The HighWay

The Anglican Diocese of Kootenay Newspaper A Section of the Anglican Journal https://thehighway.anglicannews.ca/ December 2025

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Karen Brodie

"Christmas-2 "Given for You" Fibre Artist Karen Brodie

Diocese of Kootenay and the Territory of the People Clergy Conference 2025, Sorrento Centre.

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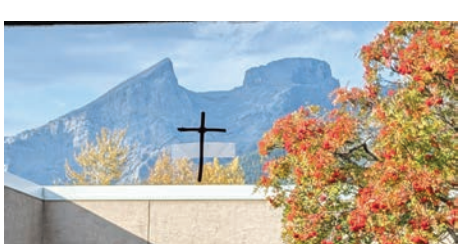

The Right Reverend Lynne McNaughton
is the tenth Bishop of the Diocese of Kootenay

A BLESSED ADVENT

One of the fragile antique decorations that came out of its careful wrapping the first Sunday of Advent in my childhood home was a holder for four tiny candles, the size of birthday cake candles. When they were lit they created enough heat that the rising air set spinning a delicate windmill of angels, whose turning rang lovely quiet chimes. It was a mystery to me as I had yet to study physics. I was enchanted! It was an image of God's Spirit setting things in motion and creating beauty.

Yes, a new one would cost me a mere $13.95 now, but I keep the slightly bent and tarnished one from my Mom. We keep to traditions of Advent, because they can rekindle an old hope. Hope and expectation! How do we enter into this season of hope and expectation when a sense of hopeful anticipation of God's future seems completely contrary to the news of the world?

I love the season of Advent. The familiar visions from scripture of Peace arising out of Social Justice. Of people streaming to receive instruction from God."They shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." Isaiah 2.

I love the Advent call to readiness, "Put on the armour of light."

The longing for the Son of Man to "decide with equity for the meek of the earth" (Isaiah 11) and yes, I confess how I want to hear in the next line that he will kill the wicked! Do I dare admit I long for this? Scripture gives voice to our need for fairness and retribution against those who create violence and injustice. Good thing scripture often repeats that vengeance belongs to God, not us! But I value that these sentiments keep my imagination thinking about a better day.

"The wolf shall live with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid, the calf and the lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall graze, their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's den. They will not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain; for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea."

Poetry, music, traditions, ritual, tiny lights glowing in the dark. I invite you to be creative with the scripture visions of Advent, to meditate on them, draw them, write a poem about them, let them deep into your soul to nurture hope.

What hymn gives voice to the hope within you, the hope that is a gift of God's Spirit?

What Advent ritual awakens your longing for a world that God has mended? What Advent tradition energizes you to hope again?

May this season draw you closer to God. May the light of Christ grow brighter for you this Advent to light your way through the darkness.

Yours in Christ,

+Lynne McNaughton

To the stirring tune "Jerusalem" the poet Carl Daw has set a hymn: O Day of Peace (#573 in Common Praise)

O day of peace that dimly shines
through all our hopes and prayers and dreams,
guide us to justice, truth, and love,
delivered from our selfish schemes.
May swords of hate fall from our hands,
our hearts from envy find release,
till by God's grace our warring world
shall see Christ's promised reign of peace.

Then shall the wolf dwell with the lamb,
nor shall the fierce devour the small;
as beasts and cattle calmly graze,
a little child shall lead them all.
Then enemies shall learn to love,
all creatures find their true accord;
the hope of peace shall be fulfilled,
for all the earth shall know the Lord.

■

The Right Rev Lynne McNaughton, and Rev Canon Austin Spry at the induction service for the Rev Juliet Thondhlana (below) St David's, Castlegar, Saturday, October 18, 2025. Photograph by Mellent and Jesse Davis.

Columns

Finding God in your Neighbour's Eyes

By Andrew Stephens-Rennie

Canon Andrew Stephens-Rennie is the Director of Missional Renewal for the Diocese of Kootenay

There's a reason I need Advent. I suck at waiting. I'm no good with patience. I'm the kind of person who, with my eye on the horizon, wants to be there rather than here. To dwell in this present moment, rather than keeping my eyes on the future takes practice. And to be honest, I'd rather not.

There are days like today that I look around and see the world as it is, the church as it is, and wish that we could be somewhere other than we are. There are days like today that I see the hunger and pain in peoples' eyes, the loneliness so many are experiencing – young, old, in between – and long for a solution. I long for the end of the struggle. I long for reprieve.

In my own life, there are so many things that I want to accomplish. Yet, for whatever reason, I have to be satisfied with the reality that these things are incomplete. Perhaps "satisfied" is a stretch. I'm not satisfied that the garage is not yet clean; the article is not yet written; the Christmas shopping is not yet done. I am coming to accept that these things are not yet done. But day by day, hour by hour, we move towards completion.

In Advent, my mind often turns to John the Baptist and his bold message, "repent for the Kingdom of Heaven is within our grasp." Repent, turn around. You are looking ahead for the next promise, the next big thing, that which will change everything. You're so focused on the horizon, the outside intervention that will fix everything you think is broken.

I think about John crying out in the wilderness, the people following him, looking at him for all the solutions to their woes. Was John going to lead the revolution? Was he going to restore God's people to whatever they thought their rightful place was going to be? John cries out in the wilderness amongst those who are looking for answers outside, and what does he say? "Repent. Turn around. Turn around and see that the Kingdom of Heaven is within our grasp."

Gathered there in the crowd, John reorients our gaze. He causes us to look inward. To look around the crowd. He tells us to slow down a little, to look one another in the eye. "The Kingdom of Heaven," he suggests, "is within our grasp." God works through great power, it is true, but more often than not, God works through people. Ordinary people doing extraordinary things with great love. God works through communities of people we can see, we can hear, we can touch. God works through communities of people committed to building the kind of world that God dreamed from the very beginning – a world of justice and joy, compassion and peace.

But how will we know what such a world, such a kingdom looks like?

Repent. Turn around. Look each other in the eye. Look each other in the eye, for in that moment of connection you will find, "shekinah," the dwelling place of the Lord. In that connection, you will see and be seen as you experience the mystery of the divine spark, the meeting of I and Thou. Look one another in the eye, and remember why you are here. You're here for each other. You're here for the love of others, for the love of God's good Creation.

Look each other in the eye. Breathe deeply of God's breath. Dwell in this moment, as the Lord dwells in you (as the Lord dwells in us) know that God's kingdom is here amongst us. Know that you are, and that you are becoming the heavenly city.

The cry of the prophet in the wilderness is a cry of repentance because I – because we – often forget how close God's kingdom is. We grieve the loss of how things were; all the while forgetting to stop, slow down, and to find God's very presence right here. And so this Advent, I am hearing John's call to repentance ever more clearly.

Stop. Turn around. Find God in your neighbour's eyes. And may they, when they look, find God dwelling deeply in you. ■

Editor's note: "Shekinah", Hebrew: "The indwelling presence of God in this world." Arthur Green, professor of Jewish thought at Brandeis University, USA.

The HighWay

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We acknowledge that the land on which we gather in the Diocese of Kootenay is the traditional unceded territory of the Syilx (Okanagan) Peoples, the Ktunaxa and Kinbasket Peoples, the Secwepemc (Shuswap) Peoples, and the Sinixt (Arrow Lakes) Peoples. We seek a new relationship with the first peoples here; one based on honour and respect, and we thank them for their hospitality. We pray that we may live more deeply into the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

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Columns

Her Name is Bonnie

By Andrea Brennan

The Reverend Canon
Andrea L. Brennan, Incumbent
Fernie Shared Ministry & Dean
of the East Kootenay Region

While she was outside, she fashioned a small cross and taped it to Bonnie's window. The cross was framed in the shadow of the Three Sisters mountain range.

On a beautiful autumn afternoon, I was at home, having just collected a friend from the airport in Cranbrook. We were discussing what we wanted to do with the rest of the day, a few days before Thanksgiving. In the midst of this conversation, my mobile phone rang and it was the local hospital. A patient had requested baptism, "it didn't matter what flavour."

After asking a few questions, I got changed, and asked my friend if she wanted to come along. We met at Huron College Seminary in London, Ontario, about 20 years ago. She was delighted to come along and assist with the baptism. Stopping at the Church I collected a stole, oil stock and vestry book as well as a baptism certificate. I had asked the hospital to please prepare a bowl, towel and some water.

We arrived and entered a sick room. The air was close, it felt dark and gloomy. I went into the room and spoke with one of the daughters and she introduced me to her mother. Her name is Bonnie. "Hello Bonnie, I'm Andrea," I said. "I understand you want to be baptised."

Weakly she replied, "I do." Gently, I asked, "Why do you want to be baptised?"

"Because I'm afraid if I'm not, God won't know who I am when I die."

My heart broke.

We had some conversation about how beautiful and wide God's love is. About how she has been loved into being from the very beginning and that God remains with her now. I told her I was honoured to baptise her and we would be following the ritual of the Anglican Church of Canada.

I then told her that the baptism wasn't her introduction to God, but rather it was a public declaration of God's love for her.

I invited the other people in the room, none of whom were religious, to please participate as they felt comfortable and if they wished only to listen, that was also appropriate. Then, I ignored everyone else in that room but Bonnie.

We moved through the presentation and examination of the candidates. When we got to the section of questions, Bonnie held my hand and earnestly repeated what I asked. The Prayers for the Candidates were said for her, and her only.

We used the first prayer of thanksgiving over the water. My friend held the bowl on the bed, as Bonnie was moved to a near seated position. My hand moved through the water, "through the waters of the Red Sea..." My hand made the sign of the cross "Now sanctify this water..." and together Bonnie, my friend and I prayed.

I then put the towel behind her and gently poured three handfuls of cool water onto her fevered head. "I baptise you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." Her forehead anointed with oil I prayed "I sign you with the cross, and mark you as Christ's own forever. Amen"

"Amen" she responded, smiling brightly.

I did not bring a candle as I was unsure if there would be oxygen in the room and didn't want to chance starting any fires in the hospital.

After the liturgical ritual was complete, I was invited to sit on the edge of Bonnie's bed. Her eyes shone greatly and her smile filled the room. "Thank you." she said, "Thank you so much."

We sat in contemplative silence, then I asked her, "Bonnie, are you afraid to die?"

"Not anymore" was her answer.

We spoke of life, of death, of coming to the end of one's life. She has been battling cancer for a few years, and soon, it will take her life. I greeted her family, each in turn with hugs and murmured words of support.

My friend and I left, feeling that we had witnessed something extraordinary.

When we entered Bonnie's room, it was dark and filled with fear. When we left it was bright and filled with love.

I left my mobile number with Bonnie's daughter's and headed home.

The following day my friend and I went back to the hospital to see how things were going. The atmosphere was incredibly bright. Bonnie was in bed, still weak, but had been outside in the sun.

An Indigenous friend had visited and took her outside to be smudged. She made an offering of tobacco on a tree that could be seen from Bonnie's hospital room. While she was outside, she fashioned a small cross and taped it to Bonnie's window. The cross was framed in the shadow of the Three Sisters mountain range.

Noticing my flat chest, Bonnie asked if I had cancer. I nodded that I did, and that it was found after the bilateral mastectomy in July. She asked if I was taking Tamoxifen and said she had taken it as well. She gave me some most excellent advice on how to manage the tiredness and other side effects.

She took my hands in hers and looked deep into my eyes. "You have to fight this, as hard as you can. Promise me." Through tears I nodded and smiled. "I will fight, I promise." Like Bonnie, I am not afraid.

"I'm so glad you came by, today," she said. "I was hoping to see you again."

I told her I'm out of town Saturday and Sunday, presiding at worship in Kimberley, and that I will check in again when I get home.

Bonnie is not going to live for much longer. And as she comes to the end of her earthly life, she has been resurrected as a child of God. A beloved child who, in the midst of darkness, chose light.

I expect I will be asked to preside at her funeral.

Bonnie is one year older than I am. She is battling breast cancer, as I am. And as I held her hand, looking into her eyes, I recognised a fellow warrior. Her previously fevered body was cool. Her dulled eyes had brightened. She was no longer afraid.

A chance phone call from the Elk Valley Hospital made it possible for me to meet Bonnie. A woman of incredibly strong faith, who, in front of her non-religious family, chose to be baptised into God's one, holy, catholic and apostolic church.

I spoke with her daughter before I left, and told her I'd be away, ensuring she has my phone number. "You know, none of us are religious and we were all kind of scared with Mum being close to dying. But after you came in and held her hand... after you poured water on her and said those prayers, something changed.

"Mum wasn't afraid anymore, and neither were any of us. I don't know what you did, and I thank you." I gave her a hug and replied, "God is great. We are all connected and whether you believe in this or not, God was present with us all. Not because of me, but because of God."

She nodded, smiled, hugged me goodbye and I said "I'll see you on Sunday."

God is great! ■

Columns

Lighten our Darkness

By David Burrows

The Reverend David Burrows is the Incumbent for the Parish of Kokanee: St Saviour's, Nelson, and St Marks, Kaslo.

This is the title of an Anglican prayer we say during both evening prayers and the service of Compline. I find it brings me peace and stillness as I shift from the busyness of daytime to the healing repose of nightfall.

This prayer invites God to enter into our space, to bring us protection and guidance as we slumber. I have prayed it so many times that the words often fall from my lips unthinkingly; my breathing shifts and life feels less complicated. I know this prayer so well that I confess I often reach the Amen without having fully absorbed every word I've spoken.

In Anglican and other faith traditions, morning and evening prayers serve as transitions or markers for people in a community, as we shift our focus from rest to awakening, and from activity to slumber.

The season of Autumn is, to me, rather like these prayers. We are shifting from a period of work, growth and abundance to the chill of winter. Nature slows down, then rests. Animals hibernate, trees drop their leaves and go dormant. Sunlight wanes in intensity and daylight is shorter during our waking hours.

The dying light and switch of the seasons bring gusty winds, first snowstorms and water transformed to hard ice. Some say it's not beautiful, and there's not much to celebrate. But I believe these are simply a series of changes that give us opportunity to look both backward and forward: reflecting on the past and observing our unfolding life.

The brilliance of sun sparkling on fresh winter snow will transform our landscape. Some of us can't wait for the white mantle to cover and hide the messiness of decaying autumn leaves. Perhaps like the prayer, we want to rush through to autumn's Amen so we can rejoice and revel in the beauty of winter?

Regardless of how we experience this season, it is very much a transitional time, and these often bring uncertainty and fear, as well as anticipation. We ask the same old questions:

- What will the winter bring?
- What's going to happen next?
- Will things be hard?
- What about Christmas and New Year?

We're not the only ones: I see the same themes explored in news headlines and community conversations, and they echo my own inner thoughts as my personal seasons of life slip by.

We mark this transition time through celebration. Early November sees the church and the community celebrating Scares, Saints and Souls. We remember and make light of fearful things. We honour those who have brightened the darkness with the light of their presence, and we give thanks for those souls who are no longer with us.

How do we mark and value transitions where there is uncertainty or fear? Some people find this a morbid or morose time. The reality of transition is the loss of what was, and it can suck us down into cycles of depression, lament, and even death.

However, transition for me suggests that the darkness is not overwhelming or all-consuming. Darkness shifts as we search for light. This is a time to seek the light within the darkness and between the chaos and tragedy of transition.

The words of two Canadian bards best sum this up for me:

Kick at the darkness till it bleeds daylight. — Bruce Cockburn

There is a crack, a crack in everything;

That's how the light gets in. — Leonard Cohen

I pray each evening to have the Holy One lighten my darkness. I am thankful that the light persists through my actions, and through God's presence.

■

Preparing for Christmas and the Great Os of Advent

By Norene Morrow

Norene Morrow is the music director at St George Anglican Church in West Kelowna.

Advent – It's that time of year when we prepare for Christ's birth with joyful anticipation and watchful waiting! We do this through the weekly lighting of the Advent candles; we see the seasonal blue colour in our church hangings; we note changes both in our liturgy and music.

Musically speaking, many congregations sing a special hymn (or verse) when lighting the Advent candles, which highlight the themes of hope, peace, joy and love over the four Sundays leading up to Christmas. Then, there are the hymns. In the secular world of shopping malls and concerts, Christmas carols are being sung long before December 24, but in the church we sing hymns about preparing the way of the Lord, prophesies of Christ's coming, and the visitation of an angel to the Virgin Mary.

Liturgically and musically and we omit the Gloria. Often, it is replaced by the Kyrie (Lord, have mercy) or Trisagion (Holy God, Holy and Mighty). In a sense, this omission builds up our anticipation to the moment when we can once again sing it with even greater joy on Christmas Eve. We also include the saying or singing of the Magnificat or Canticle of Mary. (My soul magnifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God, my saviour). This might be in the form of a chant or a hymn paraphrase such as Tell Out My Soul (CP 362), My Soul Proclaims Your Glory, Lord (CP 363), or Heavenly Message (CP 269).

A popular plainsong-like hymn that we sing during Advent is O Come, O Come Emmanuel (CP89). The text is based on the O antiphons used in the Roman Catholic Church during Vespers (aka Evening Prayer in the Anglican Church) along with the Magnificat, from December 17-23. Here, "antiphons" mean short prayers — not to be confused with antiphonal singing, which is when one group sings a phrase and the other responds.

Drawn from the prophet Isaiah, these antiphons are sometimes called the Great Os of Advent. Each one begins with the word "O," calling out the seven titles given to Jesus, one for each day of the week. In Latin they are:

Dec. 17 - Sapientia (Wisdom)

Dec. 18 - Adonai (Lord)

Dec. 19 - Radix Jesse (Root or Rod of Jesse)

Dec. 20 - Clavis (Key, as in Key of David)

Dec, 21 - Oriens (Radiant Dawn or Dayspring)

Dec. 22 - Rex Gentium (King of the Nations)

Dec. 23 - Emmanuel (God with Us)

If you arrange these Latin titles backwards, beginning with Emmanuel, the first letter of each one spells out Ero cras, an acrostic which translates as "Tomorrow, I will be (there)" or "Tomorrow, I will come." When I first learned about this, I immediately went straight to my hymn book to check the verses. Sure enough, the seven antiphon titles were there, but not in that order. Even so, knowing this gives me a greater appreciation of the hymn and somehow makes my preparation for Christmas feel even more special. To me, Advent is just as exciting as Christmas Eve. There are so many great hymns to sing while we wait. Some of my favourites are People Look East (CP91), O Come, Divine Messiah (CP95), Comfort, Comfort Ye My People (CP100), and Prepare the Way O Zion (CP102). What will you do or sing as you wait? How will Advent be special for you?

■

Columns

The Liturgical Art of Karen Brodie

By Nandy Heule

Nandy Heule is a visual artist and writer based in Ottawa, Ontario, where she attends Trinity Anglican Church. She met Karen Brodie in 2015 when visiting her daughter who lived in Golden, B.C. at the time.
http://www.nandyheule.ca

Over a decade in the making, Anglican fibre artist Karen Brodie of Golden, British Columbia, expects all 14 liturgical worship banners she designed to finally be completed and debut in an exhibition starting January 2026.

"I didn't want my designs to be sitting in a box," says Brodie. However, delays during the pandemic and budget constrains halted work on her Stations of the Cross project. A recent $5,000 grant from the Anglican Foundation of Canada and a fundraising campaign is now breathing new life into the massive undertaking. Brodie has been able to hire a studio assistant, buy fabric and supplies, and free much of her own time for a year. She is hard at work to complete the project for a show at the Il Musea Gallery at the Italian Cultural Centre in Vancouver.

The Stations of the Cross, a long Christian tradition, depict up to 14 events during Holy Week. They include images such as Christ carrying the cross or being laid in the tomb. Brodie's Stations are a contemporary interpretation of this tradition. After the Vancouver exhibition, the artist anticipates the show will tour to other locations, including churches throughout Canada.

Karen Brodie, liturgical fibre artist from Golden, B.C., at work in her studio.

"The artist in me decided to make the banners more complicated," quips Brodie about her work. She has started working out to manage back pain and be physically able to sew the large pieces. She uses a 17-year-old sewing machine and does all the sewing herself. Brodie worships at St. Paul's Anglican in the East Kootenay Region. Her works hang in churches and other buildings across North America and beyond.

Each Station of the Cross banner is guided by a reflection written by a diverse group of clergy. Many of the designs feature the figure of Jesus plus his cross. Although thoroughly modern, her work is immediately recognizable as liturgical art used to enrich worship. It is impeccably executed in rich colour palettes and a variety of fabrics.

Angela Clarke, curator of the Vancouver exhibition, says in a statement that the liturgical banners "seek to engage the viewer in a contemplative practice." She adds, "Brodie's Stations of the Cross is a non-denominational focused meditation, which all of us, regardless of our spiritual background and beliefs can participate in."

After completing her sketches for the Stations of the Cross in 2015, Brodie showed the designs and shared the clergy meditations at different churches around B.C.'s interior and the Anglican Diocese of Kootenay.

After hosting Brodie's work at St. Andrew's Anglican in Kelowna B.C., Incumbent Rev. Canon Anne Privett says the sketches for the banners, executed in water colour, provided a fantastic devotional practice for her congregation. "Her work is a treasure," says Privett. She adds that Brodie's sense of vocation as an artist and the time she spends in prayer as she creates her designs are impressive.

Brodie says, "I wasn't just waiting, I was actively praying and anticipating a future" which would see the banners executed in fabric appliqué.

After finishing a degree in fashion design in Surrey, B.C., Brodie, in her early twenties at the time, made her first banner for a church in Vancouver where she worked in youth ministry. It helped her launch her career as a full-time, internationally recognized fabric artist. Orders for her liturgical stoles and other artworks to support worship are generally booked far in advance.

Readers can learn more about The Stations of the Cross project, the ongoing fundraising campaign and exhibition details by visiting www.thestationsofthecross.ca

Exhibition details:

Sacred Journeys, An Artistic Meditation by textile artist Karen Brodie
Italian Cultural Centre Gallery, Vancouver, (3075 Slocan Street)
22 January – April 6, 2026
Curator Angela Clarke, Ph.D.

■

Title: Station of the Cross Banner #9 Fabric Appliqué

Title: Station of the Cross Banner #9 Fabric Appliqué (Detail)

Columns

Anglican Church in Canada

Part 3 of 5: Expansion West and North

By Dan Prysunka

The Expansion Westward and Northward of the Anglican Church, based on the book "Our Heritage," circa 1946, by Reverend R.J. Pierce.

Fort Douglas in Rupert's Land, now Manitoba, was founded by Thomas Douglas in 1812. Now known as Winnipeg, it was also known as the Red River colony or Assiniboia. The livelihood of English and Scottish settlers was uncertain, and conditions were harsh. The Hudson Bay Company (HBC) offered no regular spiritual services anywhere in the territory for those who served them.

In 1820, John West became the first Chaplin in Western Canada. In Fort Douglas, he established a school. Shortly afterwards, the first Church building in Western Canada was built. West travelled as far north as Fort Churchill, where he preached to the Inuit people. It was not long before help arrived, enabling local converts to learn how to share their beliefs within their own communities. One of his first converts was a native boy he named after a fellow clergy person, Henry Budd. Born in 1812, Henry became the first North American native ordained as an Anglican priest.

Expansion throughout the west was conducted by the extremely ambitious Bishop Machray (1831-1904), who was appointed Bishop of Rupert's Land in 1865. And in 1893, Machray unanimously became the first Primate of Canada. Machray believed the church must be self-supporting, produce its own clergy, and administer its own affairs. His first action was to introduce a weekly collection at church services.

Winnipeg would be his chief centre, and he reorganized St. John's College as well as the Cathedral. Along with a strong group of clergy, their first duty was to transform the Cathedral into the centre of Church life. He was instrumental in improving the music of the Church in the West. Then he sent clergy as missionaries to the isolated settlements throughout Manitoba and Saskatchewan. In addition, they were to teach in his college and train the future clergy of the West.

In 1880, an enormous flow of organized immigration began, and the self-supporting Church under Machray was ready. The city of Dauphin also had a self-supporting church within four years, and this was typical of the speed of development in the 1880s. Western Bishops admirably justified their appointment — Bompas in the north, Horden in Moosonee, Anson in Saskatchewan, whose first service was in Regina, under a "canvas hotel." Bishop John Maclean's missionary work with the Indigenous people would travel at times, a thousand miles by dog team, to cover Northern Saskatchewan. Maclean suffered a fatal accident in 1886 while traveling by wagon. He lay delirious in Edmonton for three weeks without attention; then he lay on a mattress in an open boat for eighteen days, returning by river to Prince Albert, to die in fever eighteen days after he reached home. Maclean established Emmanuel College in Prince Albert to train native clergy. It was one of his greatest accomplishments.

By the turn of the century, Bishop Pinkham and his clergy were labouring with tremendous devotion among the Indigenous Peoples and settlers in southern Alberta. The mission began in Calgary two years after the settlement started, and within three to four months the Church of the Redeemer had opened, to become in three years the centre of a self-supporting parish, and in four years the Cathedral Church of the Diocese that stands to this day.

Bishops, clergy, and indigenous lay people played significant roles in promoting Christianity and contributed to the conversion of individuals during the eighty years discussed in this article.

The next article covers the rest of Northwestern Canada (the Prairies). Alberta and Saskatchewan would not become provinces of Canada until 1905. ■

Editor's note: We acknowledge the harm that was done as a result of colonization during the period covered by this article.

How Big is a Box?

By Marcella Mugford

The Rev Marcella Mugford is a member of the Spiritual Development Committee

"Box of apples" by pavlovji pixabay

In October, I offered to pick some windfall apples for a friend. She enthusiastically responded, "Yes, please, one box will be lots." I agreed to do this, but I needed more information. In my mind a box of apples is about 30 pounds – a standard apple box size when I was picking apples many years ago. I doubted that she wanted 30 pounds of apples, as she lives alone in a condo. How big is her box?

In Advent, our imaginations may focus on the gifts we will give and what size boxes we will need.

I think we all try to put God in a box, a box of our own creation. This box is just the right size for God to fit into comfortably – not too big and not too small. We create this box when we think we understand the limits of God. Here are some examples.

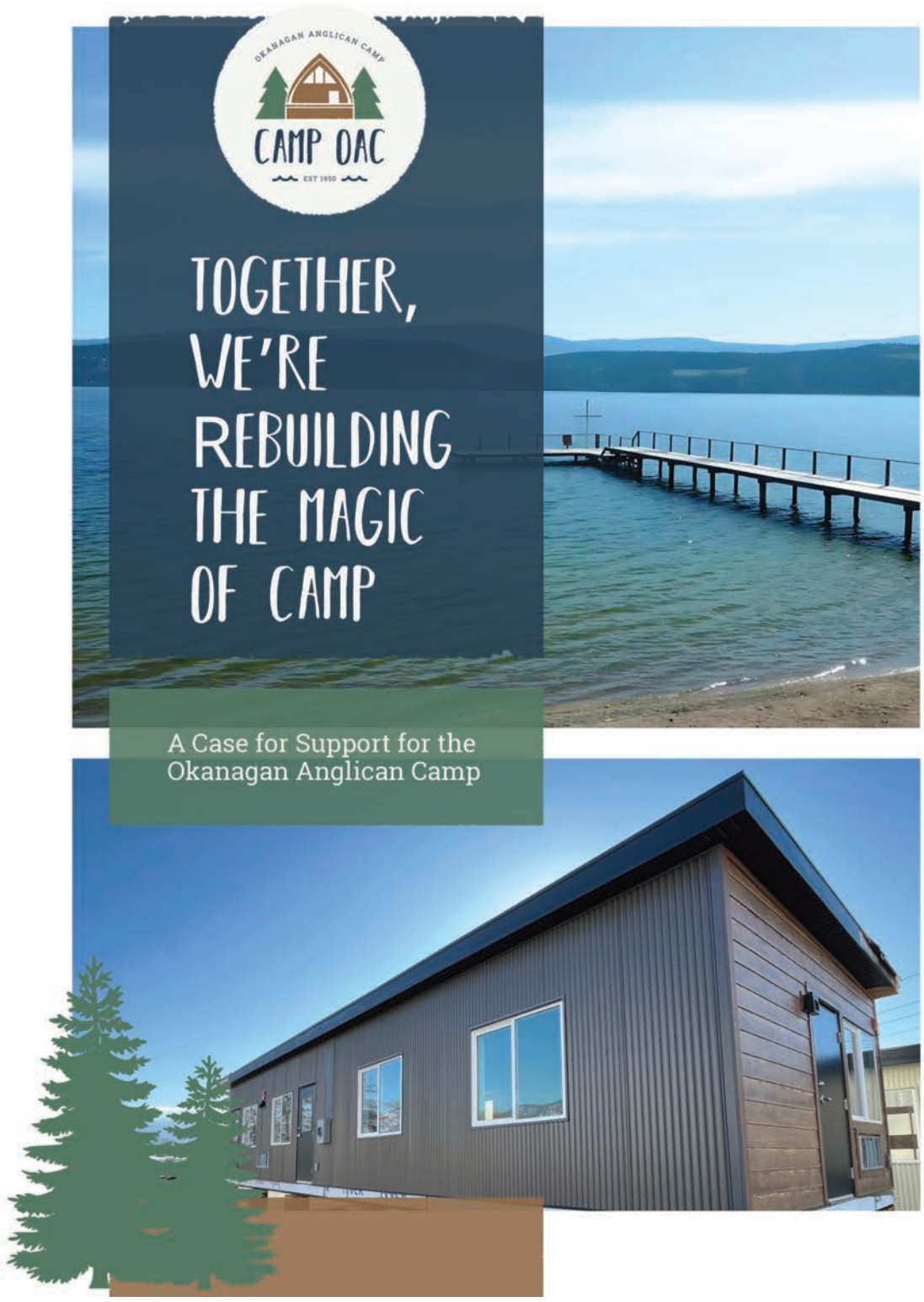
- God rewards good behaviour and punishes bad behaviour. Those who are punished must have done something that displeases God. (bad Karma?)
- God has made people with white skin superior to those with darker skin. Therefore, white people are entitled to more wealth, education, etc.
- People with a different sexual orientation are sinners.
- Only Christians are loved and forgiven by God.
- All good Christians must receive communion every week.
- God loves my favourite hockey team more than other teams.
- God prefers classical music to this modern stuff.
- God favours English over other languages
- God is male.

Etc.

We create boxes that fit a God we are comfortable with. A God that fits our limits. A God who looks like us, who supports us, who does what we want God to do. Each of us has a particular size and shape of box to reflect the size of God we put into our boxes. I think institutions, including our Church, have built boxes for God; boxes matching rules, policies and teachings that define our relationship with God.

Funny thing about God – She/He does not like boxes. The Creator of the world contained in the body of a human infant? The Creator of the world hanging on a cross? The Creator of the world blowing through the whole world, like wind, like tongues of fire? What size box can contain this God?

Advent may be a good time to ask God to show us the boxes, the rules, traditions, teachings, and assumptions that are getting in the way of our seeing God's truth more clearly. May we have a clearer, broader view of what God asks us to do each day, one day at a time. May we have a deeper experience of God's love for every person, for all created beings, and for ourselves. May we allow God to break down the walls of the boxes we have created. ■



In his letter to the supporters of the Okanagan Anglican Camp (OAC), Ian Dixon said: For more than 75 years, OAC has been a place where children discover who they are — away from screens and expectations, and fully immersed in the joy of nature, play, and belonging. But in August 2023, when the McDougall Creek wildfire swept through the Okanagan, it destroyed 95% of the camp's structure. More than the buildings, it disrupted powerful moments of connection for the children, youth, and families gathering here for generations.

Despite the devastation that turned decades of memories to ash, our story didn't end there. The hope for OAC's return has remained, and together, we are re-imagining what our camp can become. We envision a camp where children will have the space, freedom and chance to belong, explore, and lead.

Together with the Diocese of Kootenay, we're launching a Planning Feasibility Study to listen, learn, and plan wisely as we move toward rebuilding a place where kids can be kids — outside, connected, and free.

REBUILDING OAC
THE NEED IS GROWING

1. Wait lists for camp sessions were increasing before the fire.
2. Rental demand consistency grew, with peak-season vacancy days dropping to just 8 days.
3. Shoulder-season programming (spring/fall) was expanding and is a key goal of the rebuild, particularly for school groups and community rentals.
4. Demand for a kid's summer program is increasing, and the camp is intentionally rebuilding with universal design principles to create safer, more welcoming spaces for all.

PHASE ONE: IMMEDIATE RENEWAL

The first phase focuses on restoring the core camp area and essential infrastructure control for year-round usage — everything needed to reopen OAC in time for the 2026 season. This includes:

- New cabin complexes with indoor washrooms, accessible and gender-inclusive design, and climate control for year-round use.
- A lakefront dining hall with seating for 150+, panoramic views, and an allergy-safe kitchen.
- A staff residence for 28 people, allowing for seasonal and retreat accommodations
- Medical and bathroom buildings with upgraded hygiene, treatment, and accessibility features.
- A rebuild Wingsong Gazebo, dock, sports areas, and multipurpose flex space.
- Infrastructure systems for water, septic, power, and Internet.
- A security gate and surveillance system to protect the site during and after construction.

All new buildings are modular, energy-efficient, and designed to minimize environmental and archaeological disturbance — many will sit on helical pile foundations, reducing ground impact.

PHASE TWO AND THREE

Future phases (introduced in 2027-2035 once Phase 1 is underway) will add camper capacity, program areas, and rental flexibility.

- Third and fourth cabin complexes, increasing overnight capacity to 192.
- A new rope course and relocated archery range.
- New staff cabins to accommodate international or seasonal team members.
- A second dock and fully enclosed waterfront swim zone.
- A new entrance road to improve traffic flow and emergency access.

Each phase is designed to scale OAC's mission while protecting what makes it special.

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

Funds committed to date	$2,600,000
Phase One Funding Gap	$2,203,000
Phase Two and Three	$1,750,000
TOTAL	**$6,5553,000**

Camp Director Ian Dixon said, "We're not just rebuilding what was lost. We're creating a camp that welcomes everyone — with safer, more inclusive spaces that honour the land and serve future generations."

Make a Donation of support:

https://www.campoac.com/pages/donations--48

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