

# News for Scattered Pews

January/February 2023



## Val's Voice

Hello friends! Hope you are well this chilly midwinter week. I think that my energy level has improved a bit now that we have clear skies and cold temperatures... I must be Winnipeg born!

The prophet Isaiah in today's (January 31) daily lectionary even feeds into hopefulness. Isaiah speaks a message of hope, not to people who haven't known hardship, but to people precisely because they have known hardship.

In Isaiah 51 we read...

*How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of the messenger who announces peace, who brings good news, who announces salvation, who says to Zion, 'Your God reigns.'*

*Listen! Your sentinels lift up their voices, together they sing for joy; for in plain sight they see the return of the Lord to Zion...*

I know that most of the newcomers who have come to Canada as refugees have felt that gratitude – that they have heard words of salvation. I have talked to other folks who have felt that way when they heard that they got a new job, or that a beloved family member in need of long-term care has finally received word they have a spot. A student can feel that way when they finally end up in a place where they fit – where their gifts match the place.

Good news can come in lots of shapes and sizes.

It can also come in the shape of forgiveness, or faith, of course. Of feeling like you know within yourself that you are God's own beloved child. That whatever imperfections are part of you are not deal breakers. Good news can mean knowing that whatever ways you have not lived your life or your faith in the way that others (or you) think you should have... still somehow you and God are at peace with who you are.

I mention the bit about each of us and God being at peace with who we are because I think too often there are those voices (in our heads, or from someone else) that offer judgment. And those voices I don't think help us hear or live in the good news that God gives.

I think that when people flocked to Jesus, they did so because somehow he was able to express to them or show them the love which God already had for them. Often it was by healing or food, when they needed one or the other. Occasionally it was by redirecting them to a more life-giving path. I think, in my own life, I have been reminded best of the grace of God by people who opened up space for me to be the person I would want to be.

These days I find myself wondering if there are ways that we as a church can expand our ideas of who we can be. Is there a way that we can find again the joy that I know we get from being together – and at the same time do something for someone else? For example, the Refugee Support Committee is starting to prepare for the arrival of a young man at the end of February; if you wish to help with collecting items before his arrival, or running errands with him once he is here, please speak to Val or Bryan, Irene or Qaiser.

Beyond that though, my mind has also wandered to making soup or perhaps muffins! (Are you shaking your head at me?!) Really, is there a way



*Finding joy in making pretzels together on a Sunday afternoon.*

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or a time that some of us could gather once a month or so, and make soup or muffins, to fill the church freezer, so that they are there for us to share with people who might need them?

Could we deliver containers of soup to people who have just received hard news, much like we might deliver a prayer shawl? Could we deliver muffins that would be appreciated by a neighbourhood school or shelter, so that those involved know that people somewhere are thinking about them, and wishing the best for them? I think this cooking together might bring some of us joy!

The point is, if there are ideas that you have they just might be nudgings of the Spirit. Ways that our little parish is being led to be good news to a world that needs it. Ways we can be glimmers of light, and sprinkles of salt...

Share your inspiration, if it comes... and in whatever state you find yourselves today, know that you are beloved of God, a messenger with beautiful feet!

Good news to you and yours, this almost new year!

*Val*

**Our Annual General Meeting will be on Sunday, February 12 at 12:30 pm, following a pot-luck lunch.**

We will meet in person, as well as have an option for people to join by Zoom.

The usual declaration - that you are baptized, at least 16 years old and recognizable as someone who attends this parish will need to be signed. (The declaration can be done on Zoom for those participating that way; the technology is easy to use.)

How lovely it will be to sit with old friends and new to eat and discuss a bit of our life together!



## Vestry Notes from January 24

**Financial update:** We finished 2022 in a significantly better financial position than we had worried we would be in. Although we had budgeted for a \$25,000 deficit, in the end we needed to take a smaller portion of our investment funds: \$15,000, with \$5,000 of that left as a balance for the new year. A definite improvement over where we might have been.

A number of people shared that they heard how much parishioners appreciated this year's **Christmas services:** the Christmas tea and pageant, the late evening service, Christmas Day, and other efforts that were made to be in touch. Thanks to everyone involved!

**The Refugee Support Committee let us know that Obed Shareyar is due to arrive** in Winnipeg from Thailand on February 24. Most of his support will come from the Asian Christian Fellowship, but St. Mary Magdalene will also assist and has financial responsibility for one month of his first year here. If you are interested in helping him get to know the city, or wish to make a donation, please speak to Irene, Val, Qaiser or Bryan.

Vestry has decided that during worship we will resume **collecting the offering** by passing the baskets. Feel free to give your offering on the way in if you wish, but the baskets will also come by!

Vestry has approved **exploring a community development/story telling/ film making project.** Frances Ravinsky and Robert Miller, who live a few blocks from the church, will be our trainers. They have decades of experience helping community members tell their stories by making short films (Val took a course with them last winter and they are wonderful). The process of creating, telling and hearing stories from each other strengthens neighbourhoods and other groups, like churches, in our relationships with each other!

We will be gathering parishioners (and perhaps others as well: elders, seniors, immigrants, youth) to participate in a class on digital film-based story telling. There are grants available from both secular and Church funding agencies for this community development work, which strengthens neighbourhoods and community. If you think you might have a story to tell, and are curious, please speak to Val!! We will have an information Zoom meeting in the near future.



There will be a **Shrove Tuesday pancake supper** on February 21. Stop in any time after 5:30; a delicious supper of pancakes, fruit and whipped cream will begin at 6 pm! Members of the Refugee Support Committee will be working on supper. If you are interested in mixing pancake batter, flipping pancakes or helping set up for these pre-Lenten festivities, please contact Carey Isaac.



Our **Ash Wednesday service** will be on February 22 at 7 pm, with the burning of the palms before the service at about 6:45. People are asked to drop off their palms from previous years at the church prior to the service.



A reminder that we offer **worship services at two area personal care homes**: Vista Park Lodge at 2:15 pm on the 2nd Tuesday of the month, and River Park Gardens at 10:30 am on the 3rd Thursday of the month. Currently, we have all the volunteers that are allowed at Vista Park Lodge, but interested parishioners are welcome to come and assist at River Park Gardens.

## A Changing Church. A Searching World. A Faithful God: Five transformational aspirations for our church

The January 2023 issue of the **Anglican Journal** featured an article about the Anglican Church of Canada's new strategic plan and the accompanying communications campaign. Here are highlights from that article and from <https://changingchurch.anglican.ca/>

From 2020-2022 and through the guidance of the Strategic Planning Working Group, Anglicans from diverse backgrounds across the country gathered online to listen to one another, discern what was changing for them, and share what their hopes, dreams and visions are for the future mission of their national church. From those conversations emerged five transformational aspirations.

The aspirations were affirmed by the Council of General Synod in March 2022. They are being tested and validated in dioceses and national church ministries, and will be presented to the next gathering of General Synod in 2023. You are invited to share the videos and materials on this site with others in your parishes, communities and dioceses; feedback is welcome and encouraged.

The five aspirations are:



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### **1. Invite and deepen life in Christ**

In everything we do, may it serve as an invitation for all to begin, continue and nurture their discipleship with Christ. God is our constant, with us through every opportunity and challenge. May the Creator always be at the centre of our thoughts and actions, and may we listen prayerfully for the Holy Spirit guiding us as we seek to fulfill Christ's mission.

### **2. Champion the dignity of every human being; work to dismantle racism and colonialism**

Love your neighbour as yourself, there is no command greater than [this]. ~Mark 12:31

Social and economic stresses are a continual challenge in our contemporary landscape. Many struggle with issues linked to food and economic security, forced to make impossible choices between medicine, food, rent and other basic necessities. On a systemic level, inequalities and power imbalances sustain a socioeconomic ecosystem where racism, marginalization and oppression flourish—many times across generations. Recognizing that every human being is fearfully and wonderfully made, we continue in our work to lift up the dignity of all.

### **3. Embrace mutual interdependence with the Indigenous church (Sacred Circle):**

Recently you repented and did what is right in my sight: each of you proclaimed freedom to our own people. You even made a Covenant before me in a house that bears my name. ~Jeremiah 34:15

From the traditional and emerging ways of knowledge keeping, to the strong connection to the land, to the safeguarding of Elders and countless other strengths, the wisdom and ways of the self-determining Indigenous church enrich people every day in the Church and beyond. Sacred Circle provides an opportunity for a clear Indigenous voice, today and in the future of the Church. Interdependent support between Sacred Circle and the wider Church will strengthen that future.

### **4. Nurture right relationships amount people of faith in local, national and global communities and networks:**

How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity! ~Psalm 133:1

Today, the Church can be accessed from further distances than ever before. In many ways, we are able to worship and participate in groups not just linked to our local communities, but beyond our diocesan and civic borders, with more regularity and accessibility. The relationships within and connecting to the Church—from neighbourhood levels to across the globe—have been a part of Church ministries for decades. The opportunities in today's contexts of connectivity and connection lead the way for our networks to be nurtured and deepened.

### **5. Steward and renew God's creation: protect and sustain the earth; pursue justice for all**

For as the earth brings forth its shoots, and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up, so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring up before all the nations. ~Isaiah 61:11

We believe God made humankind stewards of all creation in the Garden of Eden before the Fall. As stewards, we recognize how ecological crises impact many communities around the world—especially those which are already vulnerable. From forest fires to floods, the impacts of climate change are immediate, devastating and undeniable. Environmental crises contribute to social issues like food security, forced migration and even political conflict. There is a continued need for advocacy in caring for and protecting the Earth's resources—including one another.

*The **Anglican Journal** is the monthly national news magazine of the Anglican Church of Canada. Subscription rate is \$10/year. Email [circulation@national.anglican.ca](mailto:circulation@national.anglican.ca) or phone 1-866-924-9192 ext 245 to subscribe.*

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## St. Mary Magdalene Church Calendar

<b>February 2023</b> <i>Black History Month</i>	<b>March 2023</b> <i>Season of Lent</i>
<b>5</b> 5 <sup>th</sup> Sunday after Epiphany Eucharist 10:30 am	<b>5</b> 2 <sup>nd</sup> Sunday in Lent Eucharist 10:30 am Exploring Lent for Kids 12:30 – 2:30
<b>12</b> 6 <sup>th</sup> Sunday after Epiphany Eucharist 10:30 am Annual General Meeting 12 pm	<b>12</b> 3 <sup>rd</sup> Sunday in Lent Eucharist 10:30 am <i>*Daylight Savings Time begins*</i>
<b>14</b> Service at Vista Park Lodge 2:15 pm	<b>14</b> Service at Vista Park Lodge 2:15 pm
<b>16</b> Service at River Park Gardens 10:30 am	<b>16</b> Service at River Park Gardens 10:30 am
<b>19</b> Last Sunday after Epiphany Eucharist 10:30 am	<b>19</b> 4 <sup>th</sup> Sunday in Lent Eucharist 10:30 am
<b>21</b> Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper 6 pm	<b>26</b> 5 <sup>th</sup> Sunday in Lent Eucharist 10:30 am ACF Service 7 pm
<b>22</b> Ash Wednesday Service 6:45 pm	<b>28</b> Vestry meeting 7 pm
<b>26</b> 1 <sup>st</sup> Sunday in Lent Eucharist 10:30 am ACF Service 7 pm	
<b>28</b> Vestry meeting 7 pm	

ACF = Asian Christian Fellowship service in Urdu

## Weekly Activities

Bible Study	Wednesdays 1 pm	Contact: Val
Christian Meditation	Thursdays 7:30 pm	Contact: Barbara B
Choir Practice	Sundays 9 am	Contact: Nancy
Book Club	Not currently meeting	Contact: Val