

# The Highway

THE ANGLICAN DIOCESE OF KOOTENAY NEWSPAPER A SECTION OF THE ANGLICAN JOURNAL <https://thehighway.anglicannews.ca/> JANUARY 2026

## A SEASON OF EPIPHANIES



*The Right Rev Dr Lynne McNaughton with Ruth Simpson, the retiring Alongside Hope Diocesan Coordinator and Will Postma, Alongside Hope Executive Director.*



*Prayer by Arnie Bragg Pixabay*

*The Right Rev. Dr. Lynne McNaughton at St Mary's, Kettle Valley. The Rev. Canon Austin Spry is behind Bishop Lynne. He is the priest of Boundary Parish, which is Holy Trinity Grandforks and St. Mary's Kettle Valley. (Austin is also Regional Dean of West Kootenay). On the left of the picture is the Rev. Cathy Straume, non-stipendiary priest of Boundary Parish. Bishop Lynne said, "We had a lovely dinner after the eucharist. We also basked in the warmth of their brand new furnace!"*



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The Right Reverend Dr. Lynne McNaughton, the tenth Bishop of the Diocese of Kootenay conducting the Special Synod via Zoom

# Special Synod Report 2025

By John Lavender, Editor

The Special Session of Synod 2025 took place via Zoom on November 15 from the Cathedral of St Michael and All Angels, Kelowna, with 60 participants (lay and clergy delegates plus guests). Commencing with a worship service presided over by The Right Rev Dr. Lynne McNaughton, Bishop of the Diocese of Kootenay. The theme of this Special Synod was the same as the previous year.

Bishop Lynne began by welcoming a new parish “Churches of the Transfiguration in the Southwest Kootenays,” which contains St Andrew’s Trail; St John the Evangelist, Fruitvale; St Paul, Salmo; St David’s, Castlegar; St Stephen, New Denver; Christ Church, Creston.

Worship: Morning Prayer for Ordinary Time starting with Psalm 133

Reading: “Let us hold fast to the confession of our hope without wavering, for the One who has promised is faithful. And let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds ...encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching.” Hebrews 10:23-25

Hymn: “Let Us Build a House”  
Bishop’s Charge:

The Bishop’s Charge was followed by a video message from The Most Rev Shane Parker Primate of Canada.

This was followed by a report from the Resolutions Committee being received and discussed by the delegates. (Chris Parsons)

Kootenay Fair Share (KFS) was presented and discussed by the delegates. (Chris Harwood-Jones)

During discussion it was pointed out that KFS is not a canon and will go before the Diocesan Council for final approval.

To clarify KFS: approximately 15 % of a parish’s “defined Congregational Income” goes to the diocese.

Regarding Shared Ministries, as the revised percentage of the KSF for Ecumenical Shared Ministries is given to both judicatories, they only give half of their KFS to the Diocese. Voted on and carried.

In response to the discussion, Bishop Lynne said, “We’re not in the business of closing congregations.”

The Financial Report and the Budget was given by the Treasurer, Shelia Nelson.

After lunch, Synod continued with a prayer and the hymn, “Live

in the Light.”

A presentation on “Thriving Communities and Structure Working Group” was conducted by Andrew Stephens-Rennie.

A presentation on “Rebuilding Camp OAC” was given by Ian Dixon.

A motion that the position of Director of Missional Renewal be a full-time position was discussed and passed by the delegates.

Canon 2: changes to Synod Protocols were discussed and passed.

Canon 10.2: concerning approval for erecting buildings on church properties were discussed and passed.

Canon 12: updates to regulations concerning cemeteries, columbaria, and scattering gardens were discussed and passed.

Canon 17: revised to bring the policies concerning “Ecumenical Shared Ministry” and “Shared Ministry Covenant” inline with current practices. The canon was discussed and passed.

Closing Worship and the Bishop’s Blessing concluded this Special Session of Synod.

Thanks be to God!





By Andrew  
Stephens-Rennie

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

At the end of November I travelled to Mississauga in order to facilitate a series of restructuring conversations for the Council of General Synod. The itinerary was straightforward. Fly from Castlegar to Vancouver, wait an hour, and board my connection to Toronto. Arrive in Toronto, pick up bags, go to the hotel, sleep. After a week of meetings, return home in the same way. The only thing wrong was that my plan depended on the Castlegar airport refusing to live up to its reputation. What happened instead held the promise of a decent movie script. A modern adaptation of Planes, Trains, and Automobiles, perhaps. On the day of the flight, the friend taking me to the airport forgot. I engaged a backup plan and made it to the airport in time. The clouds lifted,

the plane landed, the angels sang. A voice, as if from the heavens, implored us to hurry through security. Perhaps we would leave early! I hurried through. I sat down. I waited, and I waited, and I waited. Everything appeared to be fine until another voice spoke over the PA: “Due to mechanical issues, this flight is cancelled.” So began a day of travel woes that brought me to Kelowna by bus, Vancouver by plane, and a late-night red-eye to Toronto. My return home had an equal share of unexpected twists and turns. On the second day of my trip home, my flight was cancelled yet again. Through shared annoyance at our circumstances, another delayed passenger told me about “I Like Me,” a recent documentary about John Candy. It turns out I wasn’t the only one with Planes, Trains, and Automobiles on my mind. I downloaded it to watch on the inevitable bus ride home. The film, by turns funny and serious, was a beautiful tribute to Candy’s work and the person behind it all. It highlighted the comedian’s rise through Second City and SCTV towards the world of feature films. The parties. The limelight. His care and compassion, his empathy for others. Throughout it all, an undercurrent of pain.

The film’s throughline—the recurring theme—was Candy’s restless search for God-knows-what. Towards the end of the film, reflecting on Candy’s struggles, fellow actor Don Lake remarks, “I remember thinking how he was trying to find home.” Johnny Toronto was unflappable, larger than life. But behind the scenes, John Candy was anxious, at times deeply afraid. The film brought to light his contradictions, his hurts, his hopes. As I watched the film on a tiny screen in the back of the bus, I thought of my own contradictions. On the road between Kelowna and Rock Creek, I reflected on my own quest to find a way home. Home to Rossland, yes. But also home to myself. I thought of the way in which I hear others describe me. I thought of my own restlessness. I thought about my own quest to resolve the disconnects, and heal the divisions that exist within my very self. I thought of my own journey towards what Parker Palmer calls “a hidden wholeness,” as elusive as it can sometimes be. I thought about these things, and I was reminded about how I—how we—cannot do life on our own. We need each other. I thought about the Magi on their own ancient near Eastern Planes, Trains, and Automobiles journey. In the biblical account, we follow their journey until the moment they encounter the

child and his star. We get a sense of the winding they will take, but we don’t think much more about their journey home. Like John Candy’s character Del, they haven’t been home in years. They’re left with their thoughts. They’re left with their questions. They’re left with unresolved tensions, and the need to make sense of it all. In some sense, we’re all left to find our way home. The baby doesn’t stay small forever. The star doesn’t always shine so bright. The moment is world-changing. The moment passes. We’re left with the memories, with each other, and the journey ahead. We’re left with the opportunity to create new memories. To make new connections. To pay attention to the pillars of cloud and the pillars of fire God has placed in the sky. We’re left with stories of the way things were, not so we can dwell there, but so that we can remember that God has been there all along—all along the way. The journey of this year is before us. As we embark on this adventure, may we remember that God has been present, is present now, and will be with us even til the very end of the age.

# The HighWay



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## Column

## Her Name is Bonnie – Part 2



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.*

In my previous article, I wrote about Bonnie, a woman who was baptised in hospital; another breast cancer warrior. When I wrote the last article, I knew that Bonnie's time in this life would be short. This article tells the story of her death.

When I last saw Bonnie, she was in a hospital room with a willow cross taped to a window. Dappled sun glistened in the window and it was a beautiful day. I was unable to see Bonnie the following day as I had a commitment to be at Church out of town, and asked if I could visit her when I returned to Fernie.

"Of course," she said, "I look forward to seeing you."

My plan was to be with her by 4:00 pm on Sunday October 12, Thanksgiving Sunday.

Saturday afternoon I drove with my friend to Kimberley, BC to Kimberley Shared Ministry. Nancy had never visited Kimberley before so she and I enjoyed an afternoon of wandering around the Platzl, steeling ourselves against the brisk autumn wind.

We checked into our hotel for the night and enjoyed a quiet evening chatting, laughing and catching up with one another. Nancy lives in Ontario and we don't get to see each other as often as we'd like. When I was diagnosed with cancer, she decided she needed to see me in person, and so she flew from London, Ontario to Cranbrook, BC to see, with her own eyes, that I'm okay.

The next morning we went for a drive and then arrived at Kimberley Shared Ministry where we enjoyed a full house, wonderful music, shared in Communion and celebrated God's grace. Instead of the sermon I had prepared, I preached Bonnie's story. When I got to the part where she placed her hand on my chest and asked if I had cancer, some members of the congregation gasped... they were not aware that I had been diagnosed with cancer.

Following worship and a time of hospitality, Nancy and I drove back to Fernie through some snow showers. It was a typical Thanksgiving drive, lovely trees changing colour, a bit of snow and low cloud, nearly obscuring the mountains.

When we got back to the flat, Nancy insisted we both needed to rest and so we did, she in her room, and I in mine. Just before 3:00 pm, I roused from a

nap and decided I needed to go to the hospital. Nancy decided to stay behind.

I got to the hospital just after 3:00 pm. I went to the Nurse's station and learned that Bonnie had been transferred to the palliative suite, which is a lovely, open, bright, airy room with space for families to gather. She had changed into a bright yellow long sleeved pajama top and matching white, yellow and green pajama pants. She looked well, and happy.

"Hello!" I said as I entered the room. "Happy Thanksgiving!"

"Happy thanksgiving to you!" she replied. "Today is a good day!"

"I am so glad to hear that," I said. "What makes today such a good day?" I asked.

"Today is the day I die" she said, eyes shining.

Her face was scanning mine carefully, searching for my reaction.

"Congratulations!" I said. And I meant it.

She explained that the day she had been baptised, she was told that she had qualified for MAiD, Medical Assistance in Death. She had made an application eight excruciating months earlier. Receiving permission a couple of hours after her baptism on the Thursday had seemed poetic and heaven-sent.

I asked why she hadn't told me before, and she said it didn't seem right after the last conversation we'd had, where she'd named my cancer. We sat quietly for a few minutes, looking deeply into each other's eyes. Here was my sister in Christ, battling the same disease as I am, of similar age, and staring bravely into the end of her earthly life.

Those of you who know me know I am the farthest thing from subtle. I asked if she had decided when this would happen and she told me, "today at 4:00 pm." The clock showed 3:20 pm.

I asked if I could be present, and she said she wanted that.

I asked if I could be involved in her memorial service, and she said she wanted that.

I asked if she knew when the memorial service would be, and she said that it would be in the Spring as she wanted a red maple tree planted in her memory.

I spent the next fifteen minutes

speaking with each of her daughters and her husband, assuring them of my support and guiding what happens next.

The MAiD physician came into the room just before 4:00 pm with a document he needed Bonnie to read and sign. She signed the document, the second such document since she had learned her wish for MAiD had been granted. He explained the procedure, the length of time it would take and what to expect next.

He asked if there were any questions and one of her grandsons asked when would we know she'd got to heaven.

He pointed to me and said, "Ask them!"

The room laughed and I uncovered a tattoo I have on my right forearm. It is of a dandelion, the puffy white kind, with scattered petals and the words "spirit, breath, and wind" etched.

The Hebrew word Ruah is also present and I explained the ancient belief that when a person is born they receive their "Ruah", their spirit, breath or wind, their essence or soul, if you wish.

We each have a unique self which remains with us through our earthly lives. When we come to the end of our life, we will exhale for the last time and our Ruah returns to the lifeforce from whence it came. There was a comfortable silence when I finished speaking and the grandson nodded at me.

The MAiD doctor came back into the room a few minutes later with seven vials of medicine which would be used to bring about Bonnie's death. He asked her, one final time, if this was what she wished to happen. She said, in a clear and strong voice, "Yes it is." It struck me suddenly that when a couple are married by banns, the questions are asked three times. Here was a woman who had asked to end her suffering and was being asked to answer the question three times. It seemed to me to be both poetic and beautiful.

Someone was trying to play an awful version of Amazing Grace on their phone which kept glitching. After attempting this three times, I cleared my voice and started to sing Amazing Grace, a capella. Those who knew it joined in and we sang it through twice.

As we sang, the MAiD doctor diligently went about his work. He

was methodical in administering the medicines, the nurse by his side dutifully recording each vial of medicine used. An uneasy silence fell across the room as we waited for the doctor to finish his task.

Suddenly I was moved to sing the song of Simeon. A beautiful, ancient hymn often sung as a casket is being led to its final resting place. I have sung this hymn hundreds of times, most commonly at gravesides, yet also in hospitals and at bedsides. "As it was in the beginning, is now and every shall be, world without end. Amen."

As the finishing strains of the hymn ended, the MAiD doc finished his last vial of medicine and we sat in silence. He placed the stethoscope in his ears, and placed it against Bonnie's chest. He nodded. She was gone. Peacefully. In a most dignified way. Her earthly journey is over, her suffering ended.

In eighteen years of ordained ministry, I have been present at the bedside of many, many deaths. I worked as a volunteer for six years in palliative care, long before I took holy orders. Every death is sacred. Not every death is gentle or dignified. Bonnie's death was beautiful.

I was honoured to be part of her new life in Christ through her baptism.

I was so honoured to be part of her transition from this life to the next through her death.

It will be my absolute honour to gather with her family in the Spring to remember her. There will be laughter, tears, scripture, singing, reflections, and not a single piece of black clothing in sight. Rainbow tie-dye for me!

By the grace of God, I met a remarkable woman who reflected the light of Christ to me. We bonded over the waters of baptism, held hands through promises made and kept. We knew each other for four days, and she will remain part of my heart for the rest of my earthly life.

In eighteen years of ordained ministry, I have never had an experience as profound as this one. Bonnie is my soul sister, a warrior and I look forward to seeing her again. In the next life.

Rest in peace Bonnie, may your memory always be a blessing.



By Catherine Ripley

Catherine Ripley belongs to the Spiritual Development Committee, which encourages people to grow ever deeper in relationship with God and to pray. As people across the Diocese pray, the ministries of the church will flourish! Amen.

How can I best pray for the people of my faith community? Periodically in the early morning quiet (or on a walk in the woods) I bring the faithful to mind one by one. Most people sit in the same place each Sunday, and so I imagine the faithful in their spots and lift them up to God. It is harder for me to pray for those on our congregational list who rarely or never come to church — or for those who God is bringing into our faith community and have yet to arrive — as I cannot “see” them clearly, but I do my best.

Praying in this way suits me. And a year ago, I discovered that it also suits

the primary way I live out my faith. But does it suit those I am praying for? This question arose for me when Kimberley Shared Ministry studied The Theological Banquet, a five-week video/study course created by The Reverend Dr. Janet Gear of the United Church. We wanted to more deeply understand “difference” in our shared ministry congregation as we continued to work at becoming “one in Christ,” and the course did exactly that. It helped a small group of us look at difference through the lens of how people actually live out their faith, not through denominational or doctrinal differences.

Dr. Gear suggests there are five main ways people live out or express their faith: 1) Through sharing Jesus (evangelical), 2) through building up the church from age to age (ecclesial), 3) through helping others (missional), 4) through working for justice and peace (ecumenical), and 5) through seeking the sacred in the world (spiritual). Of course, each of us lives out all of these expressions of Christianity to greater or lesser degrees, but Gear’s research shows we usually reflect one primary way of expressing our faith. Aha! Our study group exclaimed as we thought about ourselves, others, and even ourselves

collectively as a congregation through these various perspectives.

And surprise, surprise, not everyone lives out their faith like me! This brings me back to my original question: how can I best pray for the people in my faith community? First, can I “see” how each person lives out his/her/their faith as I lift them up to the Holy One? And second, if so, is God asking me to stretch my preferred way of praying to honour the differences God has placed in them? Do I need to bring my prayers out of the early morning quiet or the woods, out from the Prayers of the People on a Sunday morning, to see prayer in a broader way? For example, could prayer for someone who is primarily missional be helping in delivering groceries to someone in need? And/or could prayer be the writing of a letter on a justice issue as requested by a person who is advocating for justice? And so on.

How can I best pray for others?  
How do you pray for others?  
For further information on The Theological Banquet course:  
<https://leadershiftuccan.org/the-theological-banquet>  
Also read “Undivided Love” by Janet Gear.

**A Prayer**

*Creator God, thank you for the rich variety of people You call into our communities of faith. Thank you for...*

*The messengers — who love to spread the Word and share Jesus with all.*

*The servants — who volunteer, care for and build up your church.*

*The neighbours — who care for those around them.*

*The partners — who join with You to bring peace, justice, reconciliation to the world*

*The pilgrims — who seek the sacred in the ordinary.*

*Bless us all however we live out our faith. Give us grace to understand that we are all valued and needed and beloved by You. Grant us wisdom to encourage each other and learn from our differences. In Your gift of multi-faceted diversity may we become one in Your love. In Jesus’s name, we pray. Amen.*



By Norene Morrow

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

One of my favourite quotes goes like this: “What I hear, I forget. What I see, I remember. What I do, I understand.” If one applies this to scripture reading in church it couldn’t be truer. When we hear The Word being read, how many of us actually remember it? With regard to seeing it, back in 2024, I wrote two articles on the subject — “Speak So They Will Listen” and “Making Sense of Scripture Readings.” Both had to do with the preparation process and some tips about how to apply it. Reading about it, however, is one thing. We may remember some of what has been read, but how can one possibly understand it unless it is put it

into practice? Even then, doing something doesn’t immediately bring about understanding. It must be practiced... a lot.

If I may digress momentarily, it has been proven that in order to become proficient at any task, repetition is necessary to create what we call muscle memory. Consistent practice strengthens neural pathways, making movements more efficient and requiring less conscious effort over time. Therefore, the muscle memory is actually more a procedural exercise that allows for skills like playing an instrument, typing, or riding a bike to become second nature. I certainly know this from my years of studies in singing and speech arts, as well as my recent training in Taekwondo. Since I take a seniors’ class I am not likely to be doing any high flying kicks or sparring in my lifetime, but I am gaining skills in balance, coordination, and self defense. Although it been has almost 18 months since I began my training I am only now really noticing an improvement in these skills.

You may wonder how this applies to reading aloud. If we go back to the idea of strengthening neural pathways, reading in front of a group requires us to engrain concepts and procedures in our brain that allows our reading to be effective, engaging, and even dynamic. And, there is a muscular component that is part of reading aloud, too. In addition to being an engaging storyteller, the words and phrases must flow easily. When they don’t, it is a clear sign to me that the reader hasn’t put in the practice time required. Many times I have heard stilted reading, stumbles, mispronunciations, and phrases that don’t make sense. All of these are indicators that the reader has not given their brain time to process the text and rehearse the physical aspects.

My point: In February I will be offering an in-person workshop where individuals can have the opportunity to practice these skills. If you are someone who currently reads at church, would like to be a reader, or are just interested in learning about the process, then this

experience is for you! Participants can expect to learn some preparation and presentation techniques for the various types of readings, learn about vocal production and proper microphone use, participate in small group work and present a reading for feedback. This will be a “doing” workshop in the hopes that it will result in more engagement with your listeners and perhaps even make your presentation of the text unforgettable. To paraphrase Paul’s letter to Timothy, “Give attention to the public reading of scripture, to exhorting, to teaching... Don’t neglect the gift that is in you... Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching, for in doing this you will save both yourself and your hearers.”

The date of this free workshop is Saturday, February 7 from 10:00 am-2:30 pm at St. George Anglican Church in West Kelowna. To register or for more details, please contact me at [nmorrow@telus.net](mailto:nmorrow@telus.net) or call (250) 979-8418.

# It’s All in the Doing A Reader’s Workshop





By David Burrows

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

As 2026 begins to unfold and the vestiges of Christmas recede into the past, much of the world is considering what this new calendar year will bring. What opportunities for discovery, for growth, for peace and security will become apparent? What risks and concerns will present themselves? How will life unfold in family, in faith, community, in society?

Here in Kokanee Parish in the Kootenays there seems to be much excitement and exuberance. This past year we have charted a course that has given new life and energy in older systems, while supporting and

“Unfolding and....Unwrapping”

# Epiphanies

Epiphany by chenspec pixabay

engaging new ministries in partnerships beyond the faith community. Our liturgical expression and pastoral presence has not diminished in the parish, even as our outreach through food security programmes and partnerships within the wider community continues to blossom.

In this I always feel challenged. How does a community hold on to treasured practices while exploring new possibilities, without one or the other suffering? Each community does have limited resources, and I fear at times that combined financial precarity and diminishing congregant numbers can elevate burnout, increase resistance to change, and create bastions of inflexibility as parishes struggle to hold on to present or past, afraid of future.

I have seen lots of creativity and possibility of the future in many different places within the church, much that involves structural and systemic change. I welcome these conversations as they invite me to consider how I believe, what shapes my expression of ministry, and whether I continue to be faithful to Christ as revealed in this Anglican expression in which I live.

Yes, I welcome the dialogue, but

it’s the journey that grates me. In many ways I have become a slave to change and innovation in my 30 years of working within the church. I have explored so many different models of ministry, some of which have been successful, others have been struggles to implement and headaches to endure. I feel as if I have been continually ‘building the boat,’ ‘constructing the plane’ without ever truly sailing or flying.

Perhaps this is an admission that I haven’t been fully content and settled in my faith. I’ve seen gaps in liturgy, in pastoral ministry, in outreach and advocacy throughout the church. I’ve lamented my struggles and those of others. At times I have been very critical of what we have to share, and how we conduct ourselves in parochial, diocesan, and national matters through our Anglican identity.

Over the years, in the spaces of intentional time, weekly sabbath, retreat, and extended separation from the system I have found perspectives that seem only recently to be bubbling up in my consciousness. This is the struggle of ministry, of faith. We are constantly growing and learning. There has to be struggle and chal-

lenge for growth to occur. We have to be dissatisfied in order to question and evoke change. We are wrapped in incarnation, in resurrection. Our life, as the life of the world, is both now and not yet. We are continually evolving as we unfold and unwrap, not presents, not a new year, but ever growing epiphanies of the Holy One, of ourselves, and of the communities in which we serve.

This is not foreign to our ancestors. I believe the disciples, the early church, the monastics, reformers, the founding families in our parishes, as well as our grandparents and parents all had to struggle with what it is to love God, to try to faithfully journey as people of faith while facing the struggles of their time.

I pray that I will not lose hope nor be dismayed as this season of Epiphany unfolds. I pray I remain present to the joys and challenges before me, instead of unduly dwelling on the past or pondering far off into the future. The angst is real, but the presence of love in the image of God present in those I serve is that deeper than the fear I hold.



## Alongside Hope

### Alongside Hope at St. Andrew’s, Kelowna

Thank you to Dean David Tiessen for sharing this photo from the Nov.14 gathering at St. Andrew’s Kelowna with Will Postma, the Alongside Hope Executive Director. It was also an opportunity to thank Ruth Simpson who recently resigned as Diocesan Coordinator for Alongside Hope.





History



# The Anglican Church in Canada

## Parts 4 and 5: The Distant West

By Dan Prysunka



Map of Canada ACC by Wikipedia

I will conclude the History of the Anglican Church in Canada with the remaining story of the expansion of Northwestern Canada (Prairies) and the Distant West from the book “Our Heritage,” circa 1946 by The Reverend R. J. Pierce.

### Northwestern Canada (Prairies)

Up until World War One, immigration and the consequent growth of the Church continued steadily as the prairies filled. Unfortunately, WWI caused a grievous setback. Parishes quickly weakened or failed. However, there was a revival of life in new areas, notably in the North. The Diocese of Athabasca in 1874, in what would become Alberta in 1905, saw a great revival due to a great influx of farm families who would grow the grains and build the livestock of cattle, which Canada ships worldwide today.

After WWI, the “Soldier Settlement Board” brought in large numbers of farmers. Life was tough because they lacked farming experience, but they were devoted churchgoers who travelled long distances to attend services. A supply of clergy to minister to them was not wanting. One of them, Hugh Lambertton, gave his life for Christ and his people, dying as the result of exposure on the trail while visiting in his parish of Ft. Vermilion.

The drought in the south brought in another tremendous wave of new settlers in the thirties. Church people

moved from Qu’Appelle, Saskatoon, Calgary, and Edmonton Dioceses, from Montana and even Texas. Soon, more churches grew, and fresh missions began as the Church extended its influence into the community— even when it meant clergy had to spend a week traveling to connect with distant groups.

The rapid establishment of northern towns such as MacMurray, Yellowknife, and Goldfields followed the discovery of gold. Clergy moved following the influx of miners.

The Bishop added the airplane, train, and car, to the wagon, the riverboat and horse as his means of transportation.

A new world war came again in 1939. The laymen and clergy of our Church went with the troops. The weaker missions closed, parishes amalgamated, retired clergy came out of retirement, young people’s groups disbanded. The Lay Readers and women workers helped splendidly, but even so the Church line could not hold, as the “Perfectionist” sects were quick to seize their opportunity. A great increase in the number of clergy and in resources in the Church was required. The Bishops of the West were now striving to fill their rural parishes and

provide for the spiritual needs of their country parishioners.

### The Heritage in the Most Distant West

Thanks to the generosity of an Englishwoman in 1859, the first Diocese of British Columbia was created by royal decree, with Bishop George Hills as its first bishop. It originally encompassed all of British Columbia. On Vancouver Island at the time, Victoria held a cosmopolitan population of 1500.

They were adventurous days for new settlers. For one farmer and churchman, outside of Victoria, recently arrived in Saanich, it was a day’s rough journey from Victoria to the new Parish of Saanich by wagon. Bishop Hills was taken captive by indigenous people and held for several months, until the Royal Navy ultimately rescued him.

Natives and Europeans worked hand in hand. On Vancouver Island, the first missionary arrived and travelled widely to locate the Indian settlements. The Church in Nanaimo was surrounded by simple wooded houses among stumps and mud, as well as nearby Indigenous villages where violent conflicts were frequent. Initially, the indigenous population had a complete disregard for the religion preached by the missionaries. When asked, a Roman Catholic priest said he had no success with the local natives. The theft of his blankets at night proved to be the last straw and this priest was about to leave.

Gold was found along the Fraser River and in the Cariboo region, and churches were established from Hope up to the Quesnel River. Over time, new dioceses were formed as the population grew, leading to the establishment of dioceses like New Westminster (1879), Caledonia (1879), and eventually the creation of the Ecclesiastical Province of British

Columbia and Yukon in 1914. The original diocese is now known as the Diocese of Islands and Inlets, and covers only Vancouver Island and the adjacent Gulf Islands. The Diocese of Cariboo was dissolved and reconstituted as the Territory of the People.

By 1900 great hardships were being endured in remote areas. The Reverend Sheldon lost his life when his canoe capsized while he was visiting sick parishioners. He was both their doctor and their clergyman. Perhaps no one showed greater devotion through this period than Mrs. Ridley, wife of the Bishop of Caledonia. On one occasion a clergyman lost heart because of hardships on the Skeena River. Without notice he returned to England. No one else was available. Mrs. Ridley made a fifteen-day journey to their location, taking a year’s supply and sleeping on the snow at night, she acted as Christian minister to the miners and the natives for a full year, living in complete isolation.

The foundations were laid in the far West up to the mid 1940s. The cities and towns of B.C., including Victoria, Vancouver, Kelowna, and Kamloops were as busy as those in the East. Churches began to flourish and reached their peak in attendance by the 1960s.

Today, we see a much different picture, with a decline in church growth. We have new challenges to overcome than our predecessors.

In closing, I wish to thank all the authors who contributed to the book “Our Heritage.” I cannot stress enough how hard all the people mentioned in the book worked to build their churches, homes and communities with the greatest of obstacles surrounding them.

Shall we be less devoted in the 21st century to our Lord than those who built our heritage across this great country.

May we find new ways and apply new energies to rebuild our Anglican community again.



Holy Trinity, Yellow Knife , Northwest Territories.



History



By Katherine Lockhart

The rich relationship between the Diocese of Kootenay Archives and the UBCO Indigenous Studies program continues. Following the introductory “Knowledge Sharing Event” held in December 2023 at the Cathedral; where students shared their research about the Diocese of Kootenay’s support for the Residential School system, a second event was held in January 2025.

This event featured two talks exploring what has been learned from this research, and connecting the dots to the wider history of the residential schools. Dr. Alanaise Ferguson discussed, “How your archive became active reconciliation and what we learned.” Dr. Evan Habkirk addressed, “From the national to the local: What we were told about the national residential school project.” The event was well-attended and there was a substantial question-and-answer session following the talks. All these public events form part of our ongoing concern to embrace the TRC’s Calls to Action, and provide unique opportunities for the university and the church to come together.

It was then decided to hold a national webinar in June 2025 entitled “Moving Toward Reconciliation: National Conversations about Local Reconciliation,” featuring Drs. Ferguson and Habkirk from UBCO, Dr. Wendy Fletcher, Dr. Alan Hayes, Eric Mitchell (a residential school survivor) and his daughter, Vanessa Mitchell, from the Syilx First Nation as respondents, and myself. Dr. Fletcher and I addressed the role of women in the Anglican Church and specifically the role of the WA in the residential schools. Dr. Hayes’ topic was “Popularizing Anglican Residential Schools: T.B.R. Westgate Tries to Change the Story.”

Other work accomplished since the last Diocesan Synod report:

**Accessions:** 29 accessions of documents from various parishes.

**Vital Record searches:** 32 inquiries from the general public about baptisms, confirmations, marriages and burials. There was also an inquiry about some cremains abandoned at the Nelson funeral home since 2007, and a search for a deceased baby with no first name.

**Photos:** 264 photos were accessed (mostly digital)

Much time spent “working on mysteries without any clues” (to quote Bob Seeger) “to figure out who, what, where, when and sometimes why, photos are lacking metadata.”

**Internal research requests:** 71 (for Diocesan committees and churches)

- Researched the status of our cemeteries and columbaria
- Researched historic property sales and disbursement of funds
- Researched church attendance stats from 1911-2020
- Researched land titles and architectural drawings
- Researched dates when all our church buildings were constructed

**External research requests:** 20 (for the general public)

- UBCO professor researching histories of Kootenay churches (ongoing)
- Princeton Museum inquiry about St. Cuthbert’s, Princeton
- Haney Museum, Salmon Arm about mystery priest in church photo
- Inquiry from Armstrong-Enderby Branch of Okanagan Historical Society re: the church and parsonage in Lansdowne.

A woman wanted to know about the church in Stanley. I assumed she meant Stanley, BC but she was actually referring to Stanley, Falkland Islands! She forgot to mention that little detail. I researched it anyway.

A professor at the University of Gothenburg, Sweden inquired about The Rt. Rev. Hugh Embling who served in New Denver in 1946. I was able to email him some information, but I could not find an obituary. He is buried in New Denver, but there is no acknowledgement of his death in the Nelson Daily News where he was mentioned in dozens of articles.

A parishioner at St. Fin Barr’s Cathedral, Cork City, Ireland wanted to know about The Rev. Colquhoun of Elko and Newgate (Gateway). In her archives, she had found a letter from Rev. Colquhoun thanking the dean of the Cathedral for sending a communion set.

Someone inquired about The Rev. (Captain) Thomas Lloyd Rimmer ordained 1931 at Revelstoke.

He assisted the researcher’s father who had fallen off a CPR train in Revelstoke and severed both his arms just below the elbow. Rev. Rimmer petitioned the federal government to allow his father to stay in Canada as the government wanted to deport him back to the Netherlands.

My researcher from last year still cannot determine if St. Peter’s, Windermere was actually “stolen” from Donald, BC and taken to Windermere, or was given to him with permission by the Bishop. Stay tuned for more developments.

**Backups**

Completed the backup of all Vital Records (Baptisms, Confirmations, Marriages, Burials)

Scanned all Executive/Diocesan Council and Administration Committee minutes from 1925 to present.

Work in process: Searchable Highway index of all articles and photos from 2001-2017 (1956-2000 issues have already been done). When this project has been completed, my goal is to have scanned copies of all the editions.

**Writing**

- Wrote four short obituaries for priests for the Kootenay Contact
- Wrote brief histories of New Denver and Kaslo for the Bishop
- Wrote 5000 word essay “Weighed and Found Wanting: The Women’s Auxiliary of the Diocese of Kootenay and the Indian Residential Schools” for the June webinar with UBCO.

**Ephemera**

Provided churches with various items including a travel communion kit, green altar frontal, linens, burse & veil, and brass candlesticks.

**Professional Development**

I plan to attend by Zoom the “Conference of Anglican Archivists” Nov 21-22, 2025 to be held in Toronto.

At the end of April, Bishop Lynne brought me two boxes of material from various Kokanee Parish churches. After

sorting and filing everything, I was left with a file of baptism certificates and marriage licenses from the 1920s and 1930s. I checked my Vital Record database, and all the baptisms had been duly recorded in their respective books here in the archives.

But only a quarter of the marriages had been recorded (of course, it is possible for people to acquire a marriage license and then not carry through with the ceremony!) So I checked the genealogy records at the Royal BC Museum, and these people had, indeed, gotten married, but the marriage register books were missing, so I printed out the government register pages, added everyone to my Vital Record database, and filed the loose pages in the appropriate boxes.

One of the names on a marriage license caught my eye because it was so long: John Whitworth Frederick Aylmer, 9th Baron Aylmer<sup>1</sup>, who married Gertrude Emma Black at St. Francis-in-the-Woods, Queen’s Bay. John Whitworth Frederick Aylmer, 9th Baron, was born in Ontario. The family moved to Kaslo, then to Queen’s Bay, where the 1921 Census lists him as a labourer on his father’s orchard or ranch. My hypothesis is that though the family was titled, they were not rich so they came to Canada seeking better opportunities. Incidentally, John’s wife, Gertrude Black, had a father who was fairly well off.

<sup>1</sup>The Aylmer Baronetcy, of Balrath in the County of Meath, was created on November 6, 1662 in the Baronetage of Ireland. The family seat was Donadea Castle, near Donadea, County Kildare. The 5th Baron was Governor General of British North America from 1830-1835. The 7th Baron was born in the UK and had moved to Quebec by 1841, listed first as a farmer and later as a gentleman.



Donadea Castle, County Kildare, Ireland