

## DEAN BETH'S LENTEN SURPRISE

**A**lthough I am a keen observer, sometimes even the most obvious things escape my notice. One day this Lent I finally managed to escape to the forest for a long-awaited snowshoe. It was a perfect day—bright sun, sparkling snow, little wind. There was enough of a hint of spring that I was able to sit, almost dozing, leaned up against a tree for quite a long time after lunch before the chill began to creep into my bones.

As I came out of the trees and across a beaver pond, something seemed different. I certainly felt different—having breathed deeply of the fresh air and given my legs quite a workout—my mood was much improved and my mind clearer. But that wasn't it.

There was a change in the light, in the atmosphere. Turning around from where I had come, there looming above me was the most amazing sun halo. It seemed as though all the tiny ice crystals in the atmosphere were dancing in perfect harmony, refracting and reflecting the light with joy. This sudden surprise of beauty took my breath away and I paused for quite some time, simply drinking it in.

During that pause, gratitude welled up within me. Not the kind of gratitude that requires the effort of making a list of the things that are good in one's life. Not the kind that comes after the relief of having escaped some horrible situation or possibility. Not the kind that comes in response to being cared for by another when in need. This was simple, deep



gratitude—for life, for air, for sun, for beauty, for being in that spot at that moment.

In the past two years, and especially since just before Christmas, it has been difficult to access gratitude that didn't feel

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## WALKING IN PRAYER DEEP IN THE FOREST

By Albert Dumont

**T**hough the February day was bitterly cold, I was feeling as if nothing could possibly remove the warmth my spiritual beliefs bring into my life each day of each season.

When I made my way down the trail hours earlier I felt the cold (about minus 35 with the wind) enter into and freeze my lungs. It actually hurt to breathe! In my circle I looked at the evergreen trees nearby, their branches laden with thick frozen snow. How spiritually striking they appeared to me as they stood among the leafless ash, poplar, maple and elm trees! Was the soul clinging to the physical entity it is attached to? A lone crow, its wings widely spread, drew a circle in the sky over my head. The sight brought a smile to my face.

I found myself contemplating at length, all things connected to spirit, the forest had absorbed since the early days of its origins. The stunning wonders Creator had placed within the embrace of the forest. The

songs of colourful birds, large and small, the snorting of the deer, the chatter of the leaves on a breezy summer day. I thought of all the trees who had lived long, given oxygen, provided nesting grounds for birds and critters, shelter, fragrance and medicine for us, the lowly human beings. I wondered about the mystery and the sacredness of the forest. I saw tall wild blackberry and raspberry stems sticking out of the snow, reminding me of the delicious pies they had brought to the feasting circle.

I thought of the strong women I have encountered in my life: my grandmother,

my mom, my daughters, my grandchildren. I threw tobacco into the breeze for them. I thought about the waters, in the snow, the ice, the gum of the spruce, the sap in the maple. I gave thanks for the waters alive in my blood, my skin, my heart and organs and even in the coldness of the winter day.

"It's a good day to be alive," I said over and over again as I walked slowly out of the forest.

The ceremony I describe is one I do now and then. I call it my 'prayer walk'.

With Creator's blessing I will continue to do so more and more and more for many years to come.



## FROM WHENCE COMETH OUR STRENGTH

By Canon Doug Richards

The other day I went out for a walk to get some fresh air and sunshine. As I came back to the Cathedral, I walked across the forecourt and noticed a large bolt sitting on the ground. My first thought, when I saw it, was I hope this did not fall out of someplace critical. I had an image of something falling apart on the construction site next door.

It is amazing how my mind works sometimes. As I held the bolt in my hand my second thought was about all of the various things that it could hold together on a construction site. The bolt could be used to hold the forms together for the cement walls and floors. Or it could be used to attach an anchor for the workers to connect their safety harnesses to, so they will not fall. There are so many things that this bolt could be used for in the construction of a building.

However, that was not where my mind stopped. I

then began to think about the many challenges that we have faced over these last two years, and how difficult it can be to hold our lives together. Sometimes, it would be so nice to have a simple bolt that could help us out when times get tough. We desperately want to make it appear like we have it all together, but if we are truly honest with ourselves, we don't. This is not an easy thing to admit. We like feeling strong and capable of facing anything that comes along and holding our lives together.



The season of Lent is a time for us to remember that we don't have to have our lives all together. Lent gives us an opportunity to look deep within ourselves and discover where God has been to help us. It is a season for us to hear once again that we are beloved children of God. To be reminded that God loves and cares for each and every person.



I believe there is a reason why Lent happens for us in the springtime. We begin Lent as the daylight is getting longer and there is a sense of hope in the air. The snow slowly recedes, slush and mud take over for a time, and then the spring flowers poke their leaves and buds above the ground and the green grass begins to grow. So it is with Lent.

We begin Lent with Ash Wednesday. As ashes are placed upon our foreheads, we are reminded that we are

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## THE SHAPE OF PARISH MINISTRY—FACING THE

By J. B. Coutts

Every week, in the prayers for the people, we pray for Bishop Shane and the diocese “...facing the challenges of rebuilding and reshaping ministry amid the uncertainties of the pandemic.” And that seems straightforward: we have all seen, month by month, the damage the pandemic has brought to every aspect of our lives.

But then we add: “Where we are tempted to guard traditions and resist new possibilities, where we magnify differences instead of celebrating our unity in Christ, where energy for leadership and community life has grown weaker, send your healing and transforming grace.”

And that’s where (if you’re paying attention, which of course you always do) you might start to worry a little bit. “But I like tradition,” you might think (“Embracing your inner Tudor” was how one member of the congregation brilliantly expressed that). Or think of people (not, of

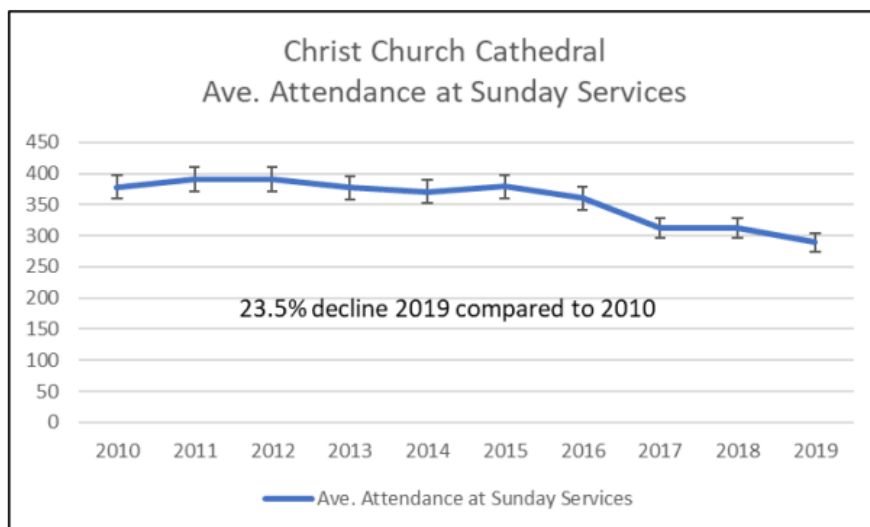
course, you) who resist every change that comes along. And you begin to see how transforming grace might, indeed, be needed.

Grace, and a carefully structured exercise, the diocesan renewal project Bishop Shane Parker has named “The Shape of Parish Ministry.” Ours is the generation, Bishop Shane has drilled into us, that must guide the diocese through the manifold changes of the late 20th and early 21st centuries: shrinking congregations, shifting rural-urban population trends and demographics that are reducing our pool of supporters. All that, in the context of infrastructure

(both administrative and physical) that can be (sometimes literally), set in stone.

It fits with another transformation Bishop Shane has been working on over the past two years, to broaden our focus from our individual parishes to include the diocese as a whole. We need, he has said, to see our local churches as parts of the family of Anglicans in the Ottawa Valley, to understand everything we do as part of the greater whole.

How is the Shape of Parish Ministry going to bring about this transformation? It’s designed as a multi-step but fairly rapid (in church time) consultation. The plan is to

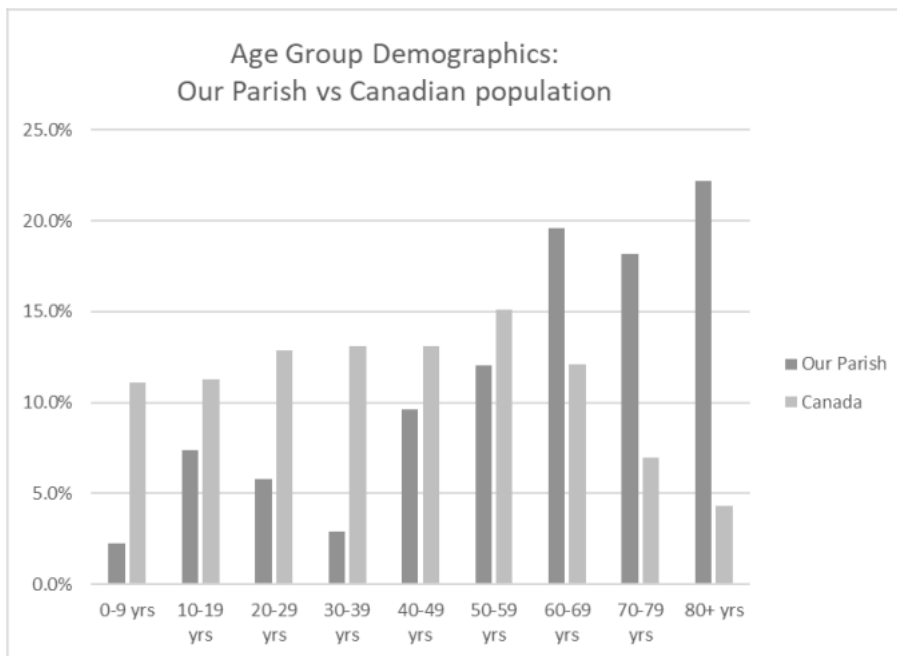


## CHALLENGES OF CHANGE IN OUR DIOCESE

have all decisions made and either undertaken by the bishop or ready for diocesan approval at the annual meeting of Synod in October.

The consultation began in the fall with an invitation to examine the shape of our parishes—and the shape they’re in. It’s expected the exercise will lead to amalgamating or even closing parishes that are struggling with the changes, and developing new congregations in places where the potential for ministry is growing. Other possibilities include offering some centralized services (such as accounting and maintenance) and perhaps some regional shared services, such as one administrative office for a number of parishes.

The Reverend Dr. Jon Martin (a student intern at the cathedral in the 2000s) was appointed chair of the Shape of Parish Ministry consultation by Bishop Shane. Dr. Martin said they began the work guided by



bishop’s understanding that “The primary purpose of a parish is to serve the needs of the community around it, not simply the preferences of the people who attend it.”

But, as we’ve said, people cling to traditions—and they can be stubborn in defending them. Problem is, Dr. Martin says, that doesn’t recognize the reality of where we are today.

“One thing we know about churches that don’t do well in the long run, they get to a point, wherever, for whatever reasons, they stop adapting to change. They resist change for the sake of

being resistant. But we are supposed to be theological communities first. We are supposed to make changes.”

In too many churches, he says, even when things are going poorly, people resist change—doing anything differently is a non-starter. “People say ‘We’d rather die than change.’ And they do,” Dr. Martin said, quoting Thom Rainer, a community developer who works with churches across the U.S.A.

Dr. Martin’s takeaway is simple: “As long as we have a Bible, bread and wine, everything else is negotiable.”

# CATHEDRAL AIR QUALITY IN A TIME OF COVID

By Andrew McAnerney and Christian Damus

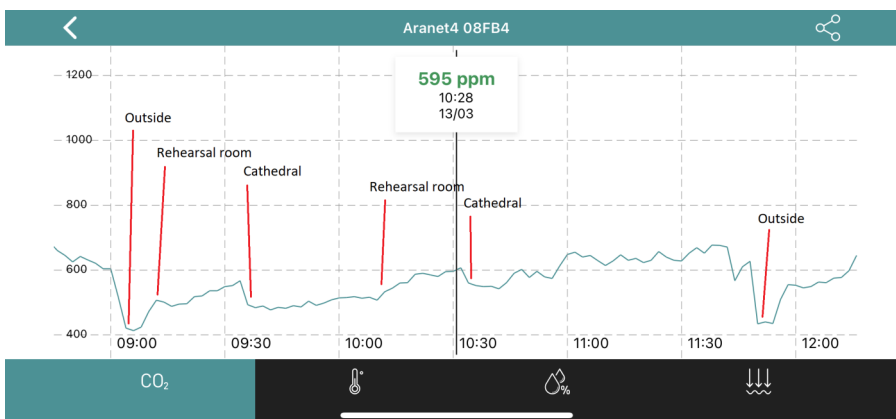
Is the Cathedral well ventilated? This is just one of the questions that has cropped up in the many discussions the music department has had when exploring how to return safely to singing. We know the Cathedral is a large building, it can accommodate many more people than regularly use it, and we have fans on the ceiling circulating air (and heat); but does that add up to good ventilation? I am pleased to say the answer is yes, the Cathedral is well ventilated. For confirmation of this we can thank Christian Damus, a long-time member of the choir, who has been monitoring carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) levels in the Cathedral.



As we breathe, we absorb oxygen and release CO<sub>2</sub>. Measuring the amount of CO<sub>2</sub> in the air over time

reveals how much of the air around us has already been breathed out by others. Good ventilation, indicated by low CO<sub>2</sub> levels and slow CO<sub>2</sub> build up, greatly reduces the risk of breathing in airborne particles exhaled by others.

The amount of CO<sub>2</sub> in the Cathedral on Sunday March 13th is shown on the graph. The left axis is the quantity of CO<sub>2</sub> expressed as parts per million (ppm), the lower axis is the time. It also shows the



CO<sub>2</sub> levels in the cathedral .....

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## IN THE END, ALL'S WELL WITH TEA AT WELLS

By Georgia Rose Becklumb

When my dad first told me he and James had arranged for my sister and me to meet with the choristers of Wells Cathedral School, my response was one of moderate distress. “Don’t worry, you’re not singing with them”, he told me. “It’s a social thing. You’re joining them for tea.”

My family and I were on a March break trip to England. I knew we would be attending Evensong at Wells Cathedral, but “tea with the choristers” was a shock. I’m a shy person by nature, so the prospect of talking to eighteen complete strangers made me worried. Thankfully, my fears were unfounded. On our arrival, my sister Juliet and I, along with our dad and dad’s cousin, were warmly welcomed by a lady called Diane, who brought us to the cafeteria.

The girls were friendly and chatty. Soon, we were all talking about school, and the challenges we’d all faced so far in choral singing during the pandemic. My sister Juliet al-

so especially enjoyed the sandwiches and juice they kindly shared with us. We talked about Easter music we were excited to be preparing and found that both our choirs are singing Ex Ore Innocentium this year, a Christ Church Cathedral Girls Choir favorite.

After tea, we all walked together to their cathedral for the rehearsal and service. It was wonderful. The music was beautiful, and so was

the building. It was interesting to see different conducting techniques, and to be in the congregation, not the choir, hearing a girls’ choir sing. They also told us when to stand and when to sit, which was much appreciated.

Everyone was so welcoming to us. I’m grateful we got the chance to talk to other people excited about choral singing and got to know more about the international Anglican community.





# PRAYERS FOR PEACE

## Pledge of Transformation

For love, which heals wounds, **we will stand.**



For generosity, which opens space for hope, **we will stand.**

For nurturing, which builds a culture of peace, **we will stand.**

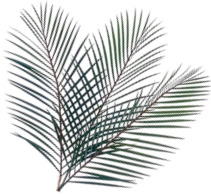


For compassion, which seeks the best for all, **we will stand.**





For respect, which enables us to love with difference, we will stand.



For humility, which allows healthy relationships with others, we will stand.

Together for hope, we will stand.



*“Pledge of Transformation”, Together for Hope, sister organization of the Coventry Community of the Cross of Nails.*

## LEAVING WHEN YOU'VE HARDLY SAID HELLO

By **Bob Albert**

I was born into the Roman Catholic tradition; growing up I served as an altar boy and I married my wife Tracy almost 33 years ago in a Roman Catholic church. However, we left the church not long after, other than attending the odd Christmas Eve or Easter service to give our children a sense of what worship was like.

That didn't change until a dark time hit our family, and Tracy felt the need to attend an Anglican service on Easter, hoping we might find some comfort. We did, and feeling the love of that Anglican community, we got deeply involved in the parish, doing all kinds of lay ministry from being servers to teaching Sunday school and fundraising.

A few years after starting back to church, I went to a weekend event focused on showing Christian laypeople how to become effective Christian leaders. It sparked my curiosity to know more about God and to deepen my relationship with the Creator.



I began to see God in the actions of people around me and in the world in general. A few years later, a friend pointed out over lunch that since I was obviously going to decide to be a priest eventually, I might as well do it now. I quit my job in IT and enrolled in St. Paul's university for a Master's in

Divinity (googling every second word to understand what was going on).

Placements are important in preparing for the priesthood, but thanks to COVID, the amount of time I have spent with people has been limited. I managed to squeeze in a few sermons be-

tween being confirmed and COVID hitting, but most of the time I was speaking to a camera, pretending there were people in front of me. My IT background helped, and so did the fact that everything—from worshiping to pastoral care to online school—was being done in a new way.

Nevertheless, it's when we've been able to worship in person with the Cathedral congregation that I have recognized an active spirit throughout the whole church, hearing and feeling the active voices and images of God in all the beings of the Trinity. The people of Christ Church Cathedral have shown me what it means to be in God's presence. As I leave this parish to be Deacon in Charge at the Parish of Prescott-North Glengarry, I will always carry this time with me and fondly cherish it. Thanks to you, my Christ Church family and to Dean Beth and Canon Doug for their loving generosity in guiding, teaching, and demonstrating their vocation to me.



## DEAN

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forced. However, God's creation, rarely predictable and often overlooked, can easily break down all our barriers—if only we pause long enough to notice. May you also be surprised by simple gratitude!



## VICAR

from page 3

mortal. But we don't stay there: as each week passes we are being called to rest in the arms of God and to, once again, realize that we are God's children. It is through God that all life came to be. It is in God that we find strength. It is with God that we can face all of the challenges that life has to offer.

As I held that bolt in my hand, I realized that we are joined together by something far greater. We have a God who wants the very best for us. It is

through this season of Lent that we are invited to reflect on how God is working in our lives, and to rejoice in it.



## AIR QUALITY

from page 6

monitor's location; it went with Christian as he arrived by car, rehearsed in the rehearsal room and then the Cathedral, returned to the rehearsal room to robe, and then sang in the service from 10:30 onwards.

A room with CO<sub>2</sub> levels below 800ppm is considered well ventilated. You can see the amount of CO<sub>2</sub> increased gradually as the morning went on to a high point around 675ppm—well within the boundaries of what's considered well-ventilated and no cause for concern.



**Palm Sunday, April 10th**  
8:30 am Holy Eucharist  
10:30 am Choral Eucharist with  
Liturgy of the Palms

**Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, April 11th, 12th and 13th**  
12.05 pm Sung Eucharist  
in the Chancel

**Maundy Thursday, April 14th**  
7 pm Choral Eucharist  
with the Stripping of the Altar

**Good Friday, April 15th**  
Noon Solemnity of the Lord's Passion  
3 pm Organ Meditation with  
Words of Reflection for Good Friday

**Holy Saturday, April 16th 8 pm**  
A Vigil for Easter

**Easter Day, April 17th**  
8:30 am Holy Eucharist  
10:30 am Festal Eucharist



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