

Seasons of Stewardship with Ven. Wayne Varley

Continue your stewardship reflection journey with Wayne through Advent Christmas and Epiphany



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WINTER 2024

Dialogue

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Advent: Hope suffused with glory and joy in the coming Kingdom

Bishop William Cliff

For in hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what is seen? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience. Romans 8:24-25

I love the season of Advent. It is by far one of the richest seasons of the church year, and for me it rivals the depth of Easter. It is a combination of anticipation, excitement and almost a holy fear. The music of this season, the darkening days, the scripture we read which tells us of the expectation of God's mighty final acts in this world, they all add up to a season of hope for me. This is different than the garden-variety hope which we all learn as children. This is more than the expectation of a coming party on a birthday, or the countdown to the end of school and beginning of summer holidays. Those are all instances of expectation and anticipated freedom - but these listed examples of expectation are all about something we know, or have experienced before. In Advent, we are expecting a mighty act of God, which we cannot know, for it is the stuff of mystery, and redemption and joy and faith.



Bishop William Cliff: "Advent is about what we cannot see, cannot know and yet believe will change everything. Advent is about hope suffused with glory and joy in the coming Kingdom and in the One who will bring this kingdom into being. Hope is the most powerful emotion because it can make suffering bearable." Photo-Mark Hauser.

Expectation can be a powerful force in our lives. Anyone who has tried to get a child to sleep on Christmas Eve when the expectation of the next morning is so real will know whereof I speak. Expectation is a state where we allow our minds to wander into the particular delight, the single pleasure for which we have been made to wait. Fantasies of the Christmas Tree piled high with presents, or day dreaming about the long lazy days of summer while sitting in a classroom in the middle of June are good examples of the power of expectation.

But hope, especially in the kingdom of God is not like that expectation. There is expectation to be sure: we expect God to arrive and with a mighty arm set up his kingdom, return to the temple and begin the reign of justice and joy which had been foretold. But we can't exactly daydream about what that will look like because we have never seen it or experienced it fully before. We have definitely had flashes of it. We have experienced moments in our lives where God may have swept us off our feet with the power of his love and the transforming power of

grace. These are flashes... inklings of what is to come. They are not the whole kingdom, rather they are a flash of the sun off of a lake: blinding and beautiful, but a reflected glory.

Advent is about what we cannot see, cannot know and yet believe will change everything. Advent is about hope suffused with glory and joy in the coming Kingdom and in the One who will bring this kingdom into being. Hope is the most powerful emotion because it can make suffering bearable. Hope can make simple expectation and its power, fade, for when

hope is present, trust in the outcome becomes a matter of faith, and not a matter of knowledge.

As we enter Advent, my prayer for you is that you will feel the power of hope which the Christ brings to those who put their trust in him. That there is something, someone, coming that will change everything for you. It was to the forgotten, the hungry and the broken that he came. The rich and the powerful did not need, or did not anticipate the hope which Jesus came to bring. They weren't even interested in the message which Jesus proclaimed until

they began to understand that his preaching might upset their comfortable lives. Jesus is still here, calling us into the deeper hope of the kingdom, still preaching the end of the powers who have oppressed and broken the people of God. Advent is about that hope: the topsy-turvy kingdom of God where the meek inherit the earth and where those who mourn are comforted.

May that hope - suffused with glory and joy - grow in you each and every day as we approach the birth in time of the timeless Son of God.

St. Thomas' Kingston Prays Through the Truth and Reconciliation 94 Calls to Action

John Schreiner
Sue Orgill

One weekend this past June the Reverends' Rod and Lisa BrantFrancis from All Saints' Church, Tyendinaga, led two sessions at St. Thomas' Church in Kingston during which they encouraged reflection on healing throughout our church and Indigenous communities. They led a Reconciliation Circle in the parish hall on the Saturday, and on Sunday Rod preached at our two services. During these gatherings Rod and Lisa reviewed their personal history as members of the Mi'kmaq (Rod) and Mohawk (Lisa) nations and then walked the parish through exercises with clay and with jigsaw puzzles (divided into complementary but incomplete parts) to illustrate the challenges of getting a complete picture of the work that needs doing and how to best do it together. The weekend was informative and moving, ending on the positive note emphasizing that even though the challenge ahead is difficult we mustn't lose hope of its completion.



Reconciliation between Canada's First Nations and all other Canadians is something that most people recognize as beneficial for us all. One take away from the weekend was that achieving reconciliation is not just the work of Canadian and First Nation governing bodies, but rather that each person in Canada should be involved in part of the healing.

With that challenge, the leadership of St. Thomas' thought it important to bring some concrete activity to our church family and it was decided at the Parish Advisory Council to initiate a program to present the 94 Calls to Action policy recommendations from the Canadian Truth and Reconciliation Commission report. We thought such a review would help make parishioners more

aware of the calls and might perhaps stimulate further reading and reflection on the actions the commission considered so vital.

This program was timed to start the Sunday before National Truth and Reconciliation Day at the end of September and will run for 47 weeks with two actions reviewed during a prayer given immediately prior to each Sunday service. We trust the program will encourage some thought, reflection, and prayer and perhaps inspire parishioners to think on how they can participate in reconciliation in some way. It is one way St. Thomas' parish is working to complete Action 59, a call to all churches to ensure their congregations learn about the history and legacy of residential schools and to help in the healing needed.

A sample Sunday in our schedule:
Week 30: April 20, 2025

Let us pray: Dear brothers and sisters, as a community of faith committed to reconciliation, we are called to work towards healing the wounds of the past. Over these months we are embarking on a journey of learning and reflection, examining two of the 94 Action Items of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission each Sunday. By reflecting on these recommendations, we hope to discern how we can contribute to a more just and equitable future together. Jesus, help us today by guiding our reflection and action on these two calls of action:

- **Action 59:** Call upon church parties to the Settlement Agreement to develop ongoing education strategies to ensure that their respective congregations learn about their role in colonization and the history and legacy of residential schools.
- **Action 60:** Have leaders of the churches develop and teach curriculum for clergy and religious staff on respecting Indigenous spirituality, the history of residential schools, religious conflict, and the responsibility to mitigate such conflicts.
- **Call to Action 5:** Call the federal, provincial, territorial, and Aboriginal governments to develop culturally appropriate parenting programs for Aboriginal families.
- **Call to Action 6:** Have the Government of Canada repeal Section 43 of the Criminal Code of Canada, which allows for the physical punishment of children.



Dialogue

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PWRDF membership approves new name, Alongside Hope

Janice Biehn
PWRDF

On Tuesday, October 15, 2024 the membership of the Primate's World Relief and Development Fund approved a new name for the 65-year-old organization, Alongside Hope and its French equivalent, Auprès de l'espoir. Members were presented with the new name at a Special Meeting of Members on September 20, 2024, and in accordance with the organization's corporate bylaws, they met again yesterday to approve the names.

The issue of changing PWRDF's name to one that is easier to say and less confusing has been ever-present for many years. In 2022, the PWRDF Board approved a budget and the creation of a Task Team to identify a new name for PWRDF that would honour its history as the Anglican Church of Canada's agency for international development and humanitarian response, but would also carry it

into the future.

In 1958, a mining disaster in Springhill, N.S. compelled Anglicans across the country to donate money to support the affected families. One year later, The Primate's World Relief Fund was established at General Synod, to create an agency that would respond to emergencies on behalf of Anglicans in Canada. In 1969, the D was added for Development. In the last fiscal year, PWRDF worked with more than 70 partners in 32 countries, and was recently named to the 2024 Charity Intelligence Top 100 Charities List. The voting membership comprises Board members, Diocesan Representatives and PWRDF's Youth Council.

The Task Team was made up of 12 key volunteers from across the country, including members of the Board, Youth Council and PWRDF staffers. Cyan Solutions, a marketing and creative agency in Ottawa, led conversations with the Task

Team, other volunteers and staff to inspire reflections and gain valuable insights.

In all of these discussions, one clear and hopeful theme emerged: partnership.

PWRDF partners with local organizations who carry out the work of food security, gender equality, community health, climate action and human rights.

We partner with membership organizations that allow us to be part of a larger network.

We partner with our generous donors and funding agencies including Global Affairs Canada.

We partner with the Anglican Church of Canada, Anglican dioceses, spiritual ministries and ecclesiastical provinces, through their bishops and their PWRDF Representatives.

We partner with parish representatives, clergy and countless volunteers in the pews across the country who connect Canadians with the work

of our partners, our neighbours.

This theme of partnership and accompaniment is woven throughout the Bible. The Task Team was drawn to the story of the road to Emmaus. Days after Jesus died, the disciples were walking from Jerusalem to Emmaus, still grieving their loss. As Luke writes, the resurrected Jesus came alongside them, but they did not know it was him. Jesus travelled with them and then accepted their hospitality to dine with them. In the breaking of bread, their eyes were opened and they recognized him. When we walk alongside one another, Jesus accompanies us. We are strengthened and comforted and recognize Jesus when we share in his feast. As we walk alongside each of our partners, supporting, listening and sharing with one another, we embrace and embody the hope of a better world.

Thus was born Alongside Hope. With the guidance of the Board and

the Task Team, taglines were developed in English and French to reflect the legacy of PWRDF.

Alongside Hope conveys the concept of partnership in a compelling way, honouring Jesus' words to love our neighbour, says Will Postma, Executive Director of PWRDF. "It conveys the listening and learning that takes place when walking side by side, together with partners from around the world, including in Canada, with our supporters and volunteers. Alongside Hope inspires us even further in working with partners towards our vision of a truly just, healthy and peaceful world."

The name is changing, but the colourful globe icon will continue to identify the organization. This continuity will improve brand recognition as PWRDF transitions to its new name over the coming months and into 2025. More information is available on our website at pwrdf.org.



Stewardship Reflections

Based on the Revised Common Lectionary - Liturgical Year C

The following reflections are intended to encourage individuals and parishes to think about holistic stewardship and serve as guideposts along the way of our individual and collective faith journey.

Bless you during this year's Season of Pentecost and your various activities and ministries, including the practice of stewardship. We pray for the Holy Spirit to enable and equip us in taking care of ourselves; the gift and practice of faith; our relationships; Christ's church; our local communities; and the wider world.

DECEMBER 1, 2024

A reflection based on Psalm 25:1-9

DECEMBER 8, 2024

A reflection based on Philippians 1:3-11

DECEMBER 15, 2024

A reflection based on Luke 3:7-18

DECEMBER 22, 2024

A reflection based on Luke 1:39-55

DECEMBER 24, 25, 2024

A Prayer for Christmas

DECEMBER 29, 2024

A reflection based on Luke 2:41-52

JANUARY 5, 2025

A reflection based on Matthew 2:1-12

JANUARY 12, 2025

A reflection based on Luke 3:15-17, 21-22

JANUARY 19, 2025

A reflection based on 1 Corinthians 12:1-11 and John 2:1-11

JANUARY 26, 2025

A reflection based on Psalm 19

FEBRUARY 2, 2025

A reflection based on Luke 2:22-40

FEBRUARY 9, 2025

A reflection based on Luke 5:1-11

FEBRUARY 16, 2025

A reflection based on Luke 6:17-26

FEBRUARY 23, 2025

A reflection based on Luke 6:17-28

MARCH 2, 2025

A reflection based on Luke 9:28-36

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

A new church year begins, and the Psalmist offers advice to faithful stewards. "Show me your ways, O Lord, and teach me your paths." What is God calling us to do throughout the year amid our challenges, opportunities, successes and pressures?

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Saint Paul prays with thanksgiving for the ways the church shares Christ's good news. What are several ways that we are called to order our lives in accordance with the teaching and example of Jesus?

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Jesus offers a clear plan for faithful stewards within a sad and broken world. "Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none; and whoever has food must do likewise." Who might we partner with in taking care of the world's need? PWRDF? A local food bank? Other agencies of relief and aid?

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

The Holy Spirit is present and active giving inspiration to Elizabeth and Mary. What are several ways that we hear what the Spirit is saying as we seek to catch up with God's mission to the world?

CHRISTMAS EVE AND DAY

We receive the greatest spiritual gift, Jesus our Saviour and Lord! What are ways that we receive this gift anew and are inspired as faithful stewards offering talent, time and treasure?

FIRST SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS

Mary and Joseph are Jesus' primary caregivers and ever concerned about his well being. How are we showing concern for all that is entrusted to us including our relationships?

EPIPHANY OF THE LORD

We learned in recent years amid challenges, opportunities, successes and failures to "double down" with the basics: Love God and our neighbour. May this year be one of ever renewing illumination as we are led by Jesus' generous love.

BAPTISM OF THE LORD

Jesus is lovingly affirmed by God in baptism, and we too in our baptism are marked as Christ's own for ever. What are ways that we are called to live ever more in this relationship through our work of faithful stewardship?

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

Saint Paul reminds us that each of us are blessed with unique gifts so that we might serve local and wider need, or as Jesus does, turn water into the wine in works beyond our imagination.

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

The Psalmist is hopeful that that which is said will be acceptable to God. Yes, one important part of faithful stewardship is speaking healing words of encouragement. Are our words true? Are they necessary? Are they kind?

THE PRESENTATION OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST IN THE TEMPLE

Joseph and Mary offer sacrifice according to what is stated in the law of the Lord. My understanding and practice tithing is reaching that point where offering is not out of obligation or done grudgingly but is done generously and joyfully. What are several ways that we do so in response to God through the church?

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

Indeed, there are occasions when we find ourselves doing things that seem totally unreasonable. Despite these experiences we too may be like Simon and the others, leading to blessed and unexpected results.

SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

Jesus invites faithful stewards to assist, feed and console our neighbour. There are so many ways that we as faithful stewards do so when given the opportunity. Bless, thank you, and carry on!

SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

"The measure you give will be the measure you get back." With a spirit of gratitude to Jesus for his teaching, a kind of stewardship 101, how are doing thus far this year in generously giving from all entrusted to us?

TRANSFIGURATION OF THE LORD

It is a tradition that we hand this week's reflection over to our friend Bishop Michele Pollesel. Over to you +Michele and thank you! Peter wants to set up tents, maybe so that he and the others can somehow physically hold on to the "high" they have experienced. But being a steward demands that we, as did Jesus, come down from the mountain top and deal with the everyday challenges of life.

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