

# News for Scattered Pews

Jan/Feb 2021



## Val's Voice

A year ago we were celebrating Candlemas, a holy day in the church when we recall how 40 days after Jesus' birth Mary brought her little one to the temple.

Recall if you will how we processed around the church, candles lit one by one, their light filling the dim space, offering God's own light in that holy space, and being a way for God's light to enter the world.

Like other women in her day, after childbirth Mary was required to go to the temple, and so she did, with her child and Joseph.

Forty days after a beginning, she again enters the story of her people, and not just the words, but the physical reality, the ancient temple, the train of history, the place where generations have been and worshipped and prayed. They do what is right and Jesus, so young himself, is incorporated into this body that is God's people, his ancestors and also generations yet to come... Simeon, a wise elder who comes to the temple, knows it. Anna, a prophet who has lived at the temple for decades, knows it...

The hope and salvation that God offers fills the air around Jesus that day, but it is not his alone... he is part of a great history of God's hope and salvation.

Our whole life as God's people is part of that history. We enter this endless procession of our God's people at birth. Through our lives, we follow a rhythm of entering and being enveloped in the words or sights or prayers of our faith and leaving. We grow, and learn in the world, all the human skills we need; in the midst of these ordinary activities we find ourselves incorporated again and again into our faith. Mourning and celebrating, laughing and praying, caring for each other - elders and the very young.

These days our world is strange. Even though we live in hope, we don't know quite where our world is going. But in faith we enter God's procession. In hope we are born into this world of ours which is

God's and so holy. We enter with the bits of light God gives each of us. But the tiny specks become a stream, and then a river, a river of light given by God. Even this year when we didn't gather for Candlemas, even (or especially) this year when life threatens to overwhelm us, God makes us part of that stream, and by Jesus, gives light and hope and salvation to us and we give it to the world.

The procession of light is a practice, a faith practice for the way that we God's people are invited to live our lives. Coming together and sharing our light is practice. Blessing the lights, so that they will do their job of lighting not just for themselves, but as a symbol of light in all the world, that is practice. And hearing the stories of God's people, that is also a practice.



Creator: Luis Fonseca | Credit: Getty Images

This year I have heard it asked from time to time, "Whose strong shoulders do you stand on?" The point is that we all live our lives on the shoulders of those who have gone before. Ancestors in the faith, beloved ancestors in our family, or the wisdom of unrelated aunties and uncles who gave us wisdom and new perspective which is good for us and the world.

As the night of winter fades, light a candle in thanksgiving for the ways that God's light has entered your life... speak the names of those who have shone when you needed that light, and know that God's light, the light of our Lord, the light of the Trinity shines still.

Val

## Vestry Notes from January 26, 2021

The **generosity of our parish** showed itself again this Christmas. We were able to distribute \$700 in Cheer Board hamper food vouchers, send \$590 to [St. Matthews-Maryland Community Ministry](#) for its Christmas activities, make a donation of \$503 to [PWRDF](#), and earmark the Christmas special offering of approximately \$1,700 for parish expenses. Thank you to all who were able to share.

Some work has been done in getting together with **our Anglican neighbours**: Val and Heather participated in worship on Epiphany with St. Bartholomew's, the first service of their Deacon Diane Lee. We have since met with leadership from St. Bart's and St. Mark's, and are planning a joint worship service on Maundy Thursday via Zoom. Our Dean, Paul Lampman, will preach for our neighbourhood churches!

The parish is working on applying for a grant that "support(s) **community initiatives** that reduce the emotional physical and spiritual stress of the COVID-19 pandemic and allow residents to connect with each other in a safe way." Our plan-in-the-works is an online concert with some local artists. It will be free to watch, but viewers will be able to make donations to [1JustCity](#) to help them carry on with their work. Stay tuned for more details on this.

As we look ahead to the **Annual General Meeting on Sunday, February 21 at 3 pm via Zoom**, please plan on being with us. It will be a little different (but by now what else is new?), but it is good for us to gather as God's people for this business. Our Dean, Rev. Paul Lampman, reminds us that "we are a charity – we are doing the best we can! All the holy angels won't mind if something is not quite perfect." Please remember to sign your Declaration of Membership (attached) and get it back to the church before the deadline of Feb 15.

The **Nomination Committee** reports that those who have been serving on Corporation are glad to remain in 2021, and the committee has heard from many people happy to serve on Vestry or as Synod Delegates. Great news that there is so much commitment to the life of our parish!

## Refugee Support Committee

Bryan Bjerring has taken on the task of exploring whether there is interest within our parish in forming a refugee support committee. Parishioners would work alongside the Asian Christian Fellowship to form a link with the newcomers and offer friendship and connection to the church and the community at large.

We are in the initial stages of this project, and we need to discern if there are parishioners interested in this work. Please contact Bryan if this is something you'd like to be involved with.

## The Lovely New Moon Shining

~ A Malcolm Guite poem inspired by Psalm 81

"After the sorrow and lamentation in psalms 79 and 80, psalm 81 brings a beautiful moment of uplift with the sound of trumpets and the clear shining beauty of the new moon:

- SING we merrily unto God our strength:  
make a cheerful noise unto the God of Jacob.
- Take the psalm, bring hither the tabret:  
the merry harp with the lute.
- Blow up the trumpet in the new-moon:  
even in the time appointed, and upon our  
solemn feast-day.

Then the psalm looks back to all that God had done for Israel in the past, how He had 'eased their shoulder from the burden'. That renewed memory of grace gives the psalmist confidence for the future... like the psalmist I have found the beautiful clarity of the moon shining high above our passing troubles becomes a symbol of hope."

*Till shadows flee at last, and sorrows cease  
Come down and ease our shoulders from the burden  
To give our straining hearts some soft release,*

*Lest from sheer weariness they shrink and harden.  
Refresh us with the memory of grace,  
Remind us of your mercy, of that pardon*

*You won for us forever from the cross.  
Then we will lift a lighter song to you  
And glimpse beyond our loneliness and loss*

*The lovely new moon shining, and the true  
Signs of the kingdom coming, where they gleam  
And kindle in the east, still showing through*

*This present darkness, even as a dream  
Of light before the dawn. Send us a sign  
That things are not so hopeless as they seem.*

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## Declaration of Church Membership

I hereby declare that:

1. I have been baptized with water in the name of the Father and of The Son and of The Holy Spirit.
2. I am of the full age of 16 years.
3. I am a recognized attendant at the public worship of the Anglican Church of Canada, Parish of St. Mary Magdalene within the Diocese of Rupert's Land.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Notice is hereby given that the Annual General Meeting of the parishioners of the Parish of St. Mary Magdalene will be held, via ZOOM, on the 21st day of February A.D. 2021 at 3:00 pm, at which time and place all members who have signed the Declaration of Church Membership and who are of the full age of 16 years are entitled to vote.

Dated: February 1, 2021

Rev. Valerie A. From  
convener