



May 2018

The **ELM LEAF**

St. Peter's Parish Newsletter

What's inside...

All Hands on Deck 3

The Power of Jeremiah's Laments 4

Our Ministries Quilt 5

Collaborative Ministry Book Study 7

St. Peter's in Pictures 10

Shabbat Service 12

God's Abundance in Christian Formation 12

K.I.D.S. Inc. Art 14

Faith Forward Stewardship Campaign 14

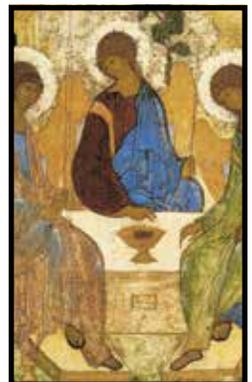
I Believe in the Communion of Saints 15



Our Fall Supper. For more "St. Peter's in Pictures", turn to pages 3, 10, 11 and 13.



All Hands on Deck, p. 3



Collaborative Ministry Study, p. 7

Worship and Mission: Blessings Received and Given

As global, national, local atrocities are seemingly on the rise, humanitarian efforts abound. God's work is flourishing as countless spokespersons and activists respond to the needs that exist throughout the world, inspiring others to do the same. For example, David Letterman's recent Netflix series, *My Next Guest Needs No Introduction*, focuses on current needs, like sponsoring refugees, and historical events,

such as the civil rights movement, which so desperately need to be re-membered within this current political climate, particularly south of the border.

So, what is the difference between this brand of reaching out and the missional work to which the Church is called? The answer is motivation. From what roots do these actions arise? It is often said that

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K.I.D.S. Inc. art, p. 14

Worship and Mission (cont.)

people respond in generous ways because it makes them feel good. Conversely, we – the Church – are called to live generously, because we recognize God’s generosity to us. Our roots for missional work begin with Abram to whom God said, “...I will bless you; I will make your name great; and you will be a blessing.” (Genesis 12:2). As we have been, and continue to be, blessed, we are required to be a blessing to others.

Worship and mission are inseparable. Our liturgy is the very presence of Jesus, the Servant of justice, found in the people gathered, the Word proclaimed, the Body and Blood shared. This is where we discover, and rediscover, our roots, week after week, year after year. This is where we are fed, informed, inspired; and this is from where we are sent.

In *The Liturgical Year: The Spiraling Adventure of the Spiritual Life*, Joan Chittister makes the point, “To live the liturgical year is to keep our lives riveted on one beam of light called the death and Resurrection of Jesus and its meaning for us here and now.” For Christians, this is the springboard from which all mission occurs, and it is experienced within our liturgy in four parts.

The Gathering of the Community

As we gather together for worship each week, we do so

with the crucified and risen Christ as our unifying force. Though we are diverse, the liturgy promises to free us from all division so that we may discover and embrace a light – the light – that can unleash us from all that separates us from God, ourselves, each other, and the world in which we live. As we acknowledge Jesus as the unifying force within the diversity of the church, we are called to be channels through which this unity is made known in the world.

The Proclamation of the Word

The entire biblical narrative, from Genesis to Revelation, speaks of a God who, in love, is determined to make things right with humanity: to counter the fall and restore shalom. For now, however, the world is not as God intends it to be. Our reading of God’s Word is essential because it embraces the whole story of God’s unrelenting pursuit of a people and world set right at last, in God’s time and at God’s expense. Through this Sacred text we are reminded that God works through us in the unfolding of this plan.

Once we have feasted at the table of God’s Word, the liturgy calls us to affirm our faith. We then pray for the needs of the Church and the world. We engage in the Confession and Absolution, during which we catch a glimpse into a restored relationship with God and each other. Then we share the

Peace, which is an outward and visible sign of our anticipation of the reign of God.

The Celebration of the Eucharist

In the Eucharist, Jesus gives all and holds nothing back. According to Thomas Cranmer, bread and wine become the true presence of his body and blood, poured out for us in total, self-giving love. God’s relationship with us is a long history of ever-deepening communion. As God, through Jesus, holds nothing back in the Eucharist, so we must hold nothing back.

Sending Forth

Everything in liturgy leads to this. Perhaps instead of saying that we “go to church,” we need to say, “we go to worship so that we may become church.” As Anglicans, all missional work is rooted in gathering with others for liturgical worship so that we may be fed by the Proclamation of the Word, and the Celebration of the Eucharist.

The purpose of the dismissal is not so much to end the liturgy as it is the consummation: sending the whole community out into the world to love and serve others as we have been loved and served. As individuals, whatever our vocation(s) may be, all that we are and all that we do rises out of God’s selfless love for us; a love proclaimed and

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All Hands on Deck - From November 2017

I was watching the Laying on of Hands – a practice we have here at St. Peter’s – and wondered why hands were so important to us. Just out of curiosity, I looked up the word ‘hand’ in the Oxford Dictionary, where it read, “the terminal part of the human arm beyond the wrist”. A good description!

In medieval times, a thief who was caught “red-handed” simply had his hand cut off and a black cap put on the end of the arm – hence, the word “handicapped”.

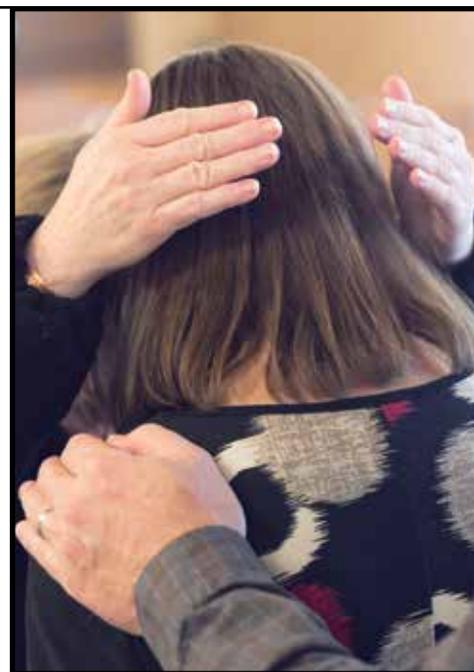
Do you know that a whole page of the dictionary is used to explain our pre-occupation with hands? A horse is measured in hands, not feet. Cards are played in hands in more ways than one. We even ask a father for his daughter’s hand in marriage, and then call on the

Mighty Hand of God to bless them.

The nerve endings in finger tips of the hand are so sensitive, they can move from stroking so gently a small kitten to a strong pressure to open the lid of a mason jar, or grip a piton on a mountain climb or gently separate the feathers of an oil-slicked bird.

Imagine the gentleness of the hands-on process: the hand of God moving above you, giving you hope and peace, with this prayer or one like it:

Almighty God, whose blessed Son did lay his hands upon the sick and heal them, grant we beseech you, to this your servant on whom we lay our hands in His name, refreshment of spirit, and according to your gracious will, restoration to health of body and



mind through the same, you Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Be thankful for the many joys in our lives that come from a simple beginning with just a hand shake that says hello – you are welcome.

 Vera Sim

Worship & Mission (cont.)

nurtured through our liturgy. As church, all our ministries rise from this same selfless love. All truth and reconciliation; acts of forgiveness; concerns for justice and kindness stem from the call to love as we have been loved. As we have been blessed, we are called to become a blessing to others. “As the Father has sent me, even so I send you.”

 Rev. Canon Donna Joy

This article originally appeared in the March 2018 edition of the Rupert’s Land News and is reprinted with permission.

St. Peter’s in Pictures Part I



One parishioner quipped that we are so blessed at St. Peter’s, we have our own holy chef. In fact, it is Karen Dunlop preparing to get the parish of St. Peter’s all fired up for the annual Cookie Walk. (November 2017)

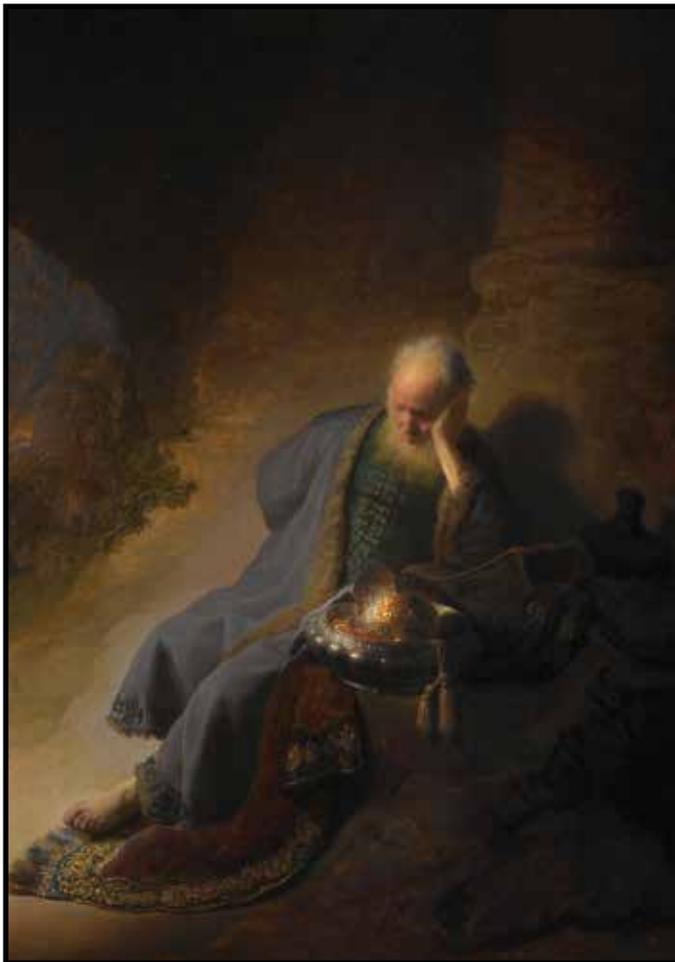
Shared Pain: The Power of Jeremiah's Laments - From November 2017

This article originally appeared in the November 2017 edition of the Rupert's Land News and is reprinted with permission.

You deceived me, LORD, and I was deceived; you overpowered me and prevailed. I am ridiculed all day long; everyone mocks me. Whenever I speak, I cry out proclaiming violence and destruction. So the word of the LORD has brought me insult and reproach all day long. – Jeremiah 20:7-8

Jeremiah is known as the “Weeping Prophet.” These words are part of a series of laments in which Jeremiah pours out his anger, anguish, loneliness, sense of betrayal, and despair in a form similar to the laments found in the Psalter.

Jeremiah ministered in Israel’s final years, through the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple, and the peoples’ exile into Babylon.



He called God’s people to repent and return to the goodness of covenant life (Jeremiah 1:4-19). Despite God’s assurance that he would be with Jeremiah and strengthen him, ministry was incredibly difficult, lonely, and costly – and ultimately did not prevent exile. No wonder Jeremiah wept.

For a century, scholars have generally considered Jeremiah’s laments as personal expressions of his inner struggles, often confidently linking them to imagined scenarios or one of the biographical accounts in the book of Jeremiah. But, more recently, scholars have felt less confident in asserting such historical contexts, and have moved to other, less historicist approaches. Two such perspectives are explored here, each arising from the prophet’s role as a mediator who represents both the people and God. Each provides helpful ways to engage Jeremiah’s ancient laments.

One role of a prophet is to stand as a representative of the people. In light of this representational perspective, Jeremiah’s laments can be considered as giving voice to the Israelites in exile who are attempting to make sense of their shattered lives. Traumatized by the unparalleled national and personal loss occasioned by the exile, their experience of siege and famine, brutal warfare, social collapse, loss of national identity and land, and suffering and deportation, may have left them numb, shocked, hopeless, and even unable to articulate the experience.

Recent application of disaster and trauma studies to the book of Jeremiah, like Kathleen M. O’Connor’s *Jeremiah: Pain and Promise*, acknowledges these devastating effects of exile. As well, such studies show that public lament names the trauma and thus gives voice to what feels unspeakable and reaches toward restoration and hope. As the book of Jeremiah took form in the exilic period, the prophet’s laments and their emotions of

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Shared Pain (cont.)

pain, bewilderment, and loss voice a whole community's lament. Far beyond merely recounting the prophet's personal experience, the words provide a public lament by which God's people can negotiate disaster, acknowledge its devastating pain, and reach again towards God.

A second perspective likewise moves Jeremiah's laments beyond the personal. As a prophet, Jeremiah speaks God's words to the people. At times, the voice of the prophet and God blend seamlessly, switching speakers and blurring the lines between them. Jeremiah's prophetic words truly mirror God's word to the people.

Similarly, Jeremiah's life experience communicates God's message through enacted parables. Alongside these parabolic communications, Jeremiah's experience of suffering provides an embodied word to God's people. Jeremiah consistently laments opposition, and there were many attempts to silence him through arrest, trial, and imprisonment. When Jeremiah issues his first lament, he says:

*I had been like a gentle lamb led to the slaughter;
I did not realize that they had plotted against me,
saying, 'Let us destroy the tree and its fruit; let
us cut him off from the land of the living, that his
name be remembered no more'*

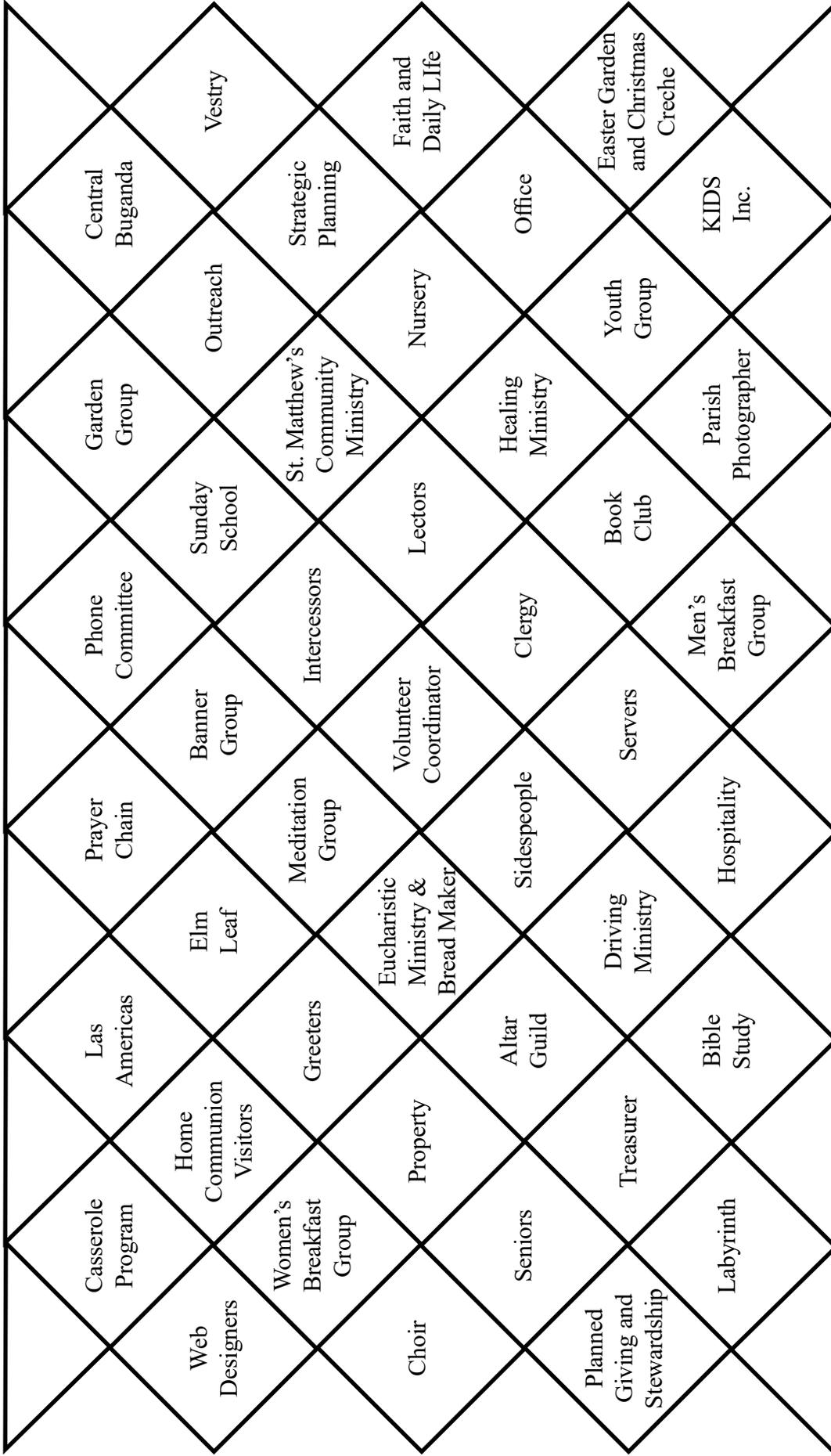
(Jeremiah 11:18-19).

Jeremiah's sadness and rejection in these words is palpable, but they also prophetically speak of God's own experience of rejection. "God's experience becomes Jeremiah's experience. As God was rejected by the people, so also the prophet who spoke and embodied God's word was resisted and renounced by them. Jeremiah's laments, whatever their roots in his personal life, thereby have become a proclamation of the word of God to the audience for whom these chapters were written," says Terence E. Fretheim in his 2002 book, *Jeremiah*. For those in exile processing the pain and anguish of loss, this identification of God's own pain would communicate that God laments over God's beloved people, despite the fact they rejected their covenant God. This would provide a powerful invitation to hope and renewal of covenant life.

In this second perspective, Jeremiah's laments embody God's experience of rejection, and his pain as a rejected covenant partner. In this, Jeremiah, like the Suffering Servant in Isaiah, stands as a typological anticipation of the God who comes in human flesh to suffer rejection, pain, and even death for God's purposes. The great church commentator, Jerome, reflecting on Jeremiah 11:18-19 in *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: Jeremiah, Lamentations*, recognized the Christ presented in the persona of Jeremiah. Much more than the personal laments of an ancient prophet in a specific historical context, Jeremiah's laments prefigure the suffering Christ – the one who suffers rejection and pain to win back recalcitrant humanity.

The two perspectives explored here consider Jeremiah's laments as more than personal expressions. As powerful corporate reflections on loss, rejection, and pain, the laments provide pastoral windows into our contemporary contexts. In Jeremiah, God joins our suffering, providing words and The Word, which meet us there.





The Quilt Team

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- Ian Chalmers
- Fenella Temmerman

The Block Makers

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- Marie Chalmers
- Mary Chalmers
- Sally Cranston
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- Mary DeGrow
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- Elizabeth Pate
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- Ruth Cadick
- Marie Chalmers
- Mary DeGrow
- Ginny Kellington
- Thelma Penteliuk
- Vera Sim
- Maureen Tate
- Eileen Young

Collaborative Ministry Book Study - From January 2018

The recent book study about collaborative ministry marks the beginning of a new stage in the life of St. Peter's Parish as we work together to support the reign of Christ in the world, in the parish and in each of our lives. The resource text for this study was the book *Collaboration: Uniting our Gifts in Ministry* by Loughlan Sofield and Carroll Juliano.

What is Collaborative Ministry?

Ministry is the responsibility and privilege of everyone who has been baptized into the church. According to the authors, collaborative ministry involves each of us identifying our own gifts while recognizing the gifts of others and then using this combination of gifts to achieve God's mission for the church and the world. Failure to develop a more collaborative ministry results in the mere survival of a church rather than the development of its resources for ministry. At the same time, the authors point out that collaborative ministry is far from a tidy process but can be messy, difficult and even painful. However, they emphasize that collaborative ministry is necessary if we as a church are to live out our witness and common baptismal vocation.

The goal of collaborative ministry is the same as that of Jesus – to extend the reign of God.

Collaborative ministry is tied to the concepts of worship, giftedness, ministry and mission. In a conversation with our Pastor of Parish Caring Ministries the Reverend Canon Mary Holmen, she explained that the word "ministry" comes from a Latin word meaning small or least, as opposed to "magister" meaning large or great. Mary said this meaning fits with Jesus' self-identification as the one who came not to be served but to serve. In other words, ministry means service. The goal of collaborative ministry is that we serve together as a community, joining our combined gifts to fulfil God's purpose in the world. In the process of developing and living collaborative ministry, we come to understand that we are all united in the body of Christ.

Baptism and the Universal Call to Ministry

In our study, our Rector the Reverend Canon Donna Joy spoke of collaborative ministry being based on the idea

of a universal call to ministry (service) through our baptism. Through the Sacrament of Baptism all disciples are called to participate in the ongoing work of Jesus. Ministry is therefore the responsibility and privilege of everyone who has been baptized into the church. The Holy spirit pours out a variety of gifts upon the baptized so that we can each assume different ministries. Collaborative ministry requires that we acknowledge, explore and use our own gifts in combination with the gifts of others who have shared this baptism. Quoting Donna, "All ministries within the body

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During the book study, Andrei Rublev's **Icon of the Holy Trinity** proved a useful illustration of God as the great collaborator

Collaborative Book Study (cont.)

of Christ at St. Peter's are understood as interdependent, and must be explored, acknowledged, and put to use along with the gifts of others".

Theological Foundations of Collaborative Ministry

Sofield and Juliano suggest that collaborative ministry is a theological concept that is based on an understanding of God, Christ and the Holy Spirit as the Trinity. When we reflected on the nature of the Trinity as illustrated by Andrei Rublev's *Icon of the Holy Trinity* we were led to understand God as the great collaborator, creating the universe and all that is in it in a unity of spirit with Christ and the Holy Spirit. As God collaborated in the act of creation, so God expects us to collaborate in serving Christ's purpose in the world.

Obstacles to Collaborative Ministry

The obstacles to collaborative ministry are a product of our humanness. These obstacles include the low self-esteem of individuals that finds expression in competitiveness, an emphasis on perfection, criticism of others, compensatory behaviors and even depression. A major obstacle is our lack of willingness to acknowledge our own gifts as well as those of others.

Conflict and Collaborative Ministry

The authors of the text stated

that conflict, which is inevitable in a collaborative setting, is not necessarily a negative phenomenon. Although conflict is messy and painful, it is also a sign of the vitality that exists within a community. However, collaboration is only possible when conflict is recognized, confronted and managed. One of the outcomes of our adoption of collaborative ministry might be the development of a team of people trained in the skills to manage conflict effectively. Successful conflict management can result in our becoming less fearful of conflict and more able to work with others whose views are different from ours. This could in turn result in our becoming more energized as a community and therefore more capable of achieving our goals of ministry.

Spirituality and Collaborative Ministry

Ministry is the embodiment and expression of our spirituality. Spirituality is one's relationship with God as this affects all parts of our lives. Spirituality affects our relationships with others and with the environment. To participate in collaborative ministry, one must reflect on the elements of spirituality that prepare each of us for God's work. The authors of the text remind us that there is more than one model of spirituality for ministry. The elements of spirituality for collaborative

ministry include forgiveness, compassion and rejection of perfectionism. They also include the understanding that failure is a normal part of our human experience and that we should not become discouraged when we do not at first meet some objective of our joint ministry.

The Role of the Leader in Collaborative Ministry.

Although collaborative ministry is a shared ministry involving all members of the congregation there remains the need for effective leadership. However, the role of the leader is different than that expected of leaders in former models of Christian ministry. The role of the leader in collaborative ministry is reflective of the role of Christ with his disciples. Jesus sent the disciples out before they were completely prepared for their ministry but upon their return, led them to reflect on what they had experienced. The leader, following the example of Jesus, does not require perfection from him/herself or others but instills a vision of mission and ministry that leads to reflection and growth in this ministry. While perfection is not the goal, careful discernment of gifts for ministry does ideally lead people to identify and use the gifts, true gifts, that they have been given – all for the glory of God in worship, ministry, and mission. Sofield and Juliano outline the qualities of the

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Collaborative Book Study (cont.)

leader as follows: to be able to create a climate of safety and to encourage interaction; to keep the group on task and directed to the agreed purpose; to be able to intervene when group dynamics interfere with the achievement of the goal and to lead in a process of evaluation of the actions taken.

Summary

The parish of St. Peter's is undertaking a new model of ministry called collaborative ministry. The goal of collaborative ministry is the same as Jesus' goal – to extend the reign of God. This model of ministry is built on the example of the Holy Trinity working collaboratively in creation and on the vows taken by each

Christian at their baptism. The concepts of this model of ministry not only apply to our pastors in their role as leaders but to each of us as a member of this community. The result of collaborative ministry can be an invigorated church discovering and fulfilling God's mission in the world.

 Lynda Wolf

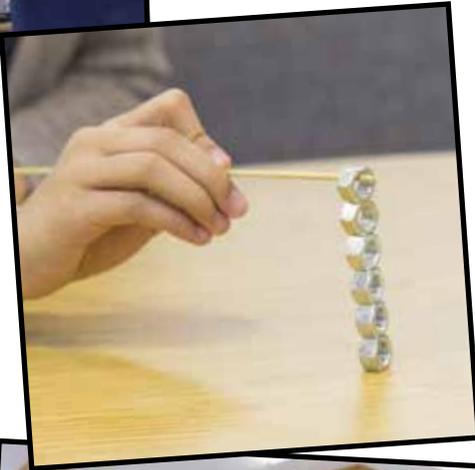
St. Peter's in Pictures Part II: Maundy Thursday

St. Peter's parishioners share in a pot luck supper service which included foot washing, followed by the stripping of the altar



St. Peter's in Pictures Part III: K.I.D.S. Inc. Family Fun Night

It's fun, food and games as St. Peter's connects with the children and parents of K.I.D.S. Inc. on March 9, 2018



Both kids and kids-at-heart enjoy the activities.

Chief games organizer Carmen Ellis gives instructions (with microphone below).



Shabbat Service at Temple Shalom



On March 23, members from St. Peter's joined the congregation of Temple Shalom for their Shabbat service. The people were welcoming and the live music was awesome! It was great to experience another faith. While there were differences, there were also many similarities. I hope to go again!

 Shannon Rusu

God's Abundance in Christian Formation

When the topic of adult Christian education comes up, what do you picture? Is it a group of adults, notebooks open as a lecturer leads them through a presentation? Or is it the Bible studies and book studies that have been a regular feature of our life together. Christian education of this type has certainly been important at St. Peter's. Many people have grown as disciples of Jesus Christ in this way.

As valuable as these opportunities are, though, we know that they cannot meet the needs of all. We don't all learn in the same way and classroom style Christian education just isn't going to work for everyone. Fortunately, there are many other ways to learn and grow together as Christians. Let me introduce you to some options already available at St. Peter's and then suggest some more we might consider in the next year.

Reading for Life Together, is a monthly book group that formed two years ago. This group meets about 6 times a year in a local restaurant. Members of the group takes turns choosing the books that will be read, which gives a wide variety of genre, and subject matter. All but one of the books thus far have been novels. Some have been serious and challenging, some have been light and humorous. All have generated rich discussion.

This past year, the parish introduced *Dinner and a Movie*, (although our first offering was actually from a popular TV show). In these relaxing evenings, a simple meal is shared while a movie is viewed. Time is allowed at the end for people to share their thoughts, but the atmosphere is informal. There is no lesson plan, plot summary, or quiz on the major themes of the movie.

So what makes these experiences Christian education? These different groups are not engaging with overtly Christian movies or books. They aren't receiving instruction about Jesus or Christian faith. Or are they?

When we gather as a group of Christians to read a book or watch a movie, our identity as disciples of Christ comes with us. In the words of one member of the book group, "If Christ came that we might have life, and have it more abundantly, then reading widely helps us consider abundant life in varying contexts." As we share our thoughts on the plot or characters of a story, we learn something about what that abundant life looks like. Because of who we are, we consider the lives and decisions of the characters from a Christian point of view. In

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God's Abundance (cont.)

discussion, we learn from one another what it means to be Christ in the world.

Both the book group and the movie nights also teach us to love one another as Christ loves us. As participants in these groups gather regularly, sharing our thoughts and our lives, we don't just learn more about each other, although that is a good thing. We also learn to love one another even when we are very different from one another.

These two Christian education options will continue in the

upcoming learning year and there will be others. Your Adult Christian Education Team has a number of interesting possibilities in the works. Among them are a coffee shop style evening on the Jewish roots of Christianity (with music), which has been offered to us from the local synagogue; an Advent Wreath making event; a movie evening with our friends at K.I.D.S. Inc.; and a shared event with St. Matthew's Maryland Community Ministry. More opportunities for adults to

engage with Catechesis of the Good Shepherd are also in the works.

Our God is a God of abundance. As a part of that abundance, God has created us with different interests and personalities and with different ways of learning. We hope that Christian education at St. Peter's will increasingly reflect both God's abundance and our individual differences.



Shelagh Balfour
Pastor of Christian Education

Photo Credits

Holy Chef photo on p. 3
courtesy of Ross Phillips

Rembrandt's *Jeremiah Lamenting the Destruction of Jerusalem* on p. 4 and Andrei Rublev's *Icon of the Holy Trinity* on p. 8 is public domain

Quilt photo on p. 6 and Temple Shalom photo on p. 12 courtesy of Marcus Le Nabat

All other photos in this edition of the Elm Leaf courtesy of Abi Calcutt

St. Peter's in Pictures Part IV: Fall Supper



Dedicated volunteers served up a tasty fall meal for parishioners and guests, while at the same time raising funds for important ministries at St. Peter's. (October 2017)



No trees were harmed in the making of this newsletter!

This newsletter was printed on Envirographic 100 paper, which is comprised of 100% Post-Consumer Waste. It's also 100% Processed Chlorine Free and acid-free as well.



K.I.D.S. Inc. Art Adorns our Hall and Altar

Thank-you to the children in the K.I.D.S. Inc. after school program for so generously sharing their art with us. K.I.D.S. Inc. is a local day care that has had a long partnership with St. Peter's. The after school program has run out of our parish hall for many years. In that time, the day care has contributed to the life of the parish in various ways.

Recently, the students discovered the nails in the parish hall, situated under the



wall sconces to showcase art. "Why not use those nails?" they asked, and we agreed.

Their art went up in early May and we have enjoyed it ever since. The students generously

allowed us to use some of their pictures for the art display in front of the altar, with beautiful results.

 Shelagh Balfour
Administrative Assistant

Faith Forward Capital Campaign (FFCC) Update

Way back in 2015, the idea of a capital campaign was born in an effort to support a number of key initiatives and projects at St. Peter's. These initiatives and projects included a new organ (purchased), sponsoring a refugee family coming to Canada (the Sekt family is now firmly settled here), retiring the debt on our roof loan (retired), and creating an operating reserve fund to provide a financial "safety net" in lean years (this reserve is now in excess of \$22,000). The FFCC was a community-building success as well as a financial success. The benefits of the

campaign and its initiatives and projects continue today. The parishioners of St Peter's who generously contributed to this campaign deserve a heartfelt thank you!

As we reach the midpoint of the third and final year of pledges, we are looking forward to officially concluding the campaign at the end of this year. Many of the third year pledges have been received already. If you have lost track of your campaign pledge status or are unsure of what is outstanding, please ask me and I would be pleased to assist you. Initiatives such as



those supported by the FFCC would not be possible without your ongoing interest and support.

 David Thompson
FFCC Chair

I Believe ... in the Communion of Saints

This article originally appeared in the May 2018 edition of the Rupert's Land News and is reprinted with permission.

In the Clinical Pastoral Education, one of the skills we teach is theological reflection. The method I use is based on Robert Kinast's 1996 book *Let Ministry Teach: A Guide to Theological Reflection* and his subsequent book *Making Faith Sense: Theological Reflection in Everyday Life*. Theological reflection is not reserved for clergy or professional spiritual care practitioners. It is about connecting faith with activity and learning from our experiences. Its purpose is to heighten our sense of where and how God is present in our experiences and to encounter the living God in these experiences. It is a practical activity; it asks us to consider what difference God's presence makes, and what God expects of us as a result. Anyone can do it.

There are several "ingredients" in theological reflection: a meaningful experience, a faith perspective, the willingness to enter the experience and explore it as fully as possible, a reflection group, and the willingness to enact the changes that God seems to be asking of us. Theological reflection is best done in a group, which can see more

than an individual. It keeps us honest and can prevent us from distorting or misreading an experience.

Here are Kinast's five steps for theological reflection:

1. Choose an experience that makes you ask questions or surprises you.
2. Describe the experience in detail.
3. Enter the experience. Who is involved? What issues or values are at stake? What themes emerge?
4. Learn from the experience. What insights do you discover? What is God asking of you?
5. Enact your learning. Plan concrete steps to put it into practice.

This brief summary does not do justice to Kinast's work, but I want to use it to share some thoughts about my recent trip to New Zealand. I'm breaking one of the rules of theological reflection by writing this alone.

I have wanted to visit New Zealand since I was a child. Part of my "mission" was to find the burial place of my great-great-great uncle, Thomas Whytehead, who went from England as a missionary in the 19th century. He has been part of my family's story ever since I can remember. Through the Diocese of

Auckland, I contacted the archivist at St. John's College, the theological college for the Church of Aotearoa, New Zealand, and Polynesia. I spent several hours in the archives reading copies of his correspondence, as well as what others wrote about him.

Thomas Whytehead received his BA and MA from St. John's College, Cambridge. He wrote poetry from a young age, some of which was published. He was ordained and served a curacy on the Isle of Wight, eventually becoming the chaplain to George Selwyn, the newly appointed Bishop of New Zealand, and the intended head of the new theological college. Thomas sailed from England in late 1841 on a six-month voyage, during which he contracted tuberculosis. When they reached Australia, he was so weak he had to stay behind while the rest of the party carried on.

He eventually reached New Zealand in October 1842, settled into the mission house, and began tutoring candidates for ordination, but it became clear he was dying. His final letters home contain messages for his family and arrange for the disposition of those possessions he had not already designated. One of his last works was a translation of the evening hymn "Glory to thee, my God, this

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Communion of Saints (cont.)

night," into Maori, which he called "my legacy." He died on March 19, 1843, at the age of 27 and was buried in the churchyard at St. John the Baptist, Waimate North, in the Bay of Islands region. The Maori inscription on his grave reads "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

Making what amounted to a personal pilgrimage was a highlight of my trip. Reading Thomas's letters and the words of others gave me a sense of him as a person and of his faith. At the Mission House, now a museum, I saw the study he used and the bedroom where he died. The fact that I was there two days before the 205th anniversary of his death and on the third anniversary of my husband's death added a layer of poignancy to my visit.

In the weeks since my return home, I've reflected on why this experience made such an impact on me. At this point, I find myself being led toward a greater appreciation of the communion of saints. We affirm our belief in this holy community each time we say the Apostles' Creed, but I wonder how much thought we give to our words. Do we, and I include myself,

regard statements about God the creator and Jesus as the "important" parts of the Creed? Do we hurry through the rest as though it were just a conclusion? If we do, we miss something crucial. The Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting flow from the creating, redeeming, and sanctifying love of God in Christ and through the Holy Spirit. This love unites the whole people of God, past, present, and future, in one body, with Christ as the head.

Writing about resurrection, Paul asserts, "If Christ has not been raised, those who have died in Christ have perished," and goes on to ask, "If the dead are not raised at all, why are people baptized on their behalf?" (1 Corinthians 15: 18, 29). While baptism on behalf of those who die unbaptized is not part of our practice today, I understand why someone would want to perform this loving action. Paul's point is that resurrection and new life are God's gift for both the living and the dead. When we gather for worship, our prayers include both intercessions for the needs of the living and thanksgivings for those

who have died. Through our statements of faith and our liturgies, we express our confidence that God's goodness and faithfulness extend beyond the bounds of this life. The communion of saints is real, and through this experience, I feel bound more tightly to all the saints across space and through time. I invite you to reflect on the saints who are part of your faith story. What better time than in this season of resurrection?



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