

Ex Cathedra

CHRIST CHURCH CATHEDRAL OTTAWA | EASTER 2024

A New Way Forward

When I became Dean in September 2020, Bishop Shane told me “our cathedral is a big place with many moving parts.” Clearly it was big, but it was mostly still as we journeyed through the pandemic. So my experience didn’t really match his description until last fall when all the parts began to coalesce and move again!

A big place takes a while to get up and running after such an interruption. As our cathedral began to re-emerge we created a new brand—grounded in the past, celebrating the present, and reaching into the future. Increasingly, some ways of doing things needed to be let go of, and a new vision along with a structure to hold it began to form, taking shape in the form of a venn diagram.

Our formal governance structure with executive responsibilities is represented at the centre. The three large circles of ministry,



development and mission are advisory panels charged with oversight of the activities within their respective purviews. And

they intersect in the actions of resourcing, engaging and growing.

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Spring in Anishinabe Territory

BY ALBERT DUMONT

Spring. The forest is alive at this time of year with energy and the extraordinary blessings sent to us by Creator. A wondrous passage of moon orbits occurs for those of us who regard spring as the starting whistle for new adventures and as an open door leading us to exploring new horizons. What spiritually fills the winds around us now, takes time to get used to, such is its power. As a great variety of bird nests are being constructed and the sap of maples flows, our sleep can be broken, telling us our dreams will be strong in their spiritual messages. Please never doubt it!

Spring is when bricklayers (my trade for over 40 years) feel an itch in their fingers. They are eager once again to skillfully temper mortar before scooping it up and rolling it off the steel of the trowel, forming the perfect mortar beds onto which they will lay a row of bricks. Spring was always a happy time for me on the jobsite.

A few nights ago, during hours of sleeplessness I wrote these words:

The love for humanity
 Living now in my heart
 Is neither old nor young
 It is not male
 Nor is it female
 It is aware that life for it
 Will live only till
 The last human heart
 Of this world
 Sends forth the warmth
 Of its final heartbeat

The words of this poem were brought to me from somewhere far from Algonquin territory (the Ottawa River watershed), this I know! From where? There are countries on Mother Earth, as these words are written, where unspeakable horrors are being heaped on innocent human beings. The innocent who perish now under the weight of oppression do not deserve what is happening to them. We as human beings must care about it and make a stand against it. Spring, the generous season, the season of rejuvenation and

spiritual wonder demands it of us. Our definition (people of kind hearts) of what is humanity, is at stake.

Spring. It is a time of reflection and new beginnings. It is a time where expressions of love should be made daily for the emotional and spiritual benefit of our loved ones. Words of gratitude for the good things the kindness of others brings to us should be prominent when we pray in the days of spring season.

Spring. It is a time when I, as a man, wash the feet of the woman I respect, honouring her with cedar water. I do so as an act demonstrating how humble I feel in her presence. Men should never forget that it is women who taught us about the sacredness of the heartbeat. It is women who are the true leaders. When men take the power of women away from them, then we can expect untold catastrophes to occur. Spring season teaches us these things.



A Path to Deeper Prayer

BY CANON DOUG RICHARDS

The other day, during my morning prayer time, I had some music playing in the background. I find that playing music helps to quieten my thoughts so I can enter into my prayers in a deeper way.

I had set my iPad to pick random pieces of music from the hymn folder. I have collected some great hymns over the years. Everything from the classic hymns of "St. Patrick's Breast Plate," and "Be Thou My Vision," to some good old gospel hymns including "As I Went Down To the River to Pray" and "Leaning On the Everlasting Arms." Each of these pieces of music holds a special place in my heart and helps to deepen my prayer life.

This time I was surprised by two hymns that played one after the other. As my prayer time started, the first hymn that began to play was, "O Sacred Head Surrounded." This hymn is usually sung on Good Friday. The music is deeply haunting, and the words remind us of the crown of thorns that was placed on Jesus's head before the crucifixion.

As this hymn came to an end, there was a slight pause, then trumpets began to sound and a

choir started singing "Jesus Christ Is Risen Today." I will admit it was a little bit shocking, this dynamic shift in themes. I almost switched the music to something more in keeping with the Lenten season, but the more I listened, the more I realized the order was a natural progression, a statement about our faith. It was reminder of the spiritual journey that we go through every year at this time.

We began this journey on Ash Wednesday, with the sign of ashes, an ancient symbol of penitence. As we receive the ashes on our foreheads the words that are spoken remind us of our humanity and our deep need for God.

When we arrive at Holy Week, we walk in the footsteps of Jesus from the Palm Sunday procession, the meal in the upper room, to the foot of the cross. The journey could have stopped there, but it didn't, it went on to an empty tomb where the angel says to the women, "You are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, he has been raised, He is not here." A reminder of God's great love for us and for our world.



During the service on Holy Saturday, the Great Vigil, water is blessed, and we once again go forward to receive the sign of the cross on our foreheads. As the cross is being made with the holy water, words are spoken to remind us that we are God's own forever.

As I listened to these two pieces of music one morning during my prayers, I was deeply moved by the reality of our faith. We can acknowledge our humanity, and how we fall short of God's ideal for us. But we can also see that God's infinite love comes and meets us where we are and embraces us with a love so deep our hearts are filled to overflowing.

Keeping Up Our Temple to the Lord

BY J.B.COUTTS

Time, like an ever-rolling stream, is always bearing down on our [not quite] eternal cathedral home. Since the 1980s, more than \$4 million has been spent on repairing, restoring and maintaining the 152-year-old stones that shelter us. It's time to spend some more.

In May, work will begin to replace the steps on Sparks Street. The stone stairs, serving the only two doors from the cathedral that lead directly outside, are emergency exits and not only are they crumbling, they don't meet fire code standards. Consulting fees so far have been \$44,500. Construction is projected at \$548,664, with a contingency fund of \$121,786.

That work, as well as updates to the choir rooms upstairs in Lauder Hall, painting in the Chapel of Reconciliation and repairs in the sacristy is to be financed by borrowing \$1 million from the cathedral's consolidated trust fund. The amount borrowed also includes \$230,000 to cover last year's deficit; the plan is to pay the total back through a fundraising campaign.

The proposed new stairs and their financing caused considerable concern at this year's vestry



Proposed redesign to lengthen stairs and add landings to improve accessibility

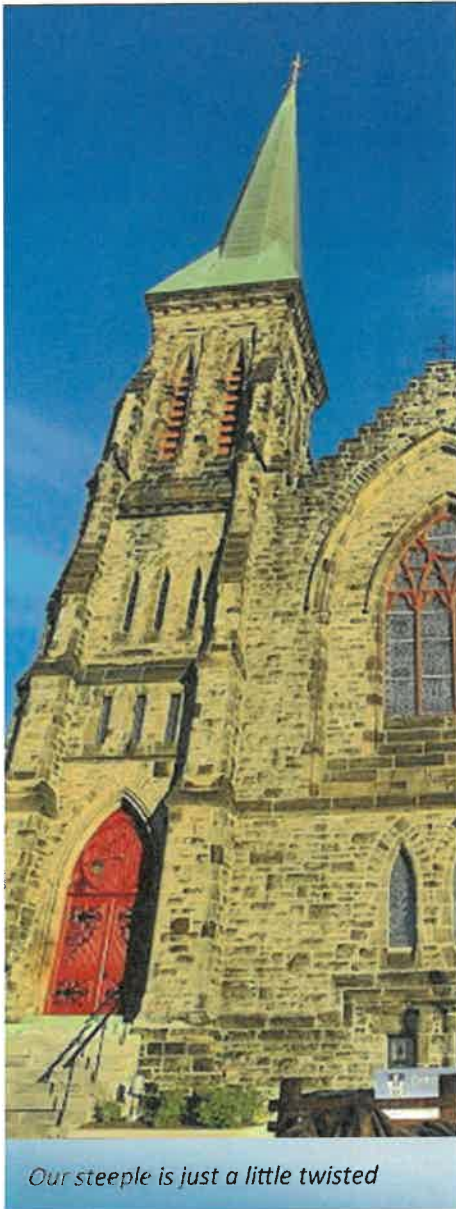
meeting. For one thing, even though we all face inflation every day, and have heard about the soaring cost of construction, it's hard for most of us to wrap our heads around the idea of spending somewhere between \$600,000 and \$700,000 on two short staircases.

It might help to offer some context: the stairs are just the latest step in a restoration process that has cost more

than \$4 million so far. It all began with a report prepared in 1980s, on work that urgently needed to be done.

"We were two generations behind on maintenance when we started the restoration campaign," said David Morgan, a longtime parishioner who has been involved in the restoration project from the beginning. He recalls Blair Seaborne (another longtime member of the cathedral) saying as the work began,

Is an [Almost] Eternal Project



Our steeple is just a little twisted

"If you don't maintain things continuously you get very far behind, and then you get hit with bigger bills."

The stairs, David says, are among the last major work that needs to be done to the exterior of the building. Over almost five

decades, the stone work on the north, east and west walls has all been repaired and repointed (it has not yet been possible to do the south side because of hydro poles in the way; David's hoping the lines will be buried during the work on Queen Street this summer so the wall can be fixed). Early on, the original tin roof was redone and the original heating system was replaced. (Happily, three years of measurement with instruments capable of discerning changes down to the millimetre determined a twist in the steeple was not getting any worse and did not need to be addressed). Even the 2019 painting of the cathedral's interior walls was part of the same restoration work begun in the '80s (though not the original \$3.5 million budget: "I stopped counting when it got to \$4 million," David said).

There has also been considerable work done on the cathedral over the years that isn't counted in that \$4 million, things like the creation of the columbarium and the construction of a hallway between Lauder Hall and the vestibule of the 1958 Cathedral Hall (replaced as part of the Cathedral Hill project).

One cathedral member asked at vestry whether there were government grants available for the stairs; the answer was no, although the Anglican Foundation has contributed \$15,000. Rob Mann, another parishioner who was involved in the restoration program at the beginning and a retired employee of the Canada Revenue Agency, told the meeting there is a way to get governments to pay 40 per cent of the cost of the steps!

The way to do it, he explained, is through the tax system's charitable donation tax credits. If parishioners decide they can afford to give \$100 to a charity, they should instead give \$150, because that donation would earn \$60 in tax credits, for a net cost to a donor of \$90, actually less than what they had felt they could afford. At the same time, because the charity receives the full \$150, which for all intents and purposes is \$90 from the donor, the remaining \$60 comes from the federal and provincial governments.



Holy Week Brings Music for Mourning and for Joy

BY JAMES CALKIN

Holy Week and Easter, especially the Triduum (Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday), comprise a powerful and rich liturgical sequence which, experienced together, has for me always been extraordinarily affecting not least because of the incredible music woven into the sacred drama—music that my colleagues, our choristers and I are privileged to prepare and offer.

In curating the music for these services, I am guided both to revisit tradition and to explore new ground. High feasts and solemnities are an important opportunity to delve more deeply into the subtleties of familiar texts while also stretching minds and voices with new expressions and interpretations.

Maundy Thursday's choral eucharist will be sung by our lay clerks and choral scholars conducted by Andrew McAnerney and Owen Spicer. At once eerily calm and devastatingly forceful the service will feature a beautiful (and new to us) motet by Parry, "This is the night, dear friends, the night for weeping." Service music comes from the bracing *Missa Brevis* by William Mathias. The evening concludes with the stripping of the altar,

extinguishing of light and the choir's singing of Arvo Pärt's "The Beatitudes."

The Solemnity of the Lord's Passion service at noon on Friday will feature a beautiful and doleful setting of the Reproaches. Sung by lay clerks and boys, it was written by John Sanders, organist at Gloucester Cathedral from 1967-1994. (Saunders was our own Andrew McAnerney's choir director when he was a boy chorister at Gloucester). Later that same day at 3:00 p.m. the Girls Choir will sing Giovanni Pergolesi's "Stabat Mater." This is a beloved part of the girls' repertoire. Throughout its thirteen short movements Pergolesi employs the melodic and harmonic gifts that made him one of the great comedic opera composers of his

day. The buoyant and infectious tunes sometimes seem oddly dissonant with the underlying text, passages perfectly capture the pain and grief of the mother of God standing at the foot of the cross.

The beautiful and gentle flow of words and music that accompany the Holy Saturday Easter vigil will be sung by our lay clerks and choral scholars.

The music for Easter Day has been chosen to reflect and amplify the unalloyed joy of the resurrection. The full complement of boys, girls, lay clerks and scholars will be accompanied by a full percussion section as well as the organ and features a new work by Paul Mealor, "Let all the world in every corner sing" for bells, choir and organ.



Collecting the Scattered, Thursdays at Noon

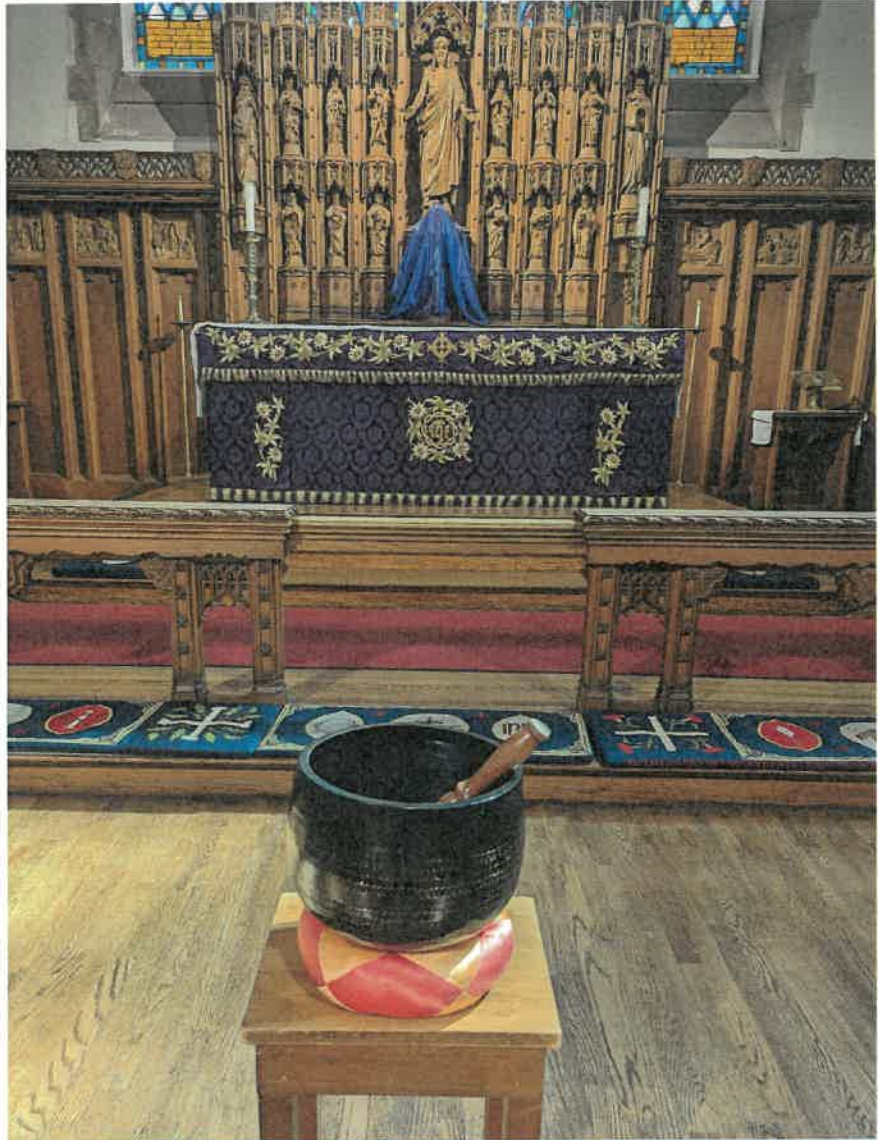
BY J.B.COUTTS

The leaflet for the cathedral's new contemplative prayer service calls it "an opportunity to pause and be still in God's presence." Those words gave me the courage to attend.

Like many people, I tend to feel harried by life and the idea of finding peace through meditation has great appeal—but what I usually find when I pause and am still is a wide-open field for my brain to race through. If I can rein in an almost endless review of things I need to do, my brain races on to free-floating worries from my workload to climate change. Internal quiet is swamped by internal noise.

But "an opportunity to pause and be still in God's presence" sounded more promising, somehow; I decided to go.

We gathered in the choir stalls (one person chose to sit in the nave) and waited in silence until our organist James Calkin transitioned us into the service with a musical meditation. The simple service frames the silence with a few verses of a psalm and epistle before, and prayers after. A gentle singing bowl proclaims the time for the silence to begin and end.



The singing bowls calls us to silence

And yes, my thoughts wandered. But I did my best to "collect the scattered," as the old general intercession says, pulling them back to the fold and refocusing multiple times until the singing bell rang again and I left slowly, in a deep enveloping calm.

Although the contemplative prayer service was introduced for Lent, it's been decided to continue it. Logistics dictate that sometimes a lay person will lead the service and sometimes there may not be music—but peace should always be on hand.

Save the date!

Saturday June 15 at 7pm

The Girls Choir will perform a fundraising concert with special guests to raise money for its performance tour of Ireland in July 2025. Come support their adventure with an Irish-themed evening of song and spoken word.

DEAN

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Ministry is our core competency, where we offer a gateway to experiencing God. Development is our responsibility for the sacred space and programs, now and into the future. Mission is our gift of hospitality, and the power it gives us to engage with the community around us and grow relationships as the Cathedral in our city and diocese. We have much work to do, but how exciting to have a sense of the path we will take!



Holy Week and Easter

Palm/Passion Sunday | March 24th

8.30 am | Holy Eucharist with Blessing of Palms

10.30 am | Choral Eucharist with Palm Procession

Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday in Holy Week

12.05 | pm Sung Eucharist

Maundy Thursday | March 28th

7 pm | Choral Eucharist with Stripping of the Altar

Good Friday | March 29th

Noon | Solemnity of the Lord's Passion

1 to 3 pm | Cathedral Open for Quiet Meditation

3 pm | Stabat Mater Sacred Concert

Holy Saturday | March 30th

8 pm | A Vigil for Easter

Easter Day | March 31st

8.30 am | Holy Eucharist

10.30 am | Festal Eucharist

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