



Val's Voice

A number of you said it would be good to take some time to look at the report I wrote for the May Vestry meeting (it was so long!). I said I would then not write a report this month, so that we can

have some time to look at it. I thought though that I could write another introduction.

As I think what is happening with us right now, when our building is not at full capacity, it would be good for us to take some time to talk about how we can make sure our building is used well. Although they may be useful, I am not sure that irregular "one off" rentals are necessarily the way to go. Instead, it would be good for us to consider trying to facilitate community building for our neighbourhood. Are there ways people could come together here? For concerts, or craft or game evenings? Could we invite musicians or artists to have concerts or shows in our building? Could we create a coffee shop upstairs, so that those who come for music or line dancing or whatever downstairs, or the parents of Kindermusik kids, could hang around and visit while they wait? And could we provide services to elders, kids, young parents? (I think a coffee shop is a potentially good idea, because it could raise a bit of money, but more than that could build community. I would like to know what you think!)

I do like this model offered by St. Martin-in-the-Fields in London. It's called *HeartEdge*, and it supports churches in blending their mission around four key areas:

1. Congregation – inclusive approaches to liturgy, worship and day-to-day communal life
2. Compassion – models of outreach serving local need and addressing social justice
3. Culture – art, music and ideas to re-imagine the Christian narrative for the present moment
4. Commerce – commercial activities that generate finance, creatively extending and enhancing mission and ministry through social enterprise

"HeartEdge supports its members in finding their stories, sharing resources and connecting effectively with others developing their church and community. We create spaces where members give from their experience and take from others – an exchange that's often inspiring, always compelling, and mutually useful for all participants. We want HeartEdge to be an essential resource and a valuable community, as you develop your church and neighbourhood."



Rector's Report for Vestry May 29, 2023

Hi! It is good to be back, and it is somewhat strange at the same time. I look forward to hearing what you have been up to while I have been gone. I made a point of trying to stay away from church email and news while I was gone, but now I need to catch up!

My time away was interesting... seeing how different people on a different continent live and work. All sorts of things are similar, of course, but there were certainly differences that struck us.

Some common social justice initiatives:

- **"No period poverty"** Throughout the UK there were numerous churches, restaurants, etc where the stuff needed for women's periods was put in baskets on shelves in the bathroom. No cost. They noted women wouldn't take stuff unless they needed it. And I read in church and elsewhere that if someone needed a week's supply, they needed it. Fine with them. Dignity depends on it. (I think we need baskets in our bathroom.)
- Concern about creation. **Eco responsibility.** The UK churches are more involved than here, I believe. "Towards Net Zero 2030" is a goal passed by the churches (And a document available.) Some of the info contained has been used in Canada already. (In our own parish, some of these directions have been followed, with respect to low energy lighting, recycling, and no paper plates, etc. in the church.)

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One cathedral is considering how they can make their concern re: Creation visible outside their building... For us, **in what ways does our environmental concern show?** (We hear all the time that young people are much more aware and concerned than the church at large.) **Is there something we can do that matches their concern?**

- **Justice regarding slavery.** How to undo the damages that have been done, especially as wealth gained as a result of slavery remains in families who were part of the injustice of owning slaves. (I did not hear answers, but I did hear concern.) I was asked by one of the clergy how the church in Canada is contributing to the Land Back movement, with respect to Indigenous people on this land. I did not know, though I noted gifts I have heard of: land or buildings from closing parishes to First Nations. A small thing. We need to learn more...

Other initiatives:

- A lot of churches have their **buildings open during the day for prayer.** Often hours are listed to let people know at what time the building will be closed for the day. It is a lovely practice. The churches were separate from hall space, though. If we were to try this, we would need to consider how the building could be secure for children and other renters as well.
- **Debit machines in all the churches.** The National Church bodies (Church of England and Scottish Episcopal) contracted companies to create a machine that could be used to receive donations by tap. From the smallest to largest church - all had tap capabilities.
- **Creative use of buildings.**
 - ❖ Coffee shops. With sandwiches, soup and dessert items, (some with wine and beer). Initially run by volunteers, they now hire staff. Volunteers are scarce, as people try to make ends meet. Churches seek to be designated as "We are a Living Wage Employer."
 - ❖ Churches rented as concert venues.
 - ❖ Book stores with well-curated books: concern for justice, creation sensitive, creative liturgy, contemplative spirituality, pilgrimage, Saints

- ❖ Stores in churches selling fair trade goods
- ❖ Daily (or mid-week) prayer or eucharist
- ❖ Places for sharing clothing, food, space for children's clubs

- **Weekly parish lunches** "Let's Do Lunch" \$15
- **Quiz nights** People form a team of 4-8, pay an entrance fee, and have a fun night of something like Trivial Pursuit (10 rounds, 10 questions); teams composed of friends or others to increase community. In one church teams switched as the evening wore on.
- **Healthy ecumenical interaction** between the churches who were approximately on the same page (Church of Scotland and the Scottish Episcopal Church were very interested in forming connections and community).

All that is a brief pulling together of some of the things I observed. What stuck out for me were ways in which the churches developed community within themselves, but also the ways in which they were part of the community around them. They encouraged the development of a healthy neighbourhood, by offering places for cultural events, nursery schools, dementia care or other senior groups, women's shelters, lunches, and places where books and fair trade goods could be sold.

When I think about our church, our building, it seems to me that it would be significant to offer a place for development of community within our church community and outside of it as well. The various activities that I saw would contribute to health. Something it is good for us to consider and talk about as well. What are the values that shape who we are as a parish? What kinds of activities or space are needed in our neighbourhood? What is lacking that might draw us all together, as neighbours? (Not just as individuals, but as communities.)

As I pondered these things, I received in my inbox an article from Dr. Walter Brueggemann that spoke of the essential nature of imagination in our world. So much of the world is constructed as if it is what is. He noted in this article that we are reminded over and over again in the prophets that "what is" will change. He notes that the religious community of Israel itself, believed its community and power to be the final word. Surely

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the beauty of the temple and its worship which lifted up the beauty of God is what God sought. But that was not the word which God had for them. God had other priorities, like justice and care for the poor.

Things which are going well, may end. There are no guarantees. When things go poorly (particularly relevant these days when cities and forests alike burn on opposite sides of the continent) and we fear for our very lives and the lives of our grandchildren, we are also reminded that we need not live in hopelessness, because in the beginning and the end, it is not what is that will last, but what God wishes to last. Our work as God's people is to hold the future open. (Not to define it rigidly.)

Brueggemann writes: "The imaginative work of the church intends to break open the world of fear, to witness to "a more excellent way" beyond scorekeeping and vengeance, and to show that we may alternatively practice a world of hospitality, generosity, forgiveness, and abundance."

I think that is our invitation: to practice, and to learn, hospitality, generosity, forgiveness and abundance. On my touring around these lands which were mostly unknown to me, I was lucky enough to see a good deal of these things. And to see them in the churches... I am sure there were other things there as well... but the people of the churches in England and Scotland seemed to be practicing these things (as one might practice piano!) seeking to get them right. And I was strengthened by having the chance to see their creativity and love. To hear of what one can do, when one just decides to give it a shot.

I was also strengthened to learn of your conversation about ensuring our community is welcoming, to ensure that we celebrate Pride Month and to return to see rainbow cookies at church and hear of a cake coming next week. A good thing, and part of imagining a world of hospitality, generosity, forgiveness and abundance which God can create with our help...

I look forward to seeing where our prayers and imagining can lead us... and our practicing of hospitality, generosity, forgiveness, and abundance.

Val



A few photos from Val and Paul's trip to England and Scotland



Vestry Notes from June 20

A **Survivor Flag** honouring the experiences of Residential School survivors is on the way. We are currently waiting for the City to let us know where it is safe to install a flag pole. Once the flag is installed, Amanda will make a presentation explaining its symbolism.



Vestry has been glad to offer rainbow cookies and cupcakes in **support of Pride Month**. We are looking into a presentation by Rainbow Resource Centre for Vestry members and any others who might be interested.



Food Drive to mark **St. Mary Magdalene Day**: To honour our Saint's Day, we want to spread some good news! We will be accepting donations of food until July 23, at which point we will share them with a St Vital community food bank, or perhaps host our own for a day. Please share as generously as you can. If you prefer to donate cash, please place your donation in the offering, or give by e-transfer to stmary@mts.net. Be sure to note that you wish your donation to go to the food drive.



St. Mary Magdalene Day Barbecue and Games Day will be on Sunday, July 23 following worship. Brian C. has been readying the barbecue and Caroline is making plans for games. It will be great to celebrate together!!

Vestry will be making plans over the summer for a **discussion series** to start in the fall. It will feature guest speakers or webinars to be offered monthly. If topics of interest come to mind, please note them, and let a Vestry member know.

Vestry is aware that our **church photo directory** needs updating. We want to make sure we have the best chance to get to know each other. Stay tuned!



Just as a reminder, Vestry includes Wardens and Deputies Caroline Olagbuji, Chima Chira, Carey Isaac and Cherryl Lenton; as well as Barbara Jalibat, Dawn Hilstrom, Heather Birtles, Carol McPhaden and Cathy Mondor.

Vestry is taking its summer break, and so the **next Vestry meeting** will be Tuesday, August 22 at 7:00 pm.



The Parish of St. Mary Magdalene is on Treaty 1 territory.

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St. Mary Magdalene Church Calendar

July 2023		August 2023	
2	5 th Sunday after Pentecost Eucharist 10:30 am	6	Transfiguration of the Lord Eucharist 10:30 am
9	6 th Sunday after Pentecost Eucharist 10:30 am	13	11 th Sunday after Pentecost Eucharist 10:30 am
16	7 th Sunday after Pentecost Eucharist 10:30 am	20	12 th Sunday after Pentecost Eucharist 10:30 am
23	8 th Sunday after Pentecost Eucharist 10:30 am St. Mary Magdalene Day BBQ & Celebration ACF Service 7 pm	22	Vestry meeting 7 pm
30	9 th Sunday after Pentecost Eucharist 10:30 am	27	13 th Sunday after Pentecost Eucharist 10:30 am ACF Service 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