



St. Paul's Journal

Pentecost 2017



Well, it has been quite a while. That is, quite a while since our last issue of *St. Paul's Journal* appeared; two years it turns out! Our previous Office Manager was also Sexton and Artist-in-Residence, "insanely busy" as folks sometimes put it (and fruitfully so); needless to say, *SPJ* issues were postponed several times. In fact so much was happening this year and is still happening in the parish, that it's taken the concerted effort of our new Office Manager, Gail Fulop and concentrated time at the end of a very long set of busy seasons to get this issue to press. And it has taken all the contributions, whose authors' names you will see within, to make the Pentecost 2017 issue of *SPJ*.

I hope you will find, as I do, that this issue provides windows into the hearts and minds of your fellow parishioners (and a visiting priest). Good Friday 2017 was the occasion of parish meditations 78-84 of the last twelve years of very distinct Good Friday liturgies at St. Paul's. The depth and variety of speakers and messages makes me joyful to be a part of this parish, and of the Church which we

are bold to call 'the body of Christ'. This joy has been a part of the encouraging growth of our parish, over the past few years, in new staff, and new worshippers, and new kinds of people, and parish initiatives, and parish events and leadership in worship, outreach, and parish life.

As we head into the summer, it's good to remind ourselves of who we are as 'the body of Christ', the Church. We are God's creatures, made in God's image--all of us. And we are a spiritual family which gathers to celebrate God's love, for the good of God's world, with all the gifts we have been given to give away.

And as we head into the summer, perhaps into various other church communities, perhaps to new places with new thoughts to think (maybe even the Summer 2017 parish book, Justin Welby's *De-throning Mammon*) I wish you refreshment of body and spirit in the company of family and friends old and new. And I will remain ever so thankful to be your pastor,

Paul Friesen

Report on Synod 2017

It was a privilege to attend the 147th Session of Synod of the Diocese of Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island. It took place from May 25 to May 27. This was the first time we had attended such an event. It was an excellent learning experience.

At <http://www.nspeidiocese.ca/synod2017/page/2017%20diocesan%20synod.aspx#.WTgiLE2GMb4> you can find details of what happened at Synod. We will not repeat that material in this report. What we will do is provide some impressions of what happened and suggest some items for follow up at St. Paul's.

What follows are our views. Rev. Paul Friesen also attended Synod. He may have some impressions of his own.

Preparation: Before Synod started, we read the material that had been prepared. We found it clear and generally helpful but not knowing the history of the issues, some of which have been around a long time, it was not always clear to us what would loom large at the meeting itself.

- In future years, it might be useful for new attendees to chat with Synod veterans about what to expect.
- It might also be useful for the "St. Paul's representatives" to get together and plan strategy, if that appeared to be necessary around particular issues.

Logistics: We found the registration process painless and straightforward both before the

event and on site. The Student Union Building sets a good tone for an event like this: not too fancy but all the basics were available. The McInnes Room is large but the use of microphones and screens made the presentations easy enough to follow.

We were assigned to tables and stayed at those tables throughout Synod. The St. Paul's group were at a table with people from St. James, Armview and St. James, Herring Cove.

Content: The agenda was a full one but it was scheduled so that it did not feel rushed. Several items, like the Bishop's Charge and the discussion of Resolutions, were broken up so that there was enough change to keep interest from flagging.

The theme of the Synod was "It's about more" – we must not be satisfied with the status quo. The Bishop's Charge came in three parts:

- Know Who You Are
- Know Who You Serve
- The Archbishop quoted Pope Francis –*
"Go out now, share the gospel. It may get messy."
- Know That It Matters

"Jesus didn't die for a bigger church? What should we do beyond maintaining our inherited church? This is a fundamental question for us at St. Paul's where maintaining what we have inherited is vital but cannot be an end in itself. It needs to be a means.

The Bishop touched on the network of 253 local congregations in the diocese and wondered about how this network could play a role in rural development

We cannot do everything but we can do something. Text of the Bishop's charge is at <http://www.nspeidiocese.ca/synod2017/Documents/Synod%202017%20Bishops%20Charge.pdf>

Synod had 15 Resolutions to discuss. Twelve were carried, one was tabled, one was withdrawn and one was defeated.

Among those carried, Resolution #14 - to amend Canon 37, Parochial Finances, Section 23 with regards to Lotteries and Raffles – led to the most discussion. It was eventually passed in both houses. Its passage opens up the possibilities of small scale raffles as part of parish fundraising initiatives.

Resolution #6 - to amend Canon 1, Section 6 (4) with regards to incapacitation of the Bishop – was the only one that got tangled up. Clearer wording might have helped but tabling it for future consideration by Diocesan Council was a useful fate for it.

Resolution # 11 - to amend Canon 35, Parish Government, Section 8 with regards to Parish Councils – was the only resolution to be defeated. It was put forward by the folks sitting at our table from St. James, Herring Cove. Although defeated, it did point to a real problem faced by many small parishes, simply getting enough people to fill seats on Parish Council. More parishes will

face this problem in the future, if attendance and membership trends continue.

It seems likely that a resolution like this one will come back in future. The problem the Herring Cove parish faces is not going to go away.

Marriage - Paul Friesen and Paul Jennings made a Presentation on Canon 21 – On Marriage in the Church – “This Holy Estate”. As reported in the press, this was a hot topic at the last General Synod. The two Pauls condensed a 58 page document into a quite understandable presentation and Michael Tutton in his journalist role questioned the presenters. After the presentation and the questions, we discussed the material in our table groups. The document is well worth reading, whatever your views on same-sex marriage might be. A slide presentation on Canon 21 can be found at <http://www.nspeidiocese.ca/synod2017/page/2017%20diocesan%20synod.aspx#.WThPB02GMb5>. The full document is at http://www.anglican.ca/wp-content/uploads/Marriage_Canon_REPORT_15Sept22.pdf. It will be interesting to look back at this issue in 20 years and see what future synods will say or think about it.

Testimonies were woven through the sessions: Several of the testimonies were quite powerful. Chris notes that he is not sure he could talk about his own “faith journey” as effectively as many of those who spoke did.

During the three days, several organizations made presentations. Highlights included:

-PWRDF described its work in Tanzania
-Alpha made a presentation on "Opportunities for Evangelism in NS & PEI. See alphacanada.org. Has St Paul's any history with Alpha?

-Refugee Sponsorship Task Force. It was interesting to hear what others had done with respect to refugees. The obvious question is what next? The refugee issue is as serious as it was when St. Paul's sponsored a family. Should we sponsor another family? The presenters highlighted the "Month 13" challenge for both the families and the sponsors. What happens then?

A shift in the Allotment Formula is under consideration. There will be more information on this proposal flowing through Regional Council. Our representatives will be engaged in dialogue and learning about the possibilities. This will be a factor for the consideration of the Finance Committee and Derek. The Bishop and others have indicated that the intention is to consult broadly and deeply as this plan is developed.

As proposed, there would be a shift from deductions taken from payable allotment as a result of approved Outreach services and programs. The current deductions are generated by property expenditures – this reduces our payment to the central operations of the Diocese and other initiatives. The intention behind this is not simply change for change sake, but rather to encourage efforts and energy be expended more on ministry and outreach rather than property. An issue to be considered in regards to this new approach is a concern about the ability of Parishes to maintain

buildings and other property if the present system of advantage to approved property expenditures is changed. The relevant PowerPoint presentation is on the Synod website under "presentations." There will be time to revisit this as it moves toward any necessary changes to the relevant canon. The presenter described it as a five-year process.

Material was distributed about "Prayer Partner Ministry" an initiative organized by the Anglican Church Women Nova Scotia Board. Under this initiative, St. Paul's Halifax has been partnered with St. Paul's Charlottetown. It is not clear how best to follow up on this initiative? We could begin by contacting St. Paul's Charlottetown.

Elections also took place. Veteran Synod attendees might have known most of the candidates but they were often a mystery, even after three days when it came time to vote. It might have been useful to have candidates at least stand up and identify themselves (if not make "campaign speeches.")

Regional Council: Patrick attended with our Regional Council representatives Sandra McLennan and David Kalix. This was quite helpful in understanding the coming Synod session. The energy and commitment of the Regional Dean and convenor of the meeting to the exchange of ideas and consultation among members was quite apparent. We were at her table at Synod and that deliberate connection of Parishes in like areas is a very useful aspect of the organization for Synod. On Friday, May 26, there was a powerful service at The Cathedral Church of All Saints. The sermon - The Best Job in the

World – was lively and was directed at all attending - the importance of a lively and thoughtful Christian faith and service to others was explored from the perspective of a busy mother, and a cradle Anglican in a secular world.

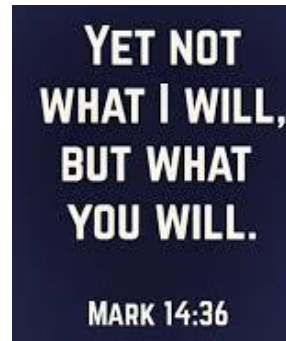
The Music was quite lovely and very engaging, and suited the occasion very well as an uplifting and beautiful element of the service. The service had a strong sense of Community, despite the many varied traditions and styles of worship likely of the gathered community. There was a genuine sense of common faith which reminded us of how the Anglican church can be both diverse and unified in what is essential.

The Bishop's many talents and a clear indication of his vision were highlights of Synod. His role is very demanding during Synod. His presence sets the tone, through his charges and through his chairmanship of those gathered. We were very impressed with Bishop Ron in that regard. He has also been made Metropolitan Bishop, which is a leadership position among the Bishops of an ecclesiastical region, in this case Canada. He clearly is promoting a sense of Mission and Outreach and also believes in an active church which will lead to a stronger church.

Chris Bryant & Patrick Hartling

Synod Prayer

Almighty and everliving God, source of all wisdom and understanding, be present with those who take counsel in this Synod for the renewal and mission of your Church. Teach us in all things to seek first your honour and glory. Guide us to perceive what is right, and grant us both the courage to pursue it and the grace to accomplish it; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.



“Nevertheless, not what I will, but what Thou wilt”

Christ's words in Gethsemane are echoed in Leonard Cohen's beautiful song of reflection, “*If it be your will*”. The challenge of our lives in faith is to find our truth in God's truth but that means some serious thinking about the will of God for our humanity. The very rich, suggestive, and profound readings set before us on this The Second Sunday in Lent provide us with such an opportunity.

But first, let me thank your rector, the Revd. Dr. Paul Friesen, and the Parish of St. Paul's for the kindness and the privilege, the pleasure and the honour of preaching tonight and for hosting the Prayer Book Society of Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island. The work of the Society has been primarily about reclaiming our fundamental spiritual identity as Anglican Christians embodied in the Prayer Book tradition of theology and spirituality. It is especially an honour to be here at St. Paul's, Halifax, because of the significant role St. Paul's plays in the history and life of the Diocese and beyond. It was, to take one small but important example, the St. Paul's Mite Society which contributed to the building and support of many of our rural parishes, particularly along the Eastern Shore of Nova

Scotia. That kind of outreach and commitment to the Gospel was altogether crucial for the life of the Church in the remoter parts of the province. Having served for a number of years in such parishes and churches assisted by the St. Paul's Mite Society, this gives me an opportunity to say thank you.

The Scripture readings that are before us this evening and as well at the Eucharist speak wonderfully to our current distresses and anxieties. We live in a broken world. One of the recurring refrains of the Lenten season is that we are the community of the broken-hearted. To know that is the condition of our turning back to God. "*A broken and a contrite heart thou wilt not despise*", as the Psalmist, perhaps David himself, puts it. "*Rend your heart and not your garments*", the prophet Joel tells us, "*and turn unto the Lord your God.*" The season of Lent reminds us of a basic biblical insight expressed in the Collect. "*We have no power of ourselves to help ourselves*". But far from leading to a kind of paralysis and helplessness, it moves us to repentance which is about our turning to God and with great insistence. Nowhere is that great insistence seen more clearly than in the Eucharistic Gospel story of the "*woman of Canaan*" who engages so wonderfully and yet so disturbingly with Jesus, seeking mercy from him as Lord for her daughter who is "*grievously vexed with a devil*".

It is an amazing scene. She is clearly a non-Israelite who senses in Jesus the truth and power of God who alone can heal and restore. Her importunity results in her breaking into the heart of Jesus but only so

because he wills to have her faith drawn out so explicitly. Spiritual life is about a struggle, a jihad of the soul, a wrestling with God, like Jacob wrestling with God and becoming Israel. The story reveals the tension between Israel and the whole of our humanity. Is God just the God of Israel or indeed the God for all people? And if so, what does that mean for the particular cultures and communities in which we live? At issue is the relation between the universal and the particular which is a dynamic feature of the very nature of revelation itself. God reveals himself to Moses in the burning bush first by way of a particular tribal identity, "*the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob*", and then universally as "*I am who I am*". That necessary tension between the particular and the universal carries over into the Christian understanding concentrated in the figure of Jesus Christ.

In a way, the encounter between the "*woman of Canaan*", as Matthew styles her, and Jesus, highlights this tension and resolves it. She has an insight into the universality of God's truth in Jesus through the particularity of his Jewish identity. Jesus both confirms this and transcends it but without forsaking it. "*I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel*", he says but that does not deter her. "*Lord, help me*", she says. "*It is not right to take the children's bread,*" a reference to the children of Israel, he says, "*and to cast it to dogs*", a reference to the sense of otherness between Israel and what is outside Israel. Her response is at once a kind of turning point and a breakthrough moment. "*Truth, Lord, yet the little dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table*". Not just dogs but "*little dogs*" and with a claim to the Lord of all creation!

This is what the encounter intends to draw out. To know that "*we have no power of ourselves to help ourselves*" leads not to mere passivity but to prayer, to the active seeking of the will of God without which there can be no turning, no healing. She is the non-Israelite who wrestles with God in Christ as a true Israelite. Such is the struggle, "*if it be your will*".

"*Repentance itself*", the great Anglican preacher, Lancelot Andrewes notes, echoing the prophet Joel, "*is nothing else but redire ad principia, 'a kind of circling', to return to him by repentance from Whom by sin we have turned away.*" And it is here, perhaps, that we can begin to grasp something of the deep lessons from Genesis and Mark with the foundational stories of the Flood and the Tower of Babel seen in conjunction with the Passion of Christ in Gethsemane.

We don't, I fear, attend seriously enough to these Old Testament stories and often miss how they inform so much of the New Testament. To have the end of the story of the Flood along with the story of the Tower of Babel is quite instructive. Both stories reveal the great biblical insight that the human community has no unity and no truth apart from God. Why the flood to begin with? Because of the sin and violence of our humanity. The problem is with us, with our chaos and disorder. This stands, by the way, in complete contrast to the much older flood story in *The Epic of Gilgamesh* which occurs because the Gods are annoyed and indifferent to humankind and decide, though not unanimously, for the Gods can't get their act together either, to wipe them off the face of the earth altogether, only to find

themselves threatened by the very forces they have unleashed. That story reveals a world where the forces of chaos seem more powerful than the forces of order; there is, at least, a great uncertainty about the world itself and thus a great fearfulness. There is the further irony that the Gods are annoyed at the "babble" of the humans.

The Genesis story is very much about God cleaning up the human mess and establishing the idea of law, hence the covenant with Noah symbolised in the sign of the rainbow, as we heard tonight, and also in the recalling of an essential feature of our humanity from the accounts of creation. "*God made man in his own image*" and because of that there is the proscription against murder. There is a new and different relation to God, to man, and to nature signalled in the conclusion to the story of Noah and the Flood.

We confront our human wickedness when we are left to our own devices. Jonathan Sacks, the former Chief Rabbi of Great Britain, notes about the biblical flood story that what occasions the flood is the problem of "*identity without universality*", the universality of law for all. Violence arises out of the conflicts between one another, between 'them' and 'us', because of our tribal identities to which we cling in opposition to one another. As Sacks suggests, this biblical picture has its modern echo in Thomas Hobbes' famous account of man in the hypothetical state of nature as being the war of "*every man against every man*" and where there was "*continual fear, and danger of violent death.*" For "*where there is no overarching rule of law, the world is filled with violence,*" Sacks remarks, an echo perhaps of Dostoyevsky's

observation that "*without God... all things are permitted ... [and] they – mankind – can do what they like*". That is, of course, the problem.

This is the significance of the covenant with Noah, a covenant which calls us to account, to a law for all and to the strong reminder of our common humanity as made in the image of God himself. It arises out of the pageant of violence that begins with the Fall leading to the story of Cain and Abel and carrying right through to the Flood. "*The earth was corrupt before God, the earth was filled with violence*". The Flood cleanses and restores the created order and establishes a covenant between God and his creation. We are held to account and led into the beginnings of a deeper understanding of the goodness and truth of God which is always greater than our misuse and abuse of ourselves and creation. We are turned to God.

But what then are we to make of the story of the Tower of Babel? It is the opposite problem from the flood. It is about "*universality without identity*" (Sacks). It seems at first so positive and good, the idea of a common human enterprise, yet it is really the story of human presumption which leads to oppression and to the imposition of tyrannical order at the expense of human freedom. We tend to read it as a just-so story about the division of the world into many languages not noticing that this implies something negative about the diversity of languages and cultures. But in the previous chapter, the origins of linguistic diversity have already been established positively with the division of humanity into seventy nations "*each with its own language*." The problem with the Tower of Babel is that it belongs to the

suppression of cultural and linguistic identities by imposing one language, one culture, one way of thinking and doing things upon all others, an early form of globalisation, one might say, but at the expense of what is true and truly to be honoured in each other in and through the particularities of place.

As Sacks again notes, the story imitates the practice of the world's first empires, citing the examples of the neo-Assyrians, Ashurbanipal II and Sargon II, who made the diverse cultures and languages under their reign all "*speak one speech*." Thus, the problem with the Tower of Babel lies in the human attempt to achieve unity and order on our own strength and power. The phrase "come let us build ourselves a city and a tower ... lest we be scattered over the face of the earth" is complemented by the phrase of the Egyptian Pharaoh about controlling the Hebrews, "*come let us deal wisely with them, lest they increase*". These are the only times in the Hebrew scriptures that the construct "*come let us ... lest*" is used. The Tower of Babel denies the forms of our identities in and through the particular contexts and cultures that belong to human life. It is about subjugation. It is about "*order without freedom*," the attempt to make the other like us.

Pentecost reverses the story of the tower of Babel. By the descent of the Holy Spirit, unity is accomplished in and through but not in spite of the diversities of languages. "*We do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God*." But that is only possible because of the Passion and Resurrection of Christ which overcomes our separation from

God and from one another. All the Lenten readings anticipate the Passion of Christ and signal our participation in it. The Book of Common Prayer provides the older practice, now largely jettisoned in our churches, of immersing ourselves in all four Gospel accounts of the Passion in Holy Week beginning with Matthew on Palm Sunday, Mark on Monday and Tuesday, Luke on Wednesday and Thursday, and John on Good Friday.

During Lent the accounts of The Passion According to Mark and Luke are also read in alternating years on the Lenten Sunday evenings. These patterns and practices are altogether about a serious engagement with the will of God for our humanity in the light of our own brokenness that arises from sin and presumption in denying the truth and goodness of God. Christ's agony in Gethsemane reveals the nature of the struggle. It is a most intense scene that follows the last supper and leads into the events of the crucifixion, to Judas' kiss of betrayal, Christ's capture, trial, scourging, and crucifixion.

Gethsemane signals the meaning of the Passion, the struggle for the will of God in the face of human wickedness and confusion. The human struggle is brought into the divine relation of the Father and the Son. It is a real struggle, not some form of play-acting. "*Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee,*" Jesus says, a true and important insight about the nature of God. "*Take away this cup from me*", he prays, for suffering is not something to be sought for and wanted. "*Nevertheless, not what I will, but what thou wilt,*" he concludes. Therein lies the lesson, the

yielding of ourselves to the will of God in the knowledge of God's goodness and truth, not the presumption of our own self-sufficiency. The struggle of the woman of Canaan belongs to the agony of Gethsemane. It shapes and informs the struggle of our lives in faith. It is about the truth of our longing for the will of God. "*Thy will be done.*"

Leonard Cohen's song, "*If it be your will*", tentative and conditional as it is, and as such not unlike Christ's agony in Gethsemane, registers the longing and hesitancy of our contemporary world. It seems we want something but are afraid to commit, uncertain in our certainties about the world which we have made. Perhaps we are beginning to long for that will of God for us.

"If it be your will/ That I speak no more/ And my voice be still/ As it was before/ I will speak no more/ I shall abide until/ I am spoken for/ If it be your will." But even more than this hesitancy to speak, there is the idea of a voice that is true and one which sings "*from this broken hill*". "*If it be your will/ That a voice be true/ From this broken hill/ I will sing to you/ From this broken hill/ All your praises they shall ring.*"

Forgive me for sensing in this something of the voice of the Psalms and the Prophets, something of Mary's response at the Annunciation, and something, too, of the story of Christ in Gethsemane and on the broken hill of Calvary. Something, too, of what it means to be the Church. "*If it be your will*".

"If it be your will/ To let me sing/ If it be your will/ If there is a choice/ Let the rivers fill/ Let the hills rejoice/ Let your mercy spill/ on all..." It is a prayer that signals like all prayer the hopes of our humanity for ourselves and for creation which can only be found in God. In our broken-hearts, we turn to God seeking in his Word his will for us.

***"Nevertheless, not what I will,
but what thou wilt"***

*Fr. David Curry
Choral Evensong at St. Paul's, Halifax
PBSC NSPEI
March 12th, 2017
Second Sunday in Lent*



***Parish Worship at St. Paul's
Good Friday Meditations: 14 April, 2017***

✠1

The First Word 'Father, forgive them...'
Luke 23:34
Meditation by Adriel Driver

"Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Oh, but didn't they? Jesus's prayer is *so* generous. It's true that they didn't know the gravity of their action. That they were putting to death the very Son of God. That they were the very mouths and hands of humanity, condemning the 2nd person of the Trinity to death, scoffing at him, spitting at him and pounding in the

nails ... but the priests knew they were angry, for he had spoken badly about them in public. They knew they were envious of his popularity. They knew they had to defend their righteousness and innocence. They knew they bribed a close friend of Jesus. They knew they were inciting a thoughtless and fickle crowd and that they turned a blind eye to the murderer Barabbas in order to make sure *Jesus* was not freed... Pilate knew Jesus had done nothing wrong. He knew he was taking the easy way out and making sure he kept his job ... the soldiers knew crucifixion was a horrific way to die. And that they were benefitting from it when

they cast lots for his clothing. And yet he prayed, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

I did not grow up in the Anglican church, and therefore am not very experienced at practicing Lent. It wasn't until my 30s, really, that I started to take Lent seriously and even then, it was with hesitation that I decided to fast from anything. You see, I don't like to commit to things that I'm not likely to succeed at. At least in the realms of spiritual discipline and self-control.

And so it was with reluctance that I committed to my Lenten goal this year, and that even belatedly, after hosting a string of visitors. It was a goal I've been putting off every Lent, for the past several years. But I read a Lenten reflection that said "To observe Lent is to strike at the root of [our] complacency ... [Jesus] allowed himself to be tested, and if we are serious about following him, we will do the same." And so, I knew what I had to do.

My sense of my own depravity vacillates. Some weeks I sit in the pew feeling desperate for forgiveness and renewal and transformation. Other weeks, I fall into the complacency of thinking "I'm a selfless mom, an agreeable wife, a thoughtful friend, an all-around pretty good person!" Lent doesn't allow us the chance to feel good about ourselves, does it? We're faced with our own inadequacy and failure and weakness most moments of every day. Why must I be so impatient with my children? So angry at my husband? So jealous of my neighbor? So concerned with other's

opinions? So vain? So proud? So self-righteous? So ungrateful? So lazy?

Lent exposes the fact that I'm so used to my sin, I tend to overlook it. I am a Pharisee: I constantly defend myself in my head. I am almost *always* in the right at home. I worry about my reputation at church and at my daughters' school. I want to be respected, admired. I am Pilate: I don't want to risk my position, my comfort, my place in order to fight injustice. I am a Roman soldier: I often think "But what can I do about things? I'm not the one in charge. And I carry on with my careless patterns." And after watching the crucifixion, I head back to the dinner table to enjoy second helpings and long for the kids to go to bed and think about what episode I will get to watch on Netflix.

It's such a relief to acknowledge this, though, isn't it? To declare with conviction that I need His death on the cross as much as, and more, than anyone! Without this confession, Jesus can't save us. We don't really need him to! He utters his prayer of forgiveness for someone else.

During Lent, and on Good Friday, I can't pretend I'm better than anyone in that scene around the cross! And the rest of the year, even in my fickleness - one day recognizing my helpless, hopeless sinful nature and the next day forgetting it - Jesus in his boundless generosity and love, is every hour at the hand of the Father, again and again saying to Him, "Father, forgive her, for she knows not what she does."



✠2

The Second Word 'Today you will be with me...'
Luke 23:43

Meditation by Janine E. Hagerman

With perspective, or without? With God or without? My reflection on the second word from the cross concentrates on these questions.

A context for such questioning is found in the scene at Golgotha where, at first glance, there are three figures on their respective crosses. All three accused and seemingly convicted of wrongs, in Roman terms, deserving this cruel end. And there is our Lord, between two criminals. The scene forms an outwardly dark contrast to His blinding brilliance, the further attestation to his divinity, witnessed on the Mount of Transfiguration (scripture reading of Luke chapter 9 verses 28 to 34).

I wonder about the madness. Would it be fair to see this scene as a publicity stunt? Was it possibly conceived as a tool to erase from any onlookers' mind the trace of secret hope, a remnant of faith that might cause individuals to see the Lord, and be persuaded not only of his innocence, but of his divine glory?

The plot would go something like this; place him between two thievesmake him one of them. Better yet, tack up a sign, reminding everyone that this one was once considered a king, of the Jews, and yet he didn't measure up. A crown forced into his scalp, cruelly punishing him for even playing the part shapes up the image well.

However, as Jesus looks upon this scene, he intercedes "Forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing". Indeed this is madness. I am reminded of a strain from Reginald Heber's well-loved hymn: 'Holy Holy, Holy, Though the darkness hide thee, Though the eyes of sinful man thy glory may not see...' Men and women, who have lost perspective, without sense, without God.

Why did such a mass of derision and mockery erupt surrounding Jesus's mock trial and condemnation to death? Why the shoddy placard and crown of thorns, the symbols of unbelief and intentional ignorance? Why did the religious leaders, the Pharisees and Sadducees, hate Jesus?

New Testament scholars, Craig Evans, and NT Wright, in their book *Jesus, the Final Days*, write 'In the end, the Jewish authorities sought to kill Jesus not because he was a good man, but because Jesus was perceived as a very serious political threat. His message of God's rule threatened the status quo which the ruling priest did not want overturned.' (p.9)

They wanted to be without the One, who interrupted their patterns of thought. I draw near to the scene, and listen closely, amidst the mocking and the jeers, and beneath the cross I hear a dialogue between the thieves and Jesus. At this moment of agony for the three, they communicate. I find it compelling that even in crucifixion, God is beside, with and in close relation to man, demonstrating a powerful symbol of his incarnation, from manger to cross, from the company of shepherds to that of thieves.

Both thieves talk. They are aware that the Lord is not "one of them". The dissonance is loud and clear. And for them, their end of life agony is an opportune time to cry out their last few words ... For the one "Save yourself, save me!" for the other "Remember me when you come into your kingdom".

C.S. Lewis, in his book *Mere Christianity* wrote: 'Good and evil both increase at compound interest. That is why the little decisions you and I make every day are of such infinite importance. The smallest good act today is the capture of a strategic point from which, a few months later, you may be able to go on to victories you never dreamed of. An apparently trivial indulgence in lust or anger today is the loss of a ridge or railway line or bridgehead from which the enemy may launch an attack otherwise impossible.'— C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* Thinking upon this quote, I invite you to weigh these words from the crosses with me.

Below, the mood within the crowds is rife with a ripple effect which began throughout Jesus's ministry. We read in Luke chapter 23 of the murmurings and the taunts which tipped the balances towards judgment:

"The people stood watching, and the rulers even sneered at him. They said, "He saved others; let him save himself if he is God's Messiah, the Chosen One."³⁶ The soldiers also came up and mocked him. They offered him wine vinegar ³⁷ and said, "If you are the king of the Jews, save yourself."³⁸ There was a written notice above him, which read: THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS. One of the criminals who hung there hurled

insults at him: "Aren't you the Messiah? Save yourself and us!"

Not much is known about this individual, this "one of the criminals". Yet we can infer from his words that he is caught up in the prevailing attitude. His last moments are obstructed and clouded by the "log in his own eye". Conversely, his counterpart sees, and his lucid moments on the cross come from a different place, a place of recognition. What we know about the second thief is that he received acceptance, after perhaps a lifetime of wrong decisions, and yet this one decision to turn to Christ yields the "compound interest" (referring to earlier C.S. Lewis quote from *Mere Christianity*) of eternal goodness. "Today you will be with me in Paradise" our Lord had promised. In effect, these are the last few words spoken by Christ to men before dying, last, first, beginning, end The Gospel draws our attention to the language of priorities and timelines. Jesus is the Alpha, and the Omega, the beginning, and the end. One thief's end becomes his beginning through and with Christ. I need to remind myself that it is a mistake to believe that there is no end of time as we know it, even more so that there are no beginnings after the end.

There, beneath the cross, was a first glimpse of Heaven for the crucified, that is, "the next step", a crack in the time-space continuum, through which the Alpha leads the thief, who has come to the end of himself Christ's "next step" as Messiah, opens the way to the throne of God, to peace with Him, symbolized by the renting of the curtain in the temple after the third hour, after his last exhale. This symbol creates a vision which

draws our eyes far beyond the temporal power struggles between Jews, Romans and Gentiles.

Thus, we ponder the two responses from two men, in the company of Jesus on the cross. One, whose line of reasoning is an echo of an old quarrel that is meant to divide loyalties, and turn hearts away from God.

A beginning of it is found in Genesis 3, as the serpent entices with the question in the garden of Eden, "did he really say....?" Then in the wilderness, (Matthew chapter 4):

"If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread." 4 Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'[b]" 5 Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. 6 "If you are the Son of God," he said, "throw yourself down. For it is written: "'He will command his angels concerning you, and they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.'[c]" 7 Jesus answered him, "It is also written: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'[d]"

For the thief, whose line of reasoning is fruitless, seems to have chosen to speak from a place of deep incredulity. "Evil can be undone, but it can't develop into good. Time does not heal it." C.S.Lewis- The Great Divorce

All the while, throughout the long and ancient history of the spoken word of God, it's been made perfectly clear that before holiness, God's holiness, there is but one

response. Prophet and thief alike are quickened to say "I am ruined!" Remember Isaiah, who said in Isaiah chapter 6 upon experiencing a revelation of the Holy:

5 "Woe to me!" I cried. "I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the LORD Almighty."

For the thief who cried for mercy, there was undeniable evidence. "Do you not see that this one is innocent!? He has done no wrong. We deserve what we are getting". Clearly, the essence of this retort is, "woe is me... we are ruined!" Herein is the "strategic point" when God responds, for he comes near those who know their personal ruin, or when they come to the end of resources, of wits, of strength, of excuses ... This is the "good fruit" of decision-making, because from this point on one can venture on with GOD, in dependence on him, being fortified with an unexhausted supply of spiritual food, the bread, the living water, there is but one good; that is God. Everything else is good when it looks to Him and bad when it turns from Him." C.S. Lewis, The Great Divorce.

We are faced with daily choices, the small ones; do I let go of resentment? Do I give or withhold? Do I bless, do I curse? Do I stand up to wrong, do I remain silent? And larger choices; do I fear man? Or do I fear God?

I remember hearing Billy Graham, a most famous evangelist of the 20th century, who wisely quoted Ralph Waldo Emerson: "Sow a thought and you reap an action; sow an act and you reap a habit; sow a habit and you reap a character; sow a character and you reap a destiny."

I have gained security in the character of Christ (an explanation would take time, maybe on another occasion).

In view of an eternal destiny, shall we make our Father in heaven glad, and walk with Him in our daily choices and decisions?

"Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the Author and Perfector of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him, endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God." Hebrews 2:2

†3

The Third Word 'Woman, here is your son'

John 19:26

Meditation by Gail Fulop

When I first read this my initial thoughts were, 'why would Jesus not entrust his Mother to one of her other birth children?' Then I re-read in Matthew 12, "For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother." And that line took on a broader meaning for me all of a sudden. 'Whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother.' He truly meant that, more than I had previously realized.

In John 19:26, Jesus sees his Mother in pure agony, and she is most likely a widow by now as we hear no mention of Joseph, so there is no partner to lean on. We hear no mention of Mary's other children being present at the crucifixion, beside her to comfort her and/or support their brother? And we know that John was a most beloved

disciple. Experiencing his Mother's pain like that must have added to Jesus' own pain tenfold. He needed to give her some comforting words, and beside her, he sees someone for her to lean on. Someone who has walked with Jesus, learned from Jesus, knows Jesus, loves & trusts Jesus ... a best friend. I know if I were to die before my Mother, she would take comfort from the company of my best friends after I was 'gone'. It would be in some small way, like having me around. They would remind her of me. Disciple John would remind Mother Mary of Jesus, perhaps more than her other children would.

Right from the beginning, Jesus earthly Parents knew that their little boy was 'special', not only did they feel it, they were told it by others throughout his life (read Luke 2:25-40). Being a parent, I can imagine how proud I would be of my son watching him develop the way he did, but it also would have been a little un-nerving not knowing what was going to happen next. And I would think that Jesus probably also realized from a young age, that he was 'different'.

And I also assume that there may have been some sibling rivalry in the home of Mary & Joseph, what with Jesus quite often being the center of attention and awe. As young children, Jesus' siblings may not have appreciated their older brother if there was any favouritism felt ... warranted or unwarranted? Young Jesus was most likely without peer in intellect & wisdom. His consistent and extraordinary moral character may have given his siblings an inferiority complex? So for them, regular sinners such

as us, that would be hard to live with I would think. "A prophet is not without honour except in his hometown & in his own household" (Matt 13). We don't read much of him being extremely close to the other children of Mary & Joseph and perhaps what we now know in hindsight as his 'special-ness' was viewed as him being 'an odd duck' to his siblings? Yes, they felt the Holy Spirit eventually ... but not pre-crucifixion. We do read, however, how close Jesus was to Disciple John; the 2 men resonated with each other to say the least.

Among Christ's last few words spoken, were those of concern for the care of his Mother. I take this as an example of how much he loved her, and he would feel more at ease assigning her care to a 'brother' who knew the mind and passion of himself. One who could relate to Jesus completely, understand him & why he did what he did, instead of seeing him as an 'odd duck'. John's understanding of Jesus would have provided comfort to Mother Mary after Jesus death ... whereas her other children may not have brought the same kind of comfort because they weren't yet followers of Jesus. Many of us have siblings with whom we have nothing in common, and friends who understand us completely. Jesus words here also remind me of the importance of caring for my own Mother as she lives out her senior years. And also, how much I would hope that she would maintain a relationship with the friends I was closest to, who understand me, should I predecease her.

I don't feel that the term "Woman" used here was an expression of coldness, disrespect or shame. He may have chosen

this term so as not to raise, or add fuel to her overwhelming sorrow. Speaking tenderly can sometimes enhance a person's feeling of weakness or vulnerability. Depending on their personality, sometimes when a person is in a state of total despair ... speaking strongly yet encouragingly, can help them more. Jesus knew her personality better than anyone, I would guess, and he used those words for a reason. Everything the man said had meaning; why would now be any different? Also, he could have been hoping to conceal her from the frantic mob, so she wouldn't be exposed to any rude insults or worse ... a stoning. I'm guessing he didn't want to bring too much attention to her and possibly bring her harm. Even in his final breaths, he was selfless.

Jesus entrusted his beloved Mother to his beloved Disciple & 'brother' John ... maybe not her son by birth, nor adoption; but a man who would show himself as a son, through his filial affection for, care of, honour and respect unto her. I believe this statement came from a place of pure love ... just like everything else Jesus said. A lot of meaning packed into a few words; he was great at that. Sometimes, people can complicate and over-explain what is pure and simple. I think his small yet direct statement says it all. 'Woman here is your son' ... lean on him.

LEAN
ON ME

✠4

The Fourth Word 'My God, My God ...'

Matthew 27:46

Meditation by Karis Tees

And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? That is to say, My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?

This is a most mysterious and miraculous word from Christ on the cross.

Mysterious because of its seeming paradox: how can God forsake God? Mysterious also because of its other seeming paradox: Christ's cry of despair is the turning point, the fourth word, the centre of everything, the absolute cry of faith.

Miraculous because it is a cry of faith. Miraculous also because the paradox contains the whole world, and makes possible its return to God.

Although I cannot hope to speak theologically about this return, others have said that this moment of Christ on the cross is the end of the world. It is the end of the world, where conversion begins. This cry of Christ is the cry of purest faith – indeed, the perfection of faith, since all evidence is gone and the world is desolate.

But I am weak in faith. And if it is the end of the world where conversion begins, then I need to dwell in that end. I need to dwell in the prolonged moment of forsakenness. For how easy it is to speak of miracles and to

speaking of returning to God. It can sound like such a lighthearted thing to do! For those of us who live in comfort and in health, with people to care for and people to care for us, we can see God's blessing on us everywhere! We may say with our lips that faith is the hope of things unseen, but if we turn to examine what strengthens our faith, we may discover that much of it is quite visible. Maybe a kind gesture given or received or the simple gift of friendship, or the beauty of the natural world. What blessed lives we lead! God is Good!

What is left of that faith on Good Friday?

Today we dwell with Christ in utter forsakenness. This moment—this very moment that we share together now, in meditating on these words from the Cross—is the moment of being abandoned, of being nothing, of death. There is nothing optimistic about it.

“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”

To know this moment of forsakenness to be the moment of purest faith is to firmly and finally abandon that lingering but unspoken suspicion that faith could, just maybe, be the hope of things seen. To be truly faithful is to be forsaken – to see nothing. How could it be anything less?

*I am poured out like water,
and all my bones are out of joint
My heart also in the midst of my body
is even like melting wax*

*My strength is dried up like a potsherd,
and my tongue cleaveth to my gums
And thou bringest me into the dust of death*
(Psalm 22: 14-15)

This psalm, begun by Christ in the “fourth word,” is where we find ourselves. In the dust of death.

There is a saying of St. Silouan the Athonite, a Russian monk of the 19th century that has shaped my thinking and that of my peers in the King's Chapel. The saying, given to St. Silouan from God, is: “Keep your mind in hell, and do not despair.”

In our world of plenty, with supermarkets full of food, stores full of clothing, banks full of money, churches full of friendly people, we would really rather not think about how astonishingly fragile these structures are; how astonishingly fragile human life is. We would really rather not use our imaginations to remove ourselves from this earthly paradise and keep our minds in hell. We would really rather remain “optimistic” as long as we can afford to do so.

Keep your mind in hell, and do not despair.

We began Lent on Ash Wednesday, with hearts of stone, full of worldly fantasies and high notions of ourselves. T.S. Eliot writes in the poem, “Ash Wednesday:”

*Because I do not hope to turn again
Because I do not hope
Because I do not hope to turn
Desiring this man's gift and that man's scope*

*... Because I know that time is always time
And place is always and only place
And what is actual is actual only for one time
And only for one place
I rejoice that things are as they are and
I renounce the blessed face
And renounce the voice
Because I cannot hope to turn again
Consequently I rejoice,
having to construct something
Upon which to rejoice*

This is what I mean when I speak of “optimism”—those things we construct to be the cause of our rejoicing, which only play into our refusal to turn, to be converted. These words of T.S. Eliot are written for the beginning of Lent. We hear the fourth word of Christ on Good Friday, the end of Lent. And “in my end is my beginning” (T.S. Eliot, “East Coker”).

“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” Praying this way does not allow our constructions. All that is left is “My God.”

*Thou art he that took me from my mother's womb.
Thou wast my hope,
when I hanged yet upon my mother's breasts.*
(Psalm 22: 9-10)

On Good Friday, in the centre of the seven words, thinking back to the state of our souls on Ash Wednesday, this fourth word comes, miraculously, as the greatest blessing. The reassurance of the Divine order of the world in which all things—from the very depths of hell, to utter forsakenness, to terrible loneliness—return to God. My God, my God.

And we humans are invited into this return: we are invited to tear down our constructions, to finally cease from “mocking ourselves with falsehood.” It is painful, and it is not worldly. It is the beginning of freedom.

†5

The Fifth Word ‘I am thirsty...’

John 19:28

Meditation by Sandra MacLennan

On the cross, Jesus spoke seven times. Only one of these dealt with his physical need for his earthly human body. He was in such distress having been treated so cruelly by men. This comment brings the man Jesus closer as we realize we are all made the same, in God's image: Jesus the son of God and the man who came to earth for us. As Christians, we work to live our lives as Jesus taught us. We thirst every day. We also thirst for more knowledge and understanding of what Jesus taught. We know that on earth he lived a simple life. No body guards, no fancy shoes, rings or gilded clothes. A song a few years ago said, “Jesus is a Capricorn, he wore organic shoes, I am sure he did.” He showed anger, sympathy, sadness and joy as at the wedding at Cana, forgiveness and always love. Always showing us his love as he taught us what we should be.

The question often comes up – what did Jesus look like? There are millions of images but is any one of them real? Many years ago I had the privilege of working with mentally handicapped young people. This is one of the most important things I have done in

life. One day we were sitting chatting and the subject of church and Jesus came up and right away the question, “What does Jesus look like?” There were a lot of comments and finally Gerald said with great authority, “No one knows”. There was a little silence then Cathy said, “I know what Jesus looks like (silence) Jesus looks like Eddie.” Eddie was a wonderful young man, tall with long dark hair. Eddie was always calm, friendly, caring, helpful and supportive. He showed how much he cared about all of the people in our group. Eddie was a special person.

Making our connection with Jesus is what we want and need. The hymn ‘Take Time to Be Holy’ says, ‘thy friends in thy conduct His likeness shall see.’ Second Corinthians 13:5 says, ‘Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you? This young girl had a wonderful connection and she saw Jesus in Eddie.

Like Jesus on the cross we thirst. Knowing how pleasant and satisfying it is to have a drink of water as needed, maybe as we drink, we can say a little prayer reinforcing our connection & recognizing our appreciation of his teachings. All of our prayers help us with our desire to fulfil the prayer we say at our communion service when we ask that may we ever hereafter serve and please thee in newness of life to the honour and glory of thy name through Jesus Christ our Lord.

When Jesus said he was thirsty, he was greeted with more cruelty and vinegar. But because of his sacrifice we are constantly reassured through the words of the Bible that our thirst will be quenched. Matthew 5:56 – Blessed are those who hunger and

thirst after righteousness for they shall be satisfied. John 7:37 - Jesus stood and cried 'if anyone is thirsty let him come to me and drink'. We continue to pray. We continue to strengthen our connection with Jesus. Our thirsts will be quenched. We are blessed.

†6

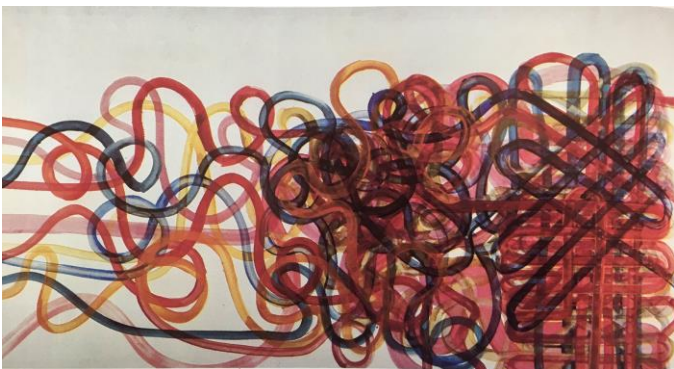
The Sixth Word "It is finished..."

John 19:30

Meditation by Cathy Tutton

At the beginning of Lent here at St. Paul's we started confirmation classes. In our first class we went through the books of the bible and we looked at some of the recurring themes that thread their way through the Books of the Hebrew Bible and into the New Testament.

The one theme in particular that we followed was God's abiding and steadfast love for his creation. Let's look at some other threads.



*The Origin of Tartan,
Ted Goodwin*

Our first Sunday School story of Lent started in Eden, the garden of paradise. Adam and Eve were blessed in Genesis 1 They were given a command in Genesis 2 They disobeyed God's command in Genesis 3 and they blamed the evil snake. God prophesied the battle between the seed of the snake and the seed of Eve. Adam and Eve were punished with the curse of Death. Animals were sacrificed to provide clothing for Adam & Eve. Through the books of the Hebrew Bible there are more blessings, laws, and commandments, sins and transgressions, prophecies, punishments, and sacrifices. It really gets complicated. The "Golden Thread" of God's abiding and steadfast love for his creation sometimes seems to get lost in all the other threads. Eventually, as Paul wrote in his letter to Phillipians, God "...emptied himself, taking the form of a slave being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death - even death on a cross."

Jesus fulfils the commandments:

In Luke's version of the temptation, Jesus is led by the spirit through a wilderness setting that reminds us of Israel's wandering in the wilderness under the leadership of Moses.

The devil tests Jesus but Jesus remains obedient to the first commandment, the Shema. He glorifies God in spite of the provocations; the Devil departs until an opportune time. This reminds us of the time Moses failed to keep the Shema in Numbers 20 and he was denied entry into the holy land.

In Matthew 5 Jesus said he came to fulfil the law of the prophets. Was it the fulfilment of the laws that he was referring to when he said "It is finished"?

Jesus fulfils the prophecies:

After Jesus left the desert he made his way to Nazareth where he read from the scroll of Isaiah "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing." He is referring to a prophesy in Isaiah 61. In the Gospels there are many Old Testament prophecies of the Messiah fulfilled in Jesus. Could it be the fulfilment of all the prophecies that Jesus is referring to when he says "It is finished"?

Jesus shows his power over death:

Then there is the story of Lazarus that we read a couple of weeks ago. God brought Lazarus back to his loved ones but now Jesus himself is about to die.

... but is sacrificed on the cross:

Is it the requirements of a sacrifice that are fulfilled when Jesus says "It is finished"?

It is clear in the Gospel of John that the evangelist is making a connection between Jesus' death and the Passover Sacrifice described in Exodus 12. Because Jesus was without sin, he is compared to the unblemished sacrificial lamb. Christ is explicitly identified with the Passover Lamb in John 19. The significance of the Passover is further recognized in the Last Supper.

The Gospel of John was originally written in Greek. The Greek word tetelestai, which is translated "It is finished!" "It is

accomplished" or "It is completed" in English Bibles, can also be translated, "Paid in full." The connection between receipts and Christ's last words on the cross in the Gospel of John could imply that Christ died as a substitutional atonement to pay for our sins.

The problem with this translation is that the Passover sacrifice described in Exodus 12 was a sacrifice that protected the Hebrew People and provided them with nourishment. It doesn't really fit the description of an atonement sacrifice in the old Testament.

So what does "It is finished" mean in John? Tetelestai comes from the verb teleo, which means "to bring to an end, to complete, to accomplish." It signifies the successful end to a particular course of action. It means "I did exactly what I set out to do." What did God set out to do when he "emptied himself, taking the form of a slave being born in human likeness"? Well, by removing the power Sin and Death have over us, He freed us to copy Jesus and live according to the two commandments upon which hang all the law and the prophets. Jesus freed us to love God and love one another. (The Golden Thread). I don't know Greek but apparently Tetelestai is in the perfect tense in Greek. The perfect tense adds the idea that "This happened and it is still in effect today."

In Galatians 3, Paul tells Jesus's followers "if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to the promise" thus fulfilling the blessing God gave to Abraham in Genesis 22.

Tetelestai, it has been accomplished.

✝7

The Seventh Word "Father, into your hands I
commit my spirit"

(Luke 23:46)"

Meditation by Amanda Eve Slattery

In the seventh "word" and the scripture reading, we see literary bookends to Christ's earthly ministry. Of course, one could argue that his ministry started with his birth, or even before his birth, and that it continued after the crucifixion although now as the resurrected Christ.

But the first time we encounter a self-aware Jesus Christ in the scriptures, it is here – when he is twelve years old, left behind in Jerusalem, and found in the temple by his very anxious parents. And when confronted about how much grief he has caused them, he replies – almost flippantly, although surely with great tenderness – "Why were you worried? You should have known I would be in the temple."

And Mary likely recalled Simeon's words when they presented Jesus in the temple twelve years earlier... "and a sword shall pierce your heart"... Oh yes. Oh yes. Before I was a parent, I understood that Mary and Joseph would have been distressed to find Jesus missing. But I was on Jesus' side, talking to my own mother perhaps – "Why were you worried? I was fine. I was right here". Now, as a parent, I have experienced the sheer terror of a split-second of not knowing where my little half-pint is. You know, the one who won't sit still and isn't taller than a pew? Pretty easy to lose in a crowd? Doesn't necessarily come when he's

called? And when I am yelling his name with pure adrenaline coursing through my body, he emerges baffled and looks at me like "What? I was right here?" But I can't help holding him just a little bit tighter as I let the breath release and flow forth. A sword just pierced my heart a little too.

Mary found her heart pierced a few times more before facing the cross. And yet, by all indications, she supported him and trusted God. She committed Christ's spirit into God's hands. At the cross, she was faced with another test of faith – letting him die. She did not beg him to save himself, although others taunted him with this prospect. Even as a sword pierced her heart, she was challenged to accept that he was right where he needed to be, even if it didn't make sense to her. For the bookend stories, the cross is like the temple – Christ is in his father's house, so to speak – and he asks Mary not to be anxious, even now. Even as she has prayed for him, and trusted God every day of his life, she is asked once again to trust, and to commend his spirit into God's hands.

As a child, I identified with Christ. I could sacrifice myself for the sake of the gospel without thought. I told my father as much. When he questioned the safety of being an overseas missionary, I challenged him with the thought that I could die tomorrow, safely in my home country, in a freak accident if it was God's will, and that I could survive open bullets in Kosovo if that was God's will. He conceded. But he probably wasn't done worrying about me. I could say as Christ did "Into your hands, I commit my

spirit" easily and perhaps a little self-righteously.

As a child, I watched my father die. It was horrible, but it was the natural order of things. But I also watched my father's mother experience his death, and it was horrible in a different way – losing a child is not the natural order of things. So as a mother, I watch Mary standing at the foot of the cross, listening to him say "Into your hands, I commit my spirit" and being challenged once again to commend him into Yahweh's care. To say, "into your hands I commit his spirit".

And I see his whole life flash before her eyes, and the memory of that precocious twelve year-old sitting in the temple saying "Why were you anxious? You knew I would be here."

And I look at my two year-old, who drives me insane as only a two year-old can, and I imagine saying goodbye to him, and a sword pierces my heart. And I wonder, could I do what Mary did? Could I say as she said "Into your hands I commit his spirit?" And I am reduced to tears.

Parish Life & Mission at St. Paul's

Tulip Tea, Bake Sale Managers



Tulip Tea, June 10th, 2017

When tulips with white petals showing red maple leaf shapes bloomed this Spring for Canada's 150th, St. Paul's celebrated. We held a Tulip Tea fundraiser to support Outreach Projects and enhance the sense of community in the parish. Thankfully donations of time, talent, and treasure, by young and old, men and women, made the event enjoyable and a success financially.

The Tulip Tea was the third St. Paul's fundraiser in recent years. Everyone agrees holding the event in the Great Hall at the Anglican Diocesan Centre was a privilege and provided the stage for a colourful tea party and a sense of community while working and eating together.

Thanks to Gordon Flowerdew and the group of musicians the atmosphere was filled with lively music which encouraged guests to sing along and tap their toes. Marion Conrad, celebrating her 90th birthday June 16th, was encouraged to take a twirl around the dancefloor accompanied by a regular from the Rector's Lunch who volunteered at the Tea to give back to St. Paul's. It took many people to make the event what it was. We thank each of you, guests and workers.

The Silent Auction had 24 items donated. They included: gift cards from restaurants in the St. Paul's neighbourhood, 10 theme baskets (from 150th Celebration theme to Travel Beauty Aids), jewellery crafted by a parishioner, art works, and household accessories. Bakers in the Parish delivered for the Bake Table and guests were delighted to sample sugar cookie ducks and tulips, buy lactose free bread, as well as mini breads, tasty cookies and cakes. Sales expertise of three young ladies from the Parish was appreciated and we enjoyed the benefits of having them circulate among the guests to sell their cookies. They seemed to be having fun!

Tables adorned with white linen and St. Paul's monogrammed cloths as well as tulips, in decorated communion wine bottles, were

set for 100 guests. Each guest found a maple leaf gingersnap at their place. Our men, adorned in their bib aprons, served tea and made sure guests had their fill of sandwiches and sweets. The Tulip Tea menu included:

Cucumber, Egg Salad, Asparagus, & Chicken Sandwiches, Smoked Salmon Crustini, Mini Quiche, & Shrimp Croissants; Assorted Sweets as well as Chocolate Dipped Strawberries, Cream Puffs, & Tea Bread; Tea & Fruit Punch.

Leftover sandwiches and tea breads were taken to the Turning Point Shelter and sweets have been frozen to serve at the Rector's Lunch as we move into summer and need to cover during vacations.



Volunteers setup and decorated around the 150th and Tulip Theme on June 9th, then made sandwiches and arranged food on the morning before the Tea. Many hands make the work go better. That was especially true for this event. Once guests finally decided to leave, all hands pitched in to clear up. What a blessing to have an electric quick washing dishwasher! Borrowed teapots, tiered cake plates, and transfer containers were returned and the Great Hall was left ready for another event. The question is, ***Will we do a Tulip Tea next year? ... Maybe?***

Thank you to all who sold and bought tickets and attended; contributed to the menu, service, and overall management of another successful St. Paul's Event. It was a privilege to work with one and all. As Tiny Tim once said, "God Bless Us Everyone!"

Margaret Bateman Ellison

Tulip Tea Coordinators,
Margaret Bateman Ellison
Julia Atkins
Siew Kim Secord



Beyond the Chancel Steps:
Relics From Our Past

As social beings we communicate with each other through signs and symbols. This holds equally true in a person's relationship with God. Since early times many signs and symbols have played a role in those relationships. During St. Paul's 268 years there have been many such signs and symbols integrated into worship and parishioners communication with God. The Divine Presence is welcomed into the Eucharist and other liturgical celebrations with permanent and temporary items that enhance praise and prayer. Our senses are stimulated by them and our ability to worship God is enhanced. The Chancel Guild at St. Paul's is charged with being the stewards of such items and to oversee the storage, care, and use of paraments, vessels, linens, and furnishings created for worship.

Over time throughout Christian denominations items used in worship have evolved. One does not have to go back many years at St. Paul's to find different items and practices used in worship services to communicate. Why? What happens to items no longer in use? The Chancel Guild is often faced with these questions.

Recently, while taking inventory in the Vestry, several relics were found. We can call them relics because they are of interest by reason of their age and association with the past. Most of them have not been used in many years. What should be done with them one has to ask?

A thorough overhauling of small linens, (purificators, corporals, fair linens, baptismal

and lavobo towels) unearthed many fragile linen pieces delicately embroidered with a variety of Christian symbols. As they are no longer able to withstand laundering, one is inclined to ask, Should they be kept? The quality of the embroidery is very fine and demonstrates skill only a few people still possess.

On the top shelf of the cupboard a box of black material was discovered. Likely material used to drape the cross on Good Friday or possibly it was used for funerals. Does anyone remember? Today at St. Paul's we set out white paraments with roses entwined around a cross for funerals and the cross on the communion table is undraped. Funerals are considered a celebration of life not a time for draping with black as in the Victorian era. On Good Friday the cross is removed from the communion table. No black draping is used although black draping is still used in many other churches.

Another box long hidden at the back of the same cabinet held a collection of white veils. How long since they had been used for confirmation? Tinker McKay says she wore one of them when she was confirmed but her daughter didn't. Did we decide veils are

no longer a reminder of the bridal relationship of Christ and the Church? Have current societal trends superseded the theological significance of the veil?

Lastly, in the process of organizing the cupboards several cruets were found. Simple as well as elegant, the vessels are no longer safe to use for water and wine, or one of a pair is missing. What should be done with them? As consecrated items it is not a matter of dropping them in a recycling box.

These relics, memorials from our past communication with God, deserve respect but need to be put to rest. Should they be archived, displayed, burned, buried, or in the case of the cruets, be deconsecrated and distributed to parishioners for use at home?

*Margaret Bateman Ellison,
Chancel Guild Director*



CHANCEL GUILD
A MINISTRY OF SERVICE

St. Paul's would like to extend a warm welcome
To our 2 new Honorary Appointments (since our last issue):

Musician-in-Residence Ian Bent (since the Fall of 2016)
Artist-in-Residence Nathan Little (since the Summer of 2017)



**Our Student Guides for this summer:
Bailey Bowden (left) and Katy Weatherly (right).**

Bailey Bowden

Hi again everyone! Remember me? My name is Bailey Bowden and I am so excited to be returning to St. Paul's for a third time as a guide for the summer. I previously worked here the summer of 2015 as well as the fall of 2014 and there is nowhere else I would rather spend my final summer as a student. I have recently graduated from Mount Saint Vincent University with a Public Relations degree and will be continuing my studies this fall at Nova Scotia Community College – Waterfront campus in Human Resource Management. I am honored to be welcomed back with so many smiles and can't wait to see what the summer has in store for me.

Bailey Bowden

Katy Weatherly

Hi, my name is Katy!
I just completed my third year at The University of King's College. I'm doing a combined honours in Early Modern Studies and Religious studies, with a minor in Art History. I'm particularly interested in religious art and the history of church buildings. I've worked at several historic sites in British Columbia and I'm looking forward to learning more about local history, here in Halifax, and at St. Paul's.

Katy Weatherly

St. Paul's Church, Halifax
Sunday Liturgies & Readings: Easter 5—Thanksgiving Sunday
14 May 2017—8 October 2017

14 May	Easter 5 <i>White</i>	10 am	Eucharist <i>BAS</i>	(<i>Mothers' Day</i>)
	<i>Acts 7.54-60</i>		<i>Psalm 31</i>	<i>I Peter 2.1-10</i>
				<i>John 14.1-14</i>
21 May	Easter 6 <i>White</i>	*9 am	Eucharist <i>BCP</i>	(<i>Downtown Bluenose Run</i>)
	<i>Acts 17.16-34</i>		<i>Psalm 66</i>	<i>I Peter 3. 13-22</i>
				<i>John 14.15-21</i>
28 May	Ascension Sunday <i>White</i>	10 am	Eucharist <i>BAS</i>	
	<i>Acts 1:1-11</i>		<i>Psalm 47</i>	<i>Ephesians 1.15-23</i>
				<i>Luke 24.44-53</i>
4 June	Pentecost <i>Red</i>	10 am	All-Ages Eucharist <i>BCP</i>	<i>Parish Lunch</i>
	<i>Acts 2.1-21</i>		<i>Psalm 104.25-35</i>	<i>I Corinthians 12.1-13</i>
				<i>John 20.19-23</i>
11 June	Trinity <i>White</i>	10 am	Eucharist <i>BAS</i>	<i>Sunday School Celebration</i>
	<i>Genesis 1.1-2.4a</i>		<i>Psalm 8</i>	<i>II Corinthians 13.11-13</i>
				<i>Matthew 28.16-20</i>
18 June	Pentecost 2 <i>Green</i>	10 am	Eucharist <i>BCP</i>	(<i>Father's Day</i>)
	<i>Genesis 18.1-15; 21.1-7</i>		<i>Psalm 116</i>	<i>Romans 5.1-8</i>
				<i>Matthew 9.35-10.15</i>
25 June	Pentecost 3 <i>Green</i>	10 am	Eucharist <i>BAS</i>	
	<i>Genesis 21.8-21</i>		<i>Psalm 86</i>	<i>Romans 6.1-11</i>
				<i>Matthew 10.24-39</i>
2 July	Pentecost 4 <i>Green</i>	10 am	Eucharist <i>BCP</i>	(<i>Canada Day Weekend</i>)
	<i>Genesis 22.1-14</i>		<i>Psalm 13</i>	<i>Romans 6.12-23</i>
				<i>Matthew 10.40-42</i>
9 July	Pentecost 5 <i>Green</i>	10 am	Eucharist <i>BAS</i>	
	<i>Genesis 24.34-67</i>		<i>Psalm 45</i>	<i>Romans 7.14-25</i>
				<i>Matthew 11.16-30</i>
16 July	Pentecost 6 <i>Green</i>	10 am	Eucharist <i>BCP</i>	
	<i>Genesis 25.19-34</i>		<i>Psalm 119.105-112</i>	<i>Romans 8.1-11</i>
				<i>Matthew 13.1-23</i>
23 July	Pentecost 7 <i>Green</i>	10 am	Eucharist <i>BAS</i>	
	<i>Genesis 28.10-19</i>		<i>Psalm 139</i>	<i>Romans 8.12-25</i>
				<i>Matthew 13.24-43</i>
30 July	Pentecost 8 <i>Green</i>	10 am	Eucharist <i>BCP</i>	
	<i>Genesis 29.15-28</i>		<i>Psalm 105.1-22</i>	<i>Romans 8.26-39</i>
				<i>Matthew 13.44-58</i>
6 August	Transfiguration <i>White</i>	10 am	Eucharist <i>BAS</i>	(<i>Natal Day Weekend</i>)
	<i>Daniel 7.1-18</i>		<i>Psalm 99</i>	<i>2 Peter 1.10-19</i>
				<i>Luke 9.23-36</i>
13 August	Pentecost 10 <i>Green</i>	10 am	Eucharist <i>BCP</i>	
	<i>Genesis 37.1-28</i>		<i>Psalm 105</i>	<i>Romans 10.5-15</i>
				<i>Matthew 14.22-33</i>
20 August	Pentecost 11 <i>Green</i>	10 am	Eucharist <i>BAS</i>	
	<i>Genesis 45.1-15</i>		<i>Psalm 133</i>	<i>Romans 11.1-2,17-36</i>
				<i>Matthew 15.21-28</i>
27 August	Pentecost 12 <i>Green</i>	10 am	Eucharist <i>BCP</i>	
	<i>Exodus 1.6-2.10</i>		<i>Psalm 124</i>	<i>Romans 12.1-8</i>
				<i>Matthew 16.13-20</i>
3 Sept.	Pentecost 13 <i>Green</i>	10 am	Eucharist <i>BAS</i>	(<i>Labour Day Weekend</i>)
	<i>Exodus 3.1-15</i>		<i>Psalm 105</i>	<i>Romans 12.9-2</i>
				<i>Matthew 16.21-28</i>
10 Sept.	Pentecost 14 <i>Green</i>	10 am	All-Ages Eucharist <i>BCP</i>	<i>W. B. Sunday & Parish Lunch</i>
	<i>Exodus 12.1-14</i>		<i>Psalm 149</i>	<i>Romans 13.8-14</i>
				<i>Matthew 18.15-20</i>
17 Sept.	Pentecost 15 <i>Green</i>	10 am	Eucharist <i>BAS</i>	
	<i>Exodus 14.19-31</i>		<i>Psalm 114</i>	<i>Romans 14.1-12</i>
				<i>Matthew 18.21-35</i>
24 Sept.	Pentecost 16 <i>Green</i>	10 am	Eucharist <i>BCP</i>	
	<i>Exodus 16.2-15</i>		<i>Psalm 105</i>	<i>Philippians 1.21-30</i>
				<i>Matthew 20.1-16</i>
1 Oct.	Pentecost 17 <i>Green</i>	10 am	Eucharist <i>BAS</i>	
	<i>Exodus 17.1-7</i>		<i>Psalm 78</i>	<i>Philippians 2.1-13</i>
				<i>Matthew 21.23-32</i>
8 Oct.	Thanksgiving <i>White</i>	10 am	All-Ages Eucharist <i>BCP</i>	(<i>Thanksgiving Day Weekend</i>)
	<i>Deuteronomy 26.1-11</i>		<i>Psalm 100</i>	<i>Philippians 4.1-9</i>
				<i>John 6.25-35</i>



St. Paul's Church
An Historic Church
Serving the Living God since 1749
Anglican Church of Canada
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Submissions to *St. Paul's Journal* are always welcome.

Why not submit a spiritual reflection, prayer, poem, or a book review?

The next issue of St. Paul's Journal will appear in the Epiphany 2018 Season. *Deadline for submissions: Monday, 8 January 2018.*