

# The Highway

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

## WHOLEHEARTED WORSHIP



*Facsimile "Book of Kells" reproduced by Verlag Abbey of Kells —  
Trinity College Library, Dublin Ireland photoWikipedia. See page 6.*



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# Wholehearted Worship

By The Right Reverend Dr Lynne McNaughton

What is the most important part of worship for you?

What engages you most? Where do you most lose yourself and your pre-occupations, stress, worries?

What fills you with Joy? Where do you experience a sense of God’s close presence?

Where are you most able to focus on God, to be “lost in wonder, love and praise”? (from the beloved hymn Love Divine, all Loves Excelling by Charles Wesley)

One of our Diocesan values which we named at Synod 2023 was “whole-hearted worship”! This year, 2026, we will highlight this value in the life of Kootenay Diocese. I love this phrase “whole-hearted worship” because it describes the worship in every community across the Diocese. As your bishop I have had the privilege of preaching and presiding in each worshipping community, parish, house church, or ecumenical shared ministry, across the glorious mountain ranges, lakes, farmland and vineyards that grace Kootenay. Each community has unique worship, faithful to our common tradition yet locally adapted to the context, space, time, gifts and preferences of that particular gathering of people. The beauty of the word “whole-hearted” is that it encompasses both a full choral Christmas eucharist in the Cathedral and a lay-lead morning prayer with five people gathered in a circle of chairs in a tiny chapel. And everything in between. A choir or pre-recorded music, unaccompanied simple voices, solos, pipe organ, guitar, flute, recorder, accordion. In a living room, on a farm, on a mountain top, in a historic wood-framed church, in a contemporary sanctuary.

What makes it “whole-hearted”? Authenticity is crucial; worship that comes from this particular group of people offering their gifts to create what fits for them. Not trying to copy what used to work, or what fits for someone else’s expectations. That means there has to be honest conversation within each worshipping community, experimentation and adapting, accommodation to what is available, courageous leadership, generous offering of skill and ability and time and preparation. Genuine good humour, laughter, perspective. Realistic expectations and appreciation of the offerings of others. Love, in other words! The spiritual grace to see Christ in each offering of worship.

Because people have different “tastes” about worship, “Whole-hearted worship “ means each community has to have careful listening to the needs of each member. The conversation needs to be about shared values of worship to discover common ground. For example, “variety of music” is a value which allows people to accommodate different tastes and to balance beloved old hymns with new offerings. Values we share Include: reverence and mystery, participation of the whole people of God, community building, taking scripture seriously, beauty and simplicity, silence,

good order balanced with space for spontaneity, familiar words balanced with creativity and fresh language, joyful but allowing a grieving person space for tears and lament, physical movement, use of our bodies, multi-sensory, intellectually satisfying but not all in our heads, satisfying to our emotions but not sentimental, prayerful, focused on God not ourselves.

I am writing this imagining that everyone has been offended by something in this list! What would you add? How would your community have a conversation about these values?

Even if we agreed on all these values, we might express them in different ways.

I have been to worship that was not at all to my “tastes” yet I still sensed the presence of God. I have been to worship rich in the things I valued and yet felt it was stilted or inauthentic, or that I wasn’t in an inner space to enter into worship. “Whole-hearted worship” asks me to leave my critic at home and enter in and focus on God, to allow praise of God to yield my whole Self to God.

One of my liturgy professors said a key question to ask of worship is “Does it tell the truth about our lives?”

I look forward to hearing from you about how “Whole-hearted worship” is expressed and experienced in your community.

“Worship the Lord in the Beauty of Holiness” Ps. 29



## Sacred Spaces in Kootenay







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.

Also See Page 7  
**Where will I be?**  
by Andrew Stephens-Rennie

# The HighWay



A section of the Anglican Journal for the Diocese of Kootenay

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Report

By Sue Kershaw

# Refugee Sponsorship Conference

On November 3, 2025, Alongside Hope hosted its annual day-long Refugee Network Meeting in Toronto prior to the three-day National Sponsorship Agreement Holder (SAH) Conference. Refugee coordinators from ten dioceses across Canada met in person – Islands & Inlets, Kootenay, Qu’Appelle, Rupert’s Land, Huron, Niagara, Toronto, Ottawa, Ontario, and NS & PEI – coordinators from the Diocese of Calgary and Action Refugees Montreal joined us online.

Our day together as Anglicans always reinforces our sense of “togetherness” and sets the tone for the following three days of the SAH Conference. It means that we always have someone to sit with at larger meetings and people to join for dinner at nearby restaurants.

This sense of belonging is also valuable in other ways. I am the lone staff member for our diocese. Being able to seek on-the-spot advice from others in the group and hearing their concerns and successes is both satisfying and encouraging. Knowing these people well enough that I can reach out to them in the coming months is also helpful. Finally, understanding the benefits and constraints of belonging to an Anglican diocese and especially sharing a deep commitment to the blessed Trinity is both gratifying and inspiring.

- Some statistics...
- In 2024, 14 of 15 Anglican SAHs in Canada welcomed 707 people into their communities. By



Refugee Network meeting Toronto, November 2025

November 2025, those SAHs had welcomed another 382 newcomers. While private money funds the start-up and monthly costs of resettling refugees in Canada, IRCC (Immigration, Refugees, Citizenship Canada) staffs the offices in Ottawa and overseas which scrutinize each application. IRCC announced a 20% reduction in its funding in November 2024 and an even more severe cut of 54% in November 2025 thus impacting the level of staffing that is available to process applications. We saw an obvious slump in the processing in 2025, and we fear what might happen in 2026.

- The federal government has also reduced the “global cap,” that is, the number of applications that each of

the 143 Canadian SAHs can submit – from 13,500 in 2024 to 10,800 in 2025, and now to 5000 in 2026. The 14 Anglican SAHs submitted applications for 632 refugees in 2025 but only 467 people in 2025. Obviously, there will be a significant drop in 2026.

The slow-down in processing mentioned above has the Anglican SAHs and all other SAHs holding their communal breath these days because Afghan refugees in Pakistan are facing imminent deportation back to Afghanistan. As of mid-2025, at least three million Afghans had fled to Pakistan after the Taliban re-took the Afghan government in 2021. In October 2023, the Pakistan Government started deporting Afghans when reduced global aid to the United Na-

tions led to increased pressure on Pakistan to manage its large Afghan refugee population on its own. Nowadays, the Pakistani government demands that landlords evict Afghan renters, and police teams are picking up Afghan refugees off the streets and going door-to-door to detain and deport many others – often at night. We receive daily pleas for help from our own applications and many other refugees.

Individual SAHs and the Canadian Government can do little, if anything, to protect our applications in Pakistan and elsewhere. It is very heart-wrenching when all we can offer is moral support, but at least our applicants have a chance to come to Canada, “God willing” or “Inshallah” as the Muslims say.



By David Tiessen

The Very Reverend David Tiessen is the Dean of the Cathedral Church of St Michael & All Angels, Kelowna, Diocese of Kootenay

“Rent-a-Stranger” is not a headline easily passed over; it caught my eye back in 2022 in The Washington Post. The article spoke of the generally accepted practice in Japan and South Korea of hiring a stranger as company/companion to attend certain social functions as a matter of saving face/observing social expectations for public events. Interesting enough, but

then it went on to focus on a person named Shoji Morimoto. Morimoto, after losing some jobs for ‘doing nothing,’ realized that ‘doing nothing’ had the potential to become a genuine occupation.

So Morimoto started offering himself as a ‘rental person.’ He became available for hire for an hourly fee, for the simple purpose of accompanying, as a stranger, those who hire him. He promises to ‘do nothing’ while he does this job. That means his main point is to be present, to be ‘there,’ but not to offer advice or direction. He will be a listening ear, but he will only offer basic verbal affirmations in response, solely to indicate that he is hearing what the person is saying.

Some have hired him to sit near them while finishing a thesis or a letter-writing project; others have needed someone to simply listen to them talk through difficult or painful things without offering advice; others simply want another human nearby.

Since starting this work, more has come to light about Morimoto’s background, particularly through his recently published memoir: Rental Person Who Does Nothing: A Memoir. In this memoir, Morimoto notes the difference between a person who is valued for what they can do, what they contribute, versus what it means to be valued simply for who they are. In his own life he has experienced first-hand loss based on this difference, and this informs his work of accompaniment. Morimoto comments that “he has learned not to judge others, and to have empathy for people who may be going through deep personal challenges but aren’t showing it” (Lee and Inuma, “Rent-a- Stranger,” Washington Post, 2022). “Doing Nothing” thus becomes connected to simply “Being There.”

In spiritual terms, this speaks to the value of presence. It goes against the grain of so much of what we assume in daily operations about what matters most about ourselves and about our

perception of others through the lense of accomplishment. And I think it speaks to the importance of the character of the church in our times.

Back in 1906 Albert Schweitzer published “The Quest of the Historical Jesus,” exploring Jesus as an apocalyptic figure whose teaching cannot easily be lifted from that historical context and plunked down in the present – simply because Jesus’ teaching carried the radical anticipation of the end of the world/apocalyptic judgement. Notwithstanding that take on Jesus as a singular reading in itself, Schweitzer’s work ruptured scholarly confidence in the quest for the historical Jesus to that point, and New Testament scholarship had to find new paths of inquiry in the wake of Schweitzer’s work. But the point that seems to me to stand out is precisely that there is a rupture, a not-easy-to-cross distance to bridge the gap between one world and another, one life and another, and this gap very much matters as the space in which Christ operates.

Schweitzer’s book concluded with these well-known words: “He comes to

Continued on page 8



Columns



By Kristy Arndt

*Kristy Arndt 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.*

The month of February brings us the observance of two intense activities: the Winter Olympics and the beginning of the season of Lent. Each of these activities requires focus, commitment, and the support of a wider community to achieve success for the participants. Olympic athletes give themselves over to wholehearted commitment and focus for their sport. They train with other people to keep them motivated and accountable. These athletes prepare by training their bodies and their minds;



*Lev means “HEART” in Hebrew.*

surrounding themselves with people who help them to grow and excel in their field. They work in groups and individually to keep their minds and bodies in peak performance mode. We might want to think of ourselves as elite athletes as we prepare for our Lenten marathon.

As faithful Christians we embrace the season of Lent as our “spring training camp,” a time to develop our spiritual skills. As a diocese we are being encouraged to raise-up wholehearted worship as the foundation of our spiritual lives. We join together with our communities to worship together; sharing in prayer, singing and the breaking of bread and in the reading of scripture and discerning its meaning for us. We sustain one another, encourage one another and challenge one another to grow in love, service and commitment.

We are called to embrace wholehearted worship as the foundation of

our faith-filled training but what exactly do we mean? We can look to scripture to help us understand. The Hebrew word for heart is “lev” which refers to the physical heart but also to the place where the mind, our will and desires reside. It is often translated as ‘mind’ or ‘inner self’ as it is a complex intertwining of emotion, thought, being and self understanding. Being wholehearted implies that our whole self; our minds, our hearts and our bodies are engaged in the worship and service of our God. St. Paul himself compares the strengthening of our spiritual lives to that of athletes in competition. He encourages Christians to hold fast, to be disciplined and focused on the prize of everlasting life (1 Corinthians 9:24-27).

Perhaps as we enter our Lenten “training camp” we can commit ourselves to increasing our spiritual conditioning through the experience of wholehearted worship. In this way, God transforms

us and our lives into a living offering to those around us. We enact wholehearted worship by engaging our minds, bodies, hearts and souls in this work. This sustains us and encourages us to go into the world and to transform all that we do into acts of worship and service to others. We worship both communally and on our own. We study and pray together and individually but it is that sense of team camaraderie that helps provide the basis to pursue the work of Jesus: service, self-sacrifice and love of neighbour.

As you enjoy watching these Olympic games, allow the wholehearted commitment of the athletes to encourage your own Lenten commitments to develop your spiritual skills. Allow the cheering of the crowds for the athletes to encourage your pursuit of wholehearted worship and spiritual growth also.



By Norene Morrow

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

Over the years, after having had conversations with various individuals at church I realized that the average person in the pew may not be as aware or understanding of the seasons of the church year. This led me to write a column about the “Season of Ordinary Time” last June and the “Season of Advent” in November. As we head into the month of February, I now add one more installment — the “Season of Lent.”

Like Advent, Lent is a season of preparation. Unlike Advent it has a more solemn tone that focuses on prayer, repentance, self denial, and soul-searching. The colour for this season is purple and it lasts

for forty days, excluding Sundays. These forty days mirror Jesus’ forty days of fasting and temptation in the desert before he began his public ministry. It also signifies spiritual testing and preparation found in such stories as those of Noah, Moses, Elijah, and Nineveh. So, like Jesus, we go on a journey. It is a journey of discovery with the guidance of our scripture readings based on the cycle of the church year. The Anglican Church, along with other denominations, follows a three year cycle that provides a systematic way to read through much of the Bible, ensuring the Old Testament, Psalms, and Epistles are covered alongside the Gospels. Each new cycle begins on the first Sunday of Advent and is designated as year A, B, or C. The primary gospel focus in Year A is Matthew, Year B is Mark (and John) and Year C is Luke. Currently, we are in Year A. This coming Lent you can expect to hear scripture readings that include stories of Adam and Eve, Abraham, the Temptation of Jesus, the Miracle at Mount Horeb, the Anointment of David, the Blind Man at Siloam’s Pool, the Valley of Dry Bones, and the Raising of Lazarus. Liturgically speaking, like Advent, the singing or saying of the Gloria and any Alleluias will

disappear. Musically, the tone takes on a more solemn character. We may sing more hymns that are written in minor keys and depending on your congregation’s musical repertoire, there may be more plainsong melodies, mantra-like chants, canticles, penitential hymns, and those with deep theological texts. Before continuing, I must put in a plug for chants from the Taizé Community. (See the Authors, Composers, Sources index at the back of your hymnal.) I love these because they are simple, short, and can be embellished with instruments. If used properly, they are very effective in creating a meditative environment. The best way to do this is to allow the chant to be repeated over and over without having a predetermined stopping point. This allows time for the words and music to become one with your soul. A good time to sing these chants is during communion.

With regard to hymn singing, worship leaders shouldn’t restrict themselves only to those hymns in the Lent section. This becomes very limiting. Check out other section titles in the Table of Contents and the subject indices at the back that coincide with scriptural themes. Com-

mon Praise offers headings like Covenant, Discipleship, Forgiveness, Guidance, Healing, Jesus (the way, truth, and life), Lazarus, Lent, Meditation, Penitence, Pilgrimage, Prayer, Renewal, Repentance, and Yearning. Also, I highly recommend hymns from the Iona Community and its composers John Bell and Graham Maule. Their words are profound and the melodies are memorable. A few of my favourites for Lent are O Lord My God (... why do you seem so far from me? - CP579), We Cannot Measure How You Heal (CP 292), and Before I Take the Body of My Lord (CP610).

Beyond these general suggestions I don’t dare get any more specific because there is so much wonderful music out there to enhance your worship services during Lent. Also, resources, style, and musical preferences vary from one congregation to another. However, I often cite specific hymns from “Common Praise” and “Sing a New Creation” because these are the official hymn books of the Anglican Church of Canada. Lastly, I have not talked about Holy Week at all. That is another topic that will have to wait until next year.

# Liturgical and Musical Practices in Lent



Columns



By David Burrows

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

I've always been amused by that cartoon image of a lightbulb appearing over someone's head when they are struck by a bright new idea: a moment of epiphany. As I get older, my overly busy brain often drops and loses my new ideas, and it feels like a candle's light is snuffed out. But, hey, I don't mind too much; I know I am easily distracted. And many more bright creative thoughts will probably pop into my head during the day. My real problem relates to kindness and compassion: the building blocks of love. When I am inundated with too much multi-tasking, I know my capacity for compassion and care sometimes get snuffed out. I overlook body language,



*Mum and Dad*  
tone of voice and sometimes the actual words people are saying to me. I know I can be inattentive, and there must be many times when others shake their heads and say, "Dave is distracted again; he's not here; he's got his head in the clouds (or in his device!)." And I need to try to remember, even when distracted, to express compassion, care and love. This past Advent I had the opportunity to witness once again, the primary learning that I have had in my life for compassion, care, and love. The Third week of Advent I travelled to be with my parents, to support them as my mum was recovering from a stroke. They have known each other for 77 years and been married for 67. The depth of their compassion, understanding, and love has not abated during this time. Their faithfulness to each other, to their family, and to God

is evident in the manner they share their lives with each other and the world. Even though age, malady, stroke and dementia has affected them, their eyes light up as the beauty of candlelight, when they are in each other's presence, and when they interact with family face to face. I am thankful for their life and witness, and how they bring the expression of love into their daily lives, through word, gesture, eye contact and hugs. Even through my mum's dementia, her eyes light up when one of us says 'I love you mum.' Even in the precarity of dad's walking ability, his voice and tone when he offers prayer and a blessing resound deep in my soul. This month in Liturgy and Scripture we remember the presentation of Jesus in the Temple. In the story, the infant Jesus is cradled by two wise sages: the prophetess Anna, and the aging Simeon. They have been hoping for redemption for themselves, their people, and their land. They have spent a lifetime praying and caring and hoping — living a life that reflects cradling compassion and love. In that moment both Simeon and Anna are embracing the very One who personifies hope, compassion and redemption for the

entire world. When I look at my parents, I think of Anna and Simeon in the Temple. I see faithfulness lived out and shared daily — not only through their life in the church but also in their home, and throughout their world. Their example has lit up a path of discovery, of love, of forgiveness, of meaning for so many who may have encountered and befriended them. This month many will bless and light candles to remember Anna and Simeon. We remember the infant Jesus, and the presence of Jesus in our lives, in our hearts, and in the world. We remember Anna and Simeon's patience, persistence, belief and compassion. We cannot embrace Jesus physically in our arms like they did, but we can be cradles of His love and reflect His compassion in our daily life and work. We can be like them, as I see personified in my mum and dad. The next time I have a bright new idea, the next time I hold a candle, the next time I talk to someone, may I be ever aware of the presence of God among us and God within us. May I be helped to be patient, caring and compassionate. May I remember that others will look to me, and possibly see a face of love, a face of God's child. ■



By Chris Harwood-Jones

The Reverend Canon Chris Harwood-Jones is the Dean of the North Okanagan Region and Incumbent for the Parish of All Saints, Vernon.

Vernon's newspaper the "Morning Star" published an article about the replica of the "Book of Kells" that All Saints currently has on display. All Saints Anglican Church in Vernon recently received an exact replica of the "Book of Kells," which is now on permanent display. The original Book of Kells is kept at Trinity College in Dublin, where it costs 25 euros to see. It is a significant artifact in medieval (especially Celtic) history, religious history, and art history. The origins of the original book are unclear: it has traditionally been attributed to Saint Columba of Iona

(521-597) but was probably written around 800AD. It was likely brought to Kells in 878AD by the Abbot of Iona, in order to preserve it from Viking raiders. Famously stolen in 1006AD, it was found two months later buried "under a sod" near the church, stripped of its gold and silver case. After the church at Kells was destroyed in 1641, the book found its way to Trinity College Dublin in 1661. Scholars believe that the Book of Kells was not intended for daily use or for study, but for display and ceremonial use within the church. It is primarily a piece of artwork: the text is secondary to the illustrations, evidenced by uncorrected mistakes in the text and missing features. The images, by contrast, are exquisitely intricate and designed for contemplation. Some images are also quite whimsical, such as cats chasing rodents running away with communion wafers. In 1990 a set of 1480 numbered facsimiles were created, each of which was an exact copy including uneven edges, holes in the parchment, faded inks, and so on. Until now the nearest replica has been on display in the library at

the University of British Columbia in Vancouver. The replica will be on permanent display in the foyer at All Saints, Vernon as of Sunday, November 30. The manuscript will be kept un-

der glass for security and preservation purposes. Upon request, researchers may gain access to the manuscript by appointment. ■



Facsimile "Book of Kells" reproduced by Verlag Abbey of Kells — Trinity College Library, Dublin Ireland photoWikipedia.

Columns



By Dan Prysunka

Dan Prysunka is an EfM graduate.

# On a Cold Winter's Snow



Helping hands on a cold winter's day — by pixabay

On one not so typical winter day in January 1963, the bitter frigid wind whistled sharply on my face as it skipped over the fields whipping around the frozen harvested wheat stubble. My nine-year-old brother, and I at eleven, were extremely excited as we anticipated seeing the monster-sized snow drifts we had heard about, covering the prairie landscape from Winnipeg to Edmonton and beyond. Just outside our small Alberta prairie town the drifts had landlocked the whole county. The drifts really were twelve feet high, or as I remember describing them, three cars piled high. All roads were impassable. Even the mighty snowplows were stuck. What would our town do? Brutal wintry weather and deep snow was everywhere.

I was very scared. This was just two months after the death of the great

President John F. Kennedy, who I really admired. The Cold War was hot. In my mind everyone was hanging on a razor's edge in fear of a world nuclear war. Was this a U.S.S.R. attack? Was an invasion imminent? These thoughts crossed the mind of my boyhood because our town was on the Direct Early Warning Line (D.E.W.). This was very real to me.

The freezing wind howled as it brought me back to what we really faced. I pushed us on, knowing our short legs were getting weaker and our toes were feeling very frozen. I began to worry when my little brother appeared exhausted. He suddenly plunked down on a snow drift, closing his eyes, and looked as if he was ready to sleep. I realized we were in real trouble. I shook my little brother awake and pushed him

up. He seemed to understand how scared he was. Amazingly at nine years old, he knew it was wrong to try to sleep. I was feeling tired and scared for bringing us this far. I had to find a new strength, or we would not make it home. I had his life in my hands. It was my idea to come out to see the giant snow drifts.

At this point, I was looking up and asking God to help us remain safe. For me an eleven-year-old boy, God was the giant, bearded man in heaven. And we needed Him now. There was no one else around to help us, We both kept trotting on. This was a very big lesson for me on how to keep safe in these terrible conditions. Thank God, we made it home.

When we reached home, we never felt so exhausted. We were now

safe, warm and cozy. We placed our wet boots, and hung our socks, pants, and coats by the living room heater, and we also dried ourselves off and got into warm dry clothes as quickly as possible.

Going on sixty-three years, this day this day has stuck with me, and it still continues to guide me in all of the many storms of my life. I would like to share with you from Philippians 4.13: *"I can do all this through Him who gives me strength."* Especially on this day God's strength helped two little boys to safety, and to endure future struggles throughout their lives.

Blessings and Happy New Year.

By Andrew Stephens-Rennie

# Where will I be?

If I were forced to pick only one artist to accompany me on my Lenten pilgrimage, I would pick Emmylou Harris. Nobody has yet forced that choice on me. Should it happen, I pick Emmylou. This year, drawing ever closer to Lent, Emmylou's been on my mind.

The other morning, her voice came to mind as I was going about my morning routine. Later that day, finding a brief moment, I found my headphones and dug out 1995's Wrecking Ball. Produced by Canadian Daniel Lanois, this album marked a significant shift in Harris' signature sound. All of a sudden, the clarion call of her country soprano sits atop a more-than-healthy dose of heady reverb and throbbing synth.

And still, her shimmering voice cuts through the noise.

We live in a cold and restless age, an age predicated on and dependent upon noise. If not the twenty-four hour news cycle, it's the fifteen-second attention span. We blame others for the state of the world, all the while drinking from some version of the same dopamine-addicted firehose. We're pulled in many directions. We're battling our own

demons. In cycles of distraction and addiction, we struggle to work together as communities attending to ourselves and our neighbours, all of whom bear the image of the invisible God.

After four bars of swelling guitar and marching drums, Harris breaks across the distance:

The streets are cracked  
And there's glass everywhere  
And a baby stares out  
With motherless eyes

Above mists of reverb and rock steady beats, we're drawn out of our slumber, toward the cries of a world in pain: cracked streets, broken glass, a baby's motherless eyes. There's the noise that surrounds us, invades us, but we need not turn away. In fact, we dare not turn away from the world God calls us to love. We dare not, and yet we are frozen, trapped, drowning in nostalgia, overcome by a sea of noise:

Under long gone beauty  
On fields of war  
Trapped in lament  
To the poet's core

We look at the reality of the world around us, and are overwhelmed by the immensity of the pain. There are so many seeking liberation. Whether we accept it or not, we are amongst them. We too are trapped in the prosaic prisons of the past, all the while yearning for the prophetic imagination of what might be, if only God would step into this story and set us free. In this moment, in the face of this motherless stare, who are we, and how might we respond to the world as it is?

What I love about this song (and so many in Harris' catalogue) is about more than the cadence and the phrasing. It's about more than the way her voice shimmers, cutting through so much existential noise. It's about all of these things and more. In this, and in so many of her other songs, Emmylou Harris embodies a profound bravery.

What makes her catalogue so rich, and what makes so much of it ripe for my Lenten playlist is her brave willingness to tackle themes of love and loss, faith and doubt – the very themes we consider throughout the season, and that help form a robust and realistic

discipleship in the way of Jesus. What I love about Harris' catalogue is her fearless wandering, her commitment to walking the road of life with all its attendant dangers and surprises.

As she bravely explores the vast countryside of human being, human emotion, human experience, she reports back on the journey. At times, we bask in wonder. At times, we bump into breathtaking beauty. At times our bodies are bent and broken. And yet, we travel this road together. And this Lent, I am excited to be taking this journey with Emmylou Harris. It seems to me, at least, that she will be an excellent companion along the road.

As Lenten guide, Emmylou Harris takes us from "river" to "rim," and "through the teeth of the reaper's grin." Through it all, the constant refrain:

Oh where, oh where will I be?

Oh where, oh when that trumpet sounds?



# The Companions Program

## September 2026 – June 2027

The residential Companions program is an immersive opportunity to experience a contemporary monastic community rooted in the Benedictine tradition. It is open to women aged 21 and up regardless of Christian denomination.

Companions live, work, and pray alongside the sisters, learning from them but also sharing each companion’s own gifts with the sisters and their ministries. They will:



- Learn to cultivate peaceful and creative ways of living in a diverse intentional community
- Appreciate silence and solitude as well as community and service for a healthy life
- Put down deep roots of spiritual intimacy with God and each other
- Develop a personal path to ongoing spiritual growth

Application start & end (both programs):  
January 1, 2026 – May 1, 2026



Open to women of all Christian expressions, **Companions Online** is an opportunity to become “monastics in the world,” living a Benedictine rhythm of prayer, work, study, and recreation. Online Companions learn to develop practices that support and nurture their spiritual life from the comfort of their homes.

They meet regularly for classes and discussion groups, and commit to times of personal prayer at home. They share in book studies, participate in online worship and sometimes screen a film relevant to spiritual growth and self-understanding. Online Companions also develop spiritual disciplines that follow the liturgical year.

**Cost:**  
**Residential Companions:**sugg. \$150/month.  
**Companions Online:** sugg. \$100/month.  
*If cost is a hindrance, assistance is available.*

To learn more about either program, or to apply, email:  
Canon Sr. Elizabeth Rolfe-Thomas, SSJD, at  
companions@ssjd.ca, or phone St. John’s Convent:  
416-226-2201, ext. 304

# The Sisterhood of St. John the Divine

## Continued from page 4 “Minding the Gaps”

us as One unknown, without a name, as of old, by the lake-side, He came to those men who knew Him not. He speaks to us the same word: “Follow thou me!” and sets us to the tasks which He has to fulfil for our time. He commands. And to those who obey Him, whether they be wise or simple, He will reveal Himself in the toils, the conflicts, the sufferings which they shall pass through in His fellowship, and, as an ineffable mystery, they shall learn in their own experience “Who He is.” (Schweitzer, \*Quest,\* 1911)

Morimoto is of course not really ‘doing nothing.’ Accompaniment is something — and the fact that people will pay him to do so is very telling about the need for simple presence, for someone, even a stranger, to ‘be there.’

The more I reflect on this, the more I think it reminds us of the heart of our faith and the heart of the church. \*Stabilitas\* - stability — is a long-held value of the church: to simply be there. To offer a place/space for prayer, worship, service, care. In short, to accompany one another, and others, in the midst of life. And to create and sustain the space to do so.

## Celebrating 40 years of ordained Anglican Ministry for the Rev. Canon Roger Cooper



Roger and his wife Loretta seen in this photograph taken at Roger’s retirement party in 2021.

This can’t necessarily be quantified — it is often ‘unknown’ in terms of its effects or longevity, but it is in the “toils, conflicts, and sufferings” that we encounter the “ineffable mystery” of Christ’s presence in our own time and place, and in the midst of the life of the church, lived together from day-to-day

and week-to-week. Who knows for how long, but while we’re at it, people like Morimoto are, I think, mysteriously and rather strangely, pointing toward something deeply important, and something that includes that “ineffable mystery” at work beyond us.

**ERRATA**  
**SYNOD report 2025 Jan 2026 edition page 2 centre column 5th paragraph, should read:**  
“To clarify KFS: approximately 15 % of a parish’s *defined Congregational Income* goes to the diocese.”