



Archbishop Melissa visits ACW Place Photo: Sheila Puls

ARCHBISHOP'S VISIT

On January 22nd, Archbishop Melissa joined the Diocesan ACW Board for the regular Board meeting. Following the meeting, she was given a tour of the warehouse and was shown the many aspects of our social action. Even though our Christmas bales had been sent in November, and donations sorted and our warehouse tidied for the Christmas Open House, the shelves were full although some items are always needed (see the Social Action report).

Over lunch, we discussed how we could spread the word about the resources we have and which we would like to share more widely.

This was an enjoyable day and a good start to 2019!

OPEN HOUSE 2018

Another successful open house was held on December 4th with about fifty people attending - more than double the number who attended in 2017! Everyone was in holiday spirit, and as usual, there was a wonderful variety of food, coffee, tea and hot cider. It was special to have representation from St Jude's Home, the Indigenous ministry, the VGH Chaplaincy and Mission to Seafarers - spreading the word about the outreach we can do.

THE EASTER STORY

Blue, and beautiful,
and lonely
it soars in endless flight
like a ship without a port
in the silent empty night.



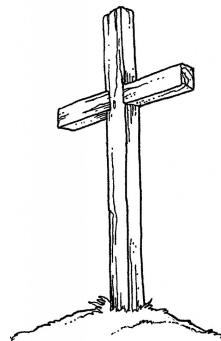
The little specs are people
and from the moment of their birth
dream as only gods dare dream
then crumple lifeless in the earth.

HE could have come in power
to free against their will,
but HE chose to let the drama
unfold upon a hill.

HE could have come in majesty
amidst triumphant cries,
but HE chose to come, a lowly man,
His glory in disguise.

And so it is at Easter
there's a very special tree -
when he knows THE ONE who hung there,
the little spec is free!

Author unknown



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE FEBRUARY 2019



What a wonderful winter we have had so far, compared to those suffering very harsh times in Eastern Canada. We are so lucky to be seeing snowdrops and tulips starting to push their heads out of the ground and bloom.

Our Christmas Open House was very successful with quite a few new people visiting with us and hearing about our social action. Thanks to all that attended and who brought friends. Our attendance was up over the previous year. It is always wonderful to be able to share with others all the good work that is done from ACW Place and to let people know that if there is a need in their community we can help.

The Board was very excited to have Archbishop Melissa Skelton visit on Jan 22 to learn about what we do. This was the first visit to ACW Place by the Archbishop.

By now, all President's will have received a request to make recommendations from their group to the Board for Outreach. Please let us know who it is you would like to support for the next 3 years. One group that was left off list was The Parish of St. Mary with St. Mark, Mayo, Yukon. The parish along with the RCMP are hosting Healthy Family Learning Evenings for the community and have held 2 dinner/parenting evenings so far. Please make your wishes know to the Board by the end of March.

Our North East Fraser Area meeting will take place on Tuesday, March 12, 2019 starting at 9AM. The day is being hosted by St. Catherine's of Alexandria, Port Coquitlam. I hope that many of you will be able to attend.

SAVE THE DATE for **Saturday, April 27, 2019** for the Annual General Meeting to be hosted by St. John's, Port Moody. More details will be available later. Would you consider a position on the Diocesan Board? We are looking for a Vice President, Secretary, Area Representatives and Members at Large. Speak to any member of the Board to find out more about these positions.

Most branches will be holding elections, if not already,

soon. Please make sure to send your Executive names, with contact information, to the Board along with your year end financial statements.

As we approach Lent may this be a season of reflection and preparation for all of you before the wonderful celebration of Easter.

Blessings
Gail Revitt

A LENTEN JOURNEY

*Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, March 6th
and ends on Maundy Thursday, April 18th*

Lent is a solemn religious observance in the Christian liturgical calendar that begins on Ash Wednesday and ends approximately six weeks later, before Easter Sunday. The purpose of Lent is the preparation of the believer for Easter through prayer, repentance of sins, almsgiving, and self-denial. Lent last for 40 days, giving up certain luxuries in order to replicate the sacrifice of Jesus Christ's journey into the desert.

So what do we give up? Or what do we change?

There are many ideas, but one which has been gaining popularity is the idea of **giving** rather than giving up:

- * Place one non perishable food item in a box each day, then donate it to a local food bank.
- * Remove an item of warm clothing from your closet, collect these and donate to a not-for-profit organization for those in need.
- * Each day send a note to someone you haven't seen for a long time or to a shut-in from your community.
- * Say 3 nice things to someone every day.
- * Practice random acts of kindness.
- * Set aside your spare change to donate to a charity.
- * Engage in a daily devotion
- * Start a good habit - volunteer

Whatever you choose to do, may this be a time of reflection for you, leading to a blessed Easter.

Our Lenten journey through the waters of baptism provide an opportunity to pray, act and give while deepening our understanding of the PWRDF and partners. Written by the Ven Charlene Taylor of NFLD it can be downloaded once or as a daily devotion.

CHAPLAIN'S CHATTER Candlemas, 2019

Now, it may be past Candlemas by the time this is read – but nonetheless it seems a special celebration for those of us in the 'senior' category. It seems that as we grow older the precious stories of Simeon and Anna take on more significance. These stories remind us of our own living, ageing, the years of struggling and hurting and loving. A lifetime of presenting ourselves at worship, hoping, praying, for that 'our eyes may see the Lord'. And it is truly all these lifetime experiences that enable Anna and Simeon to recognize God in Jesus and to have confidence in the safety and vulnerability of God's love.



From the Iona Community on the West Coast of Scotland comes this lovely prayer:

*Like Simeon, may I grow old, in hope and in wonder.
Like Anna, may I be in love with you, all my days. May I be open to truth, open to surprises. May I let your spirit into my life. May I let your justice change my behaviour. May I live in the brightness of your joy.*

But Candlemas is more than a remembrance of the stories of Simeon and Anna – it is a winter festival of birth and light. It seems particularly poignant to me this Christmastide as we welcomed the birth of our eighth grandchild in December and lay to rest our in January, my mother-in-law of one hundred years. Birth and light as she went on to join her loved ones.

Birth and dying, and in between, living, as we strive for holiness and justice, acceptance and forgiveness and affirmation, we live with the questions and the mystery, trusting in hope of home and the glory and the light of the resurrection. These are the elements of life and loving that dance and burn in the candles of Candlemas. And these are the candles that are offered to us so that, lit by God's bright fire, we may be light



and warmth for God's world.

And another lovely poem – this by Ruth Burgess:

Starmaker God, Lightener of the world,
bless us and warm us into light and loving.
Bring us to the light of Jesus
all the length and breadth of our nights and days.

You have found me. I have seen you.
Daily I know you are cherishing me.
Kindle and draw me into the light of your loving
every night and day of my journey home.
As the candle, so my life;
flickering, burning, changing,
alight and warm with the light which is you.

Rev. Beverley Stewart

Candlemas (also spelled Candlemass), also known as the Feast of the Presentation of Our Lord Jesus and the Feast of the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary, is a Christian Holy Day commemorating the presentation of Jesus at the Temple. It is based upon the account of the presentation of Jesus in Luke 2:22–40. In accordance with Leviticus 12: a woman was to be presented for purification by sacrifice 33 days after a boy's circumcision. It falls on February 2, which is traditionally the 40th day of the Christmas–Epiphany season. While it is customary for Christians in some countries to remove their Christmas decorations on Twelfth Night (Epiphany Eve), those in other Christian countries historically remove them on Candlemas. On Candlemas, many Christians (especially Anglicans, Methodists, Lutherans, Orthodox and Roman Catholics) also bring their candles to their local church, where they are blessed and then used for the rest of the year; for Christians, these blessed candles serve as a symbol of Jesus Christ, who referred to himself as the Light of the World. The Feast of the Presentation is one of the oldest feasts of the Christian church, celebrated since the 4th century AD in Jerusalem.

For those who love anagrams:

This one's truly amazing:

To be or not to be: that is the question; whether tis nobler in the mind to suffer the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune.

Becomes:

In one of the Bard's best thought of tragedies, our insistent hero, Hamlet, queries on two fronts about how life turns rotten.

And:

"That's one small step for a man, one giant leap for mankind."

Neil Armstrong.

Becomes

"A thin man ran; left planet, makes a large stride, pins flag on moon! On to Mars!"

VGH CHAPLAINCY: MAKING LIFE BEAR-ABLE

As the Anglican Chaplain at Vancouver General Hospital I provide pastoral care to an ever-shifting population of patients, families, visitors, medical and support-staff, in six different buildings, spread over four city blocks.

I visit every ward (including emergency) and meet patients from every conceivable cultural background, speaking a variety of different languages. Some cannot even speak due to their medical condition.

I interact with people who are often physically, mentally, relationally and spiritually suffering. They are living through great stress, experiencing powerful emotions such as fear, anxiety, rage, shame, guilt, loneliness, depression, abandonment, despair, helplessness, loss and an oppressive uncertainty about their chances of recovery.

Patients arrive from all over British Columbia, and hospitalization can be very traumatising for those urgent cases flown in by helicopter from remote locations. This is particularly true for Aboriginal and Inuit patients who have been abruptly evacuated. They have been suddenly separated from their support systems of family, church, community, language and culture, and often feel lonely, disoriented and vulnerable. Because B.C. is also a major tourist destination, patients and their families arrive from all parts of the world. I have supported families from Texas, Ireland, New York, Ontario and Quebec who have fallen ill or been involved in accidents during their vacations here.

Chaplaincy requires supportive, empathetic presence and attentive listening. I hold hands, literally and metaphorically. I pray with and for people, anoint them for healing, bring them communion, make phone calls on their behalf, occasionally follow-up with them after they have been discharged, and try to speak words of grace, love and life into their difficult circumstances. Basically, I journey with them as far they need, or will allow. Before I can do any of this, of course, I have to win their trust. Sometimes the little things are the most significant. Recently I visited an elderly lady and asked her: "is there anything I can do for you?" Her smiling spontaneously positive reply was: "your presence is enough."



Rev. Bryan Rivers

Submitted photo

My most challenging case this year was ministering to a young man from Africa. He had no immediate family in Canada, was blind, hooked up to a ventilator, and unable to speak clearly because of a feeding tube. He was entirely dependent on the nursing staff and, understandably, was anxious, alone, and felt abandoned by God, even though he had a strong faith. I visited him several times, anointed him and prayed with him, but still felt that there was something missing. He needed something tangible to hold on to, especially in the darkness of his blindness and vulnerability. So, I brought him a Teddy Bear, the archetypal source of comfort. His was delighted, hugged it tight and his face lit up.

I gave him the challenge of naming the bear. When I went back he told me the name he had chosen: "Emmanuel". This name, intimately associated with the Nativity and Christmas, means "God is with us". In choosing that name he was affirming and renewing his faith that God had not abandoned him. Every time he hugged the bear, he knew he was loved.

Anglican Chaplaincy at VGH depends entirely on donations to survive. On behalf of the patients, family and staff I invite you to invest financially and spiritually in this vital ministry. Information on how to donate is available on the Diocese of New Westminster web-site, or you may contact me directly. May God richly bless YOU today, especially with the precious gift of good health.

*Rev. Bryan Rivers
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FROM SHIP TO SHORE – CHAPLAINCY TO THE SEAFARERS



The sea is something many of us are drawn to especially in our natural surroundings here in B.C. and no doubt some of you have childhood or otherwise memories of being by and in the sea.

What many of us are not aware of (and there is a name given to it - 'sea blindness') are the men and a growing number of women who make a living on the sea and in particular those commercial vessels such as you may have seen in English Bay.

Seafarers come from every country on earth, representing all religions and cultures working to provide a better quality of life for their families. They do so despite the dangers on the high seas, such as adverse weather, pirates, low salary, poor conditions, loneliness and a sense of isolation in being away from loved ones and their communities for long periods of time, often up to 9 months.

The Mission to Seafarers, in its 160 year history to date, has always been about coming alongside the seafarers by providing, in the example of love shown to us in Jesus, a safe haven, help and hope from all that would trouble and distress them.

As the Senior Chaplain, working in team ministry with the Roman Catholic and Christian Reformed Chaplains, our response is a ministry of presence and hospitality which is to be found wherever we encounter the seafarers, on our visits to the ships when alongside, in our centres - one at Roberts Bank (Delta Port) and one on Waterfront Road (Vancouver) - and

when we transport them in our mini-vans.

As Chaplains it is also our role to educate people by sharing the story of the seafarer and we do that at church services, by speaking to groups, holding an annual open house and attending events such as Mission Fest at Canada Place.

We can't do the ministry without the support of others, it is after all a ministry which has been entrusted to us all by God and to which some feel called to offer their time, talent and/or treasure. Support comes in many forms such as items for the Christmas Appeal, the annual Cycle for Seafarers in August, donations of gently used clothing, making cookies, knitting toques and, so important, prayer. To learn more you can go to our website www.flyingangel.ca.

You are invited to our Open House at the Waterfront Centre on Tuesday 26th February to drop by between 4 and 8pm. We will have a pianist, a Salmon BBQ, you can look around the building and learn more about the story of the seafarer for yourself.

*The Revd Peter Smyth
Senior Port Chaplain. Mission to Seafarers*

SEA FEVER

I must go down to the seas again,
to the lonely sea and the sky,
And all I ask is a tall ship and a star to steer her by;
And the wheel's kick and the wind's song
and the white sails shaking,
And a grey mist on the sea's face,
and a grey dawn breaking.

I must go down to the seas again,
for the call of the running tide
Is a wild call and a clear call that may not be denied;
And all I ask is a windy day
with the white clouds flying,
And the flung spray and the blown spume,
and the sea-gulls crying.

I must go down to the seas again,
to the vagrant gypsy life,
To the gull's way and the whale's way
where the wind's like a whetted knife;
And all I ask is a merry yarn
from a laughing fellow-rover,
And quiet sleep and a sweet dream
when the long trick's over.

John Masefield

WORLD DAY OF PRAYER - MARCH PREPARED BY THE WOMEN OF SLOVENIA

Come. Everything is ready. Come to praise, thank, and proclaim the kingdom of love.

The invitation is grounded in the parable that Jesus told about a great dinner which was attended by the ones called off the streets, as the ones invited excused themselves. The community formed around the table is not enough to fill the house – there is still room. Who are missing from the table in your community?

Friday March 1st - many ACW branches are involved or check with the churches in your area.



SOCIAL ACTION



As usual, work continues in the warehouse on Monday mornings, packing the bales to the northern parishes. Although the warehouse is well supplied with most items, as usual, there are a few needs.

New baby items are in demand for our layettes - especially receiving blankets. Please always keep in mind that we need cloth diapers for the layettes shipped to the north. In places where the ground has permafrost, there are no dump facilities, so garbage is a major problem, and disposable diapers are not welcome!

Also there is always a need for blankets to wrap the bales - twin size and larger.

The Monday Ladies are at ACW Place every Monday except holidays from January through June and from September through November. Visitors and helpers are always welcome - no experience necessary!

*Beth Fortin
Social Action*

NEWS FROM THE BRANCHES

While St Thomas renovations are going on, the bazaar was held at the Lutheran Church and was a wonderful success. Our ACW outreach was to a local elementary school providing Christmas presents and food for one family. This outreach involves the St. Thomas Parish and this year the First Lutheran Church involved themselves in this outreach.

Christmas season 2018 was busy and productive and fun. Bazaars and teas and parties and worship made for a busy December in most parishes. It is also a time of giving...gift boxes to Surrey mission ...hats and socks and gifts to the mission to seamen, bales to the north and prayer partner exchanges are just some of the many ways of giving. In fact at the November area meeting at St Michael's, Rev. Peter from Missions to Seafarers left with a very full car - as he did once again from the December ACW Place Open House. The Christmas Bazaar at St George's, Fort Langley was the 110th annual - always held on the first Saturday in December.

January and February bring parish activities like the dinner dance at Holy Trinity on January 26th and St Helens has an international dinner in February, where they share cultures and food.

It was with sadness that the Board heard that St Mary's Kerrisdale ACW had decided to disband their formal ACW Branch - there is currently ongoing discussion about continuing as a "Friendship Group". We thank them for many years of service and wish them well as they prayerfully consider where they go from here.