



EX CATHEDRA

CHRIST CHURCH CATHEDRAL OTTAWA

FALL 2020

DEAN BETH WRITES:

I have long been a lover of places...wide open places where the caressing wind and limitless horizon provoke abandon and free thought. Cozy intimate places where lit candles and warm blankets wrap the body and soul in deep comfort and rare peace. And all the places in-between, where life is lived in its regularity. Easy to take for granted, these places we visit and inhabit, until a pandemic comes along.

Joining you now, when it feels a bit like we are outside time and place, reminds me of when I moved to Invercargill, New Zealand. I knew no one and felt surreally suspended despite the beauty of the place and the warmth of the people. One day I wandered aimlessly downtown, feeling disconnected

from my new home and so very isolated. Suddenly, I spotted a Starbucks—not my favourite coffee shop but one I certainly recognized! I just about took the glass doors off their hinges as I rushed in to the warm welcome of a familiar place, where I could order a comforting drink.

Returning to worship at our cathedral has felt like a sip of that comforting drink on the other side of the world all those years ago. When I stood behind the altar for the first time, the disconnection and isolation vanished as I sensed the presence of each one of you, whether you were physically there or not, and also the presence of all those people who have gone before us, worshipping in that place. The cathedral felt full to bursting,

and in that moment, this place which was familiar to me became home.

John O'Donahue writes in *Beauty: The Invisible Embrace*: "Is it not possible that a place could have huge affection for those who dwell there? Perhaps your place loves having you there. It misses you when you are away and in its secret way rejoices when you return." I believe this is true of our cathedral. And I believe that each person who has experienced the smell of the wood, the sight of the beautiful light, the feel of the smooth brass, the sound of the resonant organ, the taste of the communion wafer, holds the essence of our cathedral within them.

So in these pandemic days, dig

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AUTUMN LESSONS UNDER A WHITEFISH MOON

By Albert Dumont

It's been a long time now since I stepped onto the leaf-covered forest floor of mid-fall to hunt partridge. Years ago, after the Whitefish Moon (September-October) appeared in the sky, I would begin to salivate in anticipation of feasting once more on soup made with fresh partridge or I'd drool like a hound at the thought of placing pieces of salt pork over a grouse lying in the centre of a bean-filled cast iron pot. Baked beans and partridge flesh can't possibly taste better than they do after they have slowly cooked together in the same pot for six or seven hours. Finding them on your dinner plate as part of the main course is an experience of fine dining (trapline eating, that is) Algonquins are often blessed to have.

The fall of the year, with its chilly gusts of wind sweeping crackling leaves through gullies and ravines, is a time for older individuals such as myself to ponder matters connected to end-of-life duties. The careful

crafting demanded in the writing of a will is a fine example. Death will eventually claim us all. (Be sensible and prepare a will!) To me, there is nothing more emotionally uplifting than going for a long walk on an ancient bush road in the autumn time of the year to deal with the wrongs of my past and express words of contrition to those I've hurt. The bug season has come and gone when October rolls around, you are free to take in the energy of the forest and feel the caress of its spirit without being tormented by all manner

of bloodthirsty flies. The song birds have pretty much all flown south by mid-October, leaving only chickadees and blue jays to delight us and bring smiles to our faces. Hardy birds are called upon by the Good Spirit to offer us teachings to help guide our way. The geese, as an example, remind us of their spring teaching that proper "communication and leadership" is the medicine bringing wellness again after conflict has come into our lives.



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HOW CAN I KEEP FROM SINGING COMFORT SONGS?

By Canon Doug Richards

During the past several months I have noticed something about myself that I knew before but has become more apparent as I move through this pandemic. I have theme songs. Songs that play in my mind over and over again. These are not ear worms. These songs are in my life for a reason. They either reflect my mood or signal something that is happening in and around me. They offer a melody of comfort during times of difficulty, and joy during the good times. It will probably come as no surprise to you that my theme songs are hymns. Hymns that, for one reason or another are important to me.

Over the past several months, there two hymns have been playing in my mind to comfort me and to lift my heart in praise. The first is one that comforts me: “Precious Lord, Take My Hand” (hymn 509 in the Book of Common Praise). Its words speak to me during the dark times, the times

when I am feeling down and need to be reminded about God’s loving care:

*Precious Lord, take my hand,
Lead me on, let me stand;
I am tired, I am weak, I am worn;
Through the storm, through the night,
Lead me on to the light;
Take my hand, Precious Lord, lead me home.*

These words, for me, are words of comfort. They express very clearly what I am feeling at a particular moment and they remind me to rest a little while in the gentle loving arms of God to feel comfort and care.

The second hymn is “My Life Flows On in Endless Song,” (hymn 401 in the Book of Common Praise). This is the hymn that plays in my mind as a celebration of all the good things in my life. It is a hymn of thanksgiving, offering a melody of joy. It is the refrain that plays in my mind the most.



*No storm can shake my inmost calm,
While to that Rock I’m clinging.
Since Love is lord of heaven and earth,
How can I keep from singing?*

It is the last line of the refrain that gladdens my heart. Despite everything that may happen around me, my life is very good, so how can I keep from singing?

These two hymns, sung in my mind at different times, reflect how I am feeling, at a particular time and place. I am thankful for them. They are always there either to

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SUPPORTING CHILDREN IN STRESSFUL TIMES

By Canon Hilary Murray and Natasha Coolen, Sunday school teacher

Henny Penny cries, “The sky is falling!” when a nut falls on her head—and she immediately runs to tell the king.

Along the way, she meets up with a rooster, a duck, a goose and turkey who all join her. On their journey they meet a fox, who invites them in for a rest. Focused on the sky falling, none of them suspect the fox has ulterior motives.

wonder where God is. Managing our own fears is even more challenging when we’re caring for children.

Perhaps the most important step toward helping children is to acknowledge fears we’re feeling ourselves—and if they’re overwhelming, to seek out someone to help us through it.

Then listen: if children feel like the sky is falling, ask

family have been supported by their faith and church community during difficult times can be especially valuable.

Over the past seven months our church school teacher, Natasha Coolen, has provided many online resources to assist families and children stay connected to their faith. She has also shared stories of the despair and triumphs of the people of God through Google Classroom.

Those stories show that seeking the hope and support that we need and sharing stories of hope with the children in our lives will help us find strength to carry us through even the most difficult times.

If you’d like to find out more about online resources please email Natasha at natashacoolen@gmail.com. If you would like to talk with Canon Hilary about talking to your children about their fears please call her at the Cathedral office. We are all here to support each other through these unprecedented times.



Henny Penny spreads the bad news

Luckily, a nut falls on the fox’s head — terrifying her, but demonstrating to the others there’s nothing to worry about.

These days, we are all living in a world where it can seem like the sky is falling. We may question our faith and

them questions to understand their experience and fears. Help them in see what’s real and what isn’t. Tell stories of our Christian faith to reassure them the people of God have been triumphing over tragedy. Sharing stories where your

OUR WELCOME NEW DEAN WELCOMES US BACK

By J.B. Coutts

It was her first Sunday, and people were coming home.

The Very Reverend Beth Bretzlaff stood in the forecourt on the Sunday morning of Labour Day, the true beginning of her tenure as Dean of Christ Church Cathedral Ottawa, and watched as the first congregation in almost seven months approached.

“The first Sunday was the most intense ever, the most surreal ever and the most sacred ever,” Dean Beth said in a recent interview. Because everything was so strange and a little bit scary but social distancing requires staying far apart, she and the other clergy went outside to greet people as they came back.

“What I saw was every version of humanity coming down the street,” she said in an interview. Some striding along, some with walkers, some young, all a little trepidatious, it was an emotional start to a remarkable day.

She found herself deeply grateful that her first post as a priest was at St. Michael and All Angels Cathedral in Kelowna. The size and style of our Cathedral did not overwhelm her as it might someone accustomed to serving in parish churches.

Nothing in her experience, however, could have prepared Dean Beth for the reality of church in a pandemic. She was the preacher that Sunday. “For me, preaching is a conversation,” she said, “and I didn’t know who I was preaching to and I couldn’t see their faces. It’s

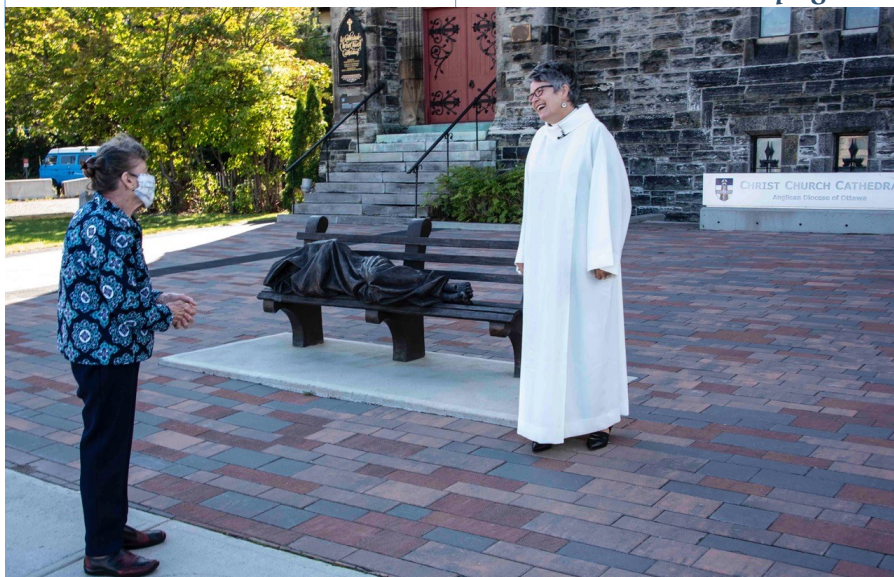
the hardest form of preaching I’ve ever done.”

She got through it, of course, and the sense of awe returned.

“I think probably it is tied to this building. I’ve always felt it was a sacred, holy place—not every church makes you feel that—but boy, I never felt it as strongly. I felt like it was full of all the people who were there, and all the people who had gone before over the years as well.”

After the service, she found herself uplifted by the “pure joy” of the people who had

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Dean Beth Bretzlaff greets long-time parishioner Luba Mullens



you made animals as our companions, that in caring for them we might learn to love and care for all your creatures, and find in them a sign of your grace.



Blessing of the Animals 2020

THE GIRLS' CHOIR LEARNS TO SING TOGETHER APART

By James Calkin

The pandemic has affected all elements of public life, but the performing arts and choral singing in particular have encountered special challenges and restrictions that have effectively placed many groups and ensembles in suspended animation.

As caretaker of the Cathedral's music ministry this continues to be a vexing issue for me. Our choirs are vibrant vehicles of outreach and community for children, youth and adults. Our choir of Men and Boys and our Girls' Choir have established records of musical excellence unrivalled in the Canadian church. To put them in the deep freeze, losing the momentum of decades of rehearsal and performance while we wait for the "all clear" is not an attractive option, especially for the boys and girls whose time with us is fleeting to begin with.

But what, safely, creatively and productively, to do? I can best speak to my work with the Girls' Choir. My initial approach this season

has been twofold: we are focusing on keeping choristers and their families engaged—nurturing the bonds of friendship and loyalty they have to one another and the Cathedral. In accordance with our diocesan guidelines, limited, distanced, in-person gatherings of the girls continue to be held regularly. I, alongside the choir chaplain (Canon Hilary) and local choir alumni are working to maintain commitment to our ministry while nourishing the esprit de corps that has carried the choir from strength to strength for nearly 20 years.

We are also working to provide these choristers as rich a musical diet as is possible and

permitted. For now, that means weekly, one-on-one cantor training for each girl—and for more experienced and confident singers, the opportunity to act as soloist at our live-streamed Sunday services. Come November we will offer a series of mid-week Evenings on Thursdays which will offer the congregation another opportunity for in-person sung worship and our choristers a chance to exercise their vocation.

In the midst of this recalibration of our choir-life we have also discerned a valuable opportunity to share our resources more

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Members of the Cathedral Girls' Choir reconnect with Canon Hilary

WHERE THERE'S A WILL THERE'S A WAY TO MOVE

By Gwynneth Evans

“What moves you?” was this year’s slogan for Ride for Refuge 2020—the annual fundraising event for the Primate’s World Relief and Development Fund, this year dedicated to raising money to support St. Jude’s Project in Uganda, which offers training for intergenerational families and communities to learn and practise green farming.

The question spurred a group of Cathedral women to run, walk and cycle for weeks because — like so much else — Ride for Refuge has been different this year. It’s normally a one-day bikeathon, but that wasn’t feasible with COVID. Instead, participants engaged in what ‘moves’ them over the summer. Indeed, the Cathedral team of Dean Beth Bretzloff, Sarah Graham, Maya McDonald, Jane Morris, Canon Hilary Murray, Gillian Wheeler and Gwynneth Evans exceeded our fundraising and distance goals, because we had the time and choice of activities (within a range of options encouraged by Ride for Refuge). Collectively we raised \$3,134.00 (the sixth highest amount across the

country) and covered 2,881 kilometres.

What moves us? Supporting our neighbours in sub-Saharan Africa in concert with the Primate’s World Relief and Development Fund.

Our Cathedral team is one of many Anglican teams across the country who have chosen a variety of activities. Our Primate, for example, has hosted two evenings in which she played and sang the hymns chosen by donors.

We are grateful to our donors. Here in Ottawa, we have had an honorary team

member. Jane Fyles has knitted eight pairs of socks and two hats! As a former Cathedral and diocesan representative, Jane also served as a member of the national board of PWRDF. A few years ago, Archbishop Fred Hiltz honoured Jane during his annual visit to the Cathedral.

Jane and many generous donors have made this year’s Ride for Refuge special. Thanks to you, we have surpassed our goal and PWRDF has raised its goal for St. Jude’s Project. What moves us? Our collective success and sense of common purpose. Thanks to all.



The Cathedral Ride for Refuge team 2020 celebrate this year’s success

COUTTS

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attended—who had come home. “The whole idea of the Christian faith is we are a community, where we’re at our best is where we gather,” she said. “The depth and breadth of faith is there. It’s all about relationships and at least part of the time, that must be in person.”

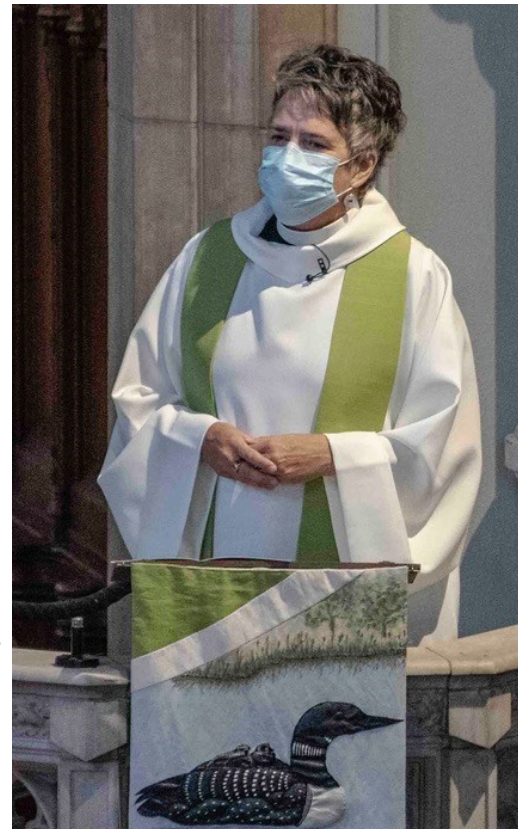
COVID took that away from us for months and may do again. Even if the second wave doesn’t lead to another shutdown, many people are being appropriately cautious about returning to church. As a result, planning is almost all focused on the short term, because who can say what Christmas or Easter or Pentecost will look like, with no real expectation of “normal” before there’s a vaccine?

Nevertheless, Dean Beth is starting to develop a longer-term vision of the Cathedral. She likes our strong external partnerships—with the Diocese of Jerusalem, through the Community of the Cross of Nails and the Compass Rose Society. Our work with the diocesan ministries, (St. Luke’s Table, Cornerstone,

Centre 454) is strong. Now (or soon) she thinks, is perhaps time to build connections within the diocese.

“I always say ‘our Cathedral’ but I would like to make it more ‘our Cathedral’ for every church in the diocese.” “In these days when we resources are scarce, this is a place that could pull us together...we could be receiving ideas and sharing them,” Dean Beth said, giving the example of Canon Doug Richards participating in a diocesan multi-church community book study on “The Great Spiritual Migration”.

Meantime, Dean Beth is focused on meeting her flock as best she can. She is trying to arrange online or physically distanced meetings with parish groups, and is planning Evensong services on four Thursdays in November, which would be followed by a Zoom drinks hour. She is out in the forecourt before and after church getting to know people with two metres between them. It seems to get harder every week, she admitted.



“This is not the way it’s supposed to be. This is not how we’re supposed to gather. It’s not right. One of the greatest losses in this is touch...Every sacrament involves touch. That’s the point: ‘An outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace.’”

Certainly, we will need that grace to keep our community feeling whole and close in what is shaping up to be a long winter of distancing. We can be assured, however, that Dean Beth is doing everything she can to build connections in (as we say in 2020) a touchless world.

CALKIN

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widely: we have offered to send our sister parishes throughout the diocese by providing cantors and accompanists as they resume in-person worship. We're also planning a virtual harvest hymn sing for the diocese later this month and, closer to Christmas, a virtual choir video. Both projects aim to support people up and down the Valley in their singing.

My colleagues, Andrew McAnerney and Nick Walters and I are living our roles in ways that often feel very foreign. But the work remains vital and, at heart, very much the same as it ever has been: building up and sustaining our community of choristers (especially of young people), enriching our liturgies with creative music-making, and reaching out to share our gifts with others.

VICAR

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offer care and support or to lift my heart in praise. Sometimes they play one after another and sometimes they play alone, but every time they play, they are always lift my mind and my heart to a place of comfort and joy.

We all have these treasured words that we can recall from time to time when we need comfort, or we need to rejoice in the world around us. They don't have to be hymns, they may be words of poems, prayers or scripture verses—anything that gives us pause to reflect on the mood we are in or reflect the world around us. What are yours? Think about them for a moment, and then offer a prayer of thanks, because we need these theme songs to guide us through life.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Weekday eucharists resume October 14, and will be offered Wednesdays at 12 noon. A different liturgy will be featured each week of the month.

Sunday November 1, a choral **Requiem for the Souls of the Faithful Departed** will be held at 4:00 pm.

There will be a series of weekly **Evensongs in November** on Thursdays at 5:30 pm, followed by **Drinks with the Dean** on Zoom at 7 pm.

The **Service of Remembrance** will be held Sunday November 8 at 10:30 am as we remember and honour cathedral members and all others who served during the two World Wars, in Korea, and in peacekeeping activities.

In these challenging times it can be difficult to keep up with changes. Check our website at www.ottawacathedral.ca for the most current information and sign up for our weekly newsletter.

DEAN

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into your senses and take a sip of the beauty and comfort of our cathedral which resides there, deep within you. Feel the heart of God beating within you and know that wherever you are, no matter what you feel, you are loved and connected. And feel the cathedral's rejoicing, whether you experience it online or in person, just as you rejoice in this familiar place... a home of God.



DUMONT

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The partridge too, is regarded as a healer and as a bird who carries much in the way of spiritual substance. Their teachings are about courage found in the heart of oneself, respect for the environment and truth to our duty to the future generations. The partridge is often found in an area of the forest where poplars and birch trees grow. It is a bird that seems to prefer to walk from point A to point B. And though he is a bird whose plumage is the colour of the forest floor when covered with decaying leaves, a sharp eye (like mine) can find him as he walks along. The partridge becomes one with the rusty leaves he walks upon in the fall of the year but yet, he didn't have much of a chance when I was looking for game.

In the past, I could bag three or four, sometimes as many as five while walking 10 kilometres on a bush road. But alas, my hunting days are behind me. I haven't fired a gun at a bird

in over 15 years and have no wish to do so ever again. The partridge I once hunted comes to me now in my dreams to deliver messages connected to my spiritual beliefs. When he does so, I pay attention. The partridge is a spirit helper of mine. I have faith in his wise counsels and can tell you that the autumn time of year is when that little bird, hardly two pounds in weight, fills me with purpose and devotion to the present and to the future. Although it is not my birth season, I love Autumn as much as if it were.

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