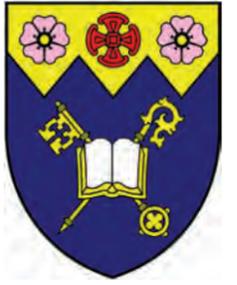


THE MESSENGER

FEBRUARY 2017

www.edmonton.anglican.org



Above: EndPoverty Edmonton Co-chair and Diocese of Edmonton Bishop Jane Alexander and Edmonton Community Foundation CEO Martin Garber-Conrad attend the "Building Pathways Out of Poverty" breakfast at St. Timothy's Anglican Church; members of the St. Tim's Men's Group hosted more than 100 people, donating \$2,400 in proceeds to the Bissell Centre; Martin Garber-Conrad describes how the newly formed Edmonton Community Development Corporation will help revitalize neighbourhoods in Edmonton's northeast. Photos and story: Margaret Glidden



City paves way for building pathways out of poverty with new community development corporation

More than 100 people met for breakfast at St. Timothy's Anglican Church on a Saturday morning in January to learn more about EndPoverty Edmonton's community-driven approach to building pathways out of poverty.

Diocese of Edmonton Bishop Jane Alexander, local politicians, and members of faith communities and non-profit organizations were welcomed by the St. Tim's Men's Group, who donated \$2,400 in proceeds from the breakfast to the Bissell Centre, an Edmonton social agency that has been empowering people to move from poverty to prosperity since 1910.

Dining on quiche and fresh fruit, early-risers had the opportunity to hear Edmonton Community Foundation Chief Executive Officer Martin Garber-Conrad describe the evolution of Edmonton's newly formed Community Development Corporation (CDC).

As head of the fourth largest community foundation in Canada with assets of \$500 million, Garber-Conrad, who also serves as an honorary assistant at Christ Church, Edmonton, has spent most of his career leading non-profit organizations. He noted that the concept of a CDC is not new to Edmonton. Forty years ago, the Social Planning Council outlined the possibilities for a non-profit community corporation to generate economic opportunity for low and moderate income people.

Nearly 20 years later, in 1994, a second call for a CDC to address the challenges of the inner city came during the City's redevelopment of the Boyle Street/McCauley neighbourhoods.

Recently, the creation of a CDC was identified as a cornerstone action in the EndPoverty Edmonton (EPE) Five-Year Road Map, paving the way for the concept of a CDC to be developed as a tangible and practical tool for ending poverty.

In December, 2016, Edmonton City Council gave unanimous support to EPE and its recommendation to create a Community Development Corporation to bring together business, industry, community organizations and other stakeholders to revitalize vulnerable neighbourhoods and help lift more than 100,000 men, women and children above the poverty line.

"We know that increasing economic opportunity is critical for improving the social conditions in neighbourhoods where people are living in poverty," said Bishop Jane Alexander, Co-Chair, EndPoverty Edmonton. "The CDC is the cornerstone action of the EPE dream for ending poverty in our city within a generation," she said. "There is a vision for Edmonton as a place where no child goes hungry and every child has equal opportunity to live into their dreams. In December, City Council gave its unanimous support to EPE and every penny we asked for. We are a city full of dreamers and I don't think there could be anything

better. We know we should judge a society on how they treat their most vulnerable and needy people and Edmonton has taken a bold step here. The Anglican church and other denominations have been central to these discussions right from the beginning and I thank you for your support."

Over the next five years, the City of Edmonton will provide the Edmonton Community Development Corporation with approximately \$10 million in land, a one-time investment of \$500,000 in start-up capital and \$280,000 in annual operating funding. This funding will be matched by contributions from each of the CDC's initial founding partners (Edmonton Community Foundation, Homeward Trust and the United Way of the Alberta Capital Region).

According to Garber-Conrad, the officially incorporated Edmonton CDC, owned and governed by its founding partners, will create affordable and supportive housing and employment opportunities in an area of northeast Edmonton stretching from Boyle/McCauley to Clareview. It will foster individual growth by offering skills development and job-training and will encourage economic development by investing in community-based businesses, providing access to non-conventional financing.

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Assisting newcomers P. 2



Food security roundtable P. 4



St. Mark's nativity P. 7

Canada and US neighbours bring Syrian family to Edmonton

MARILYN SCOTT
Sadaqah Group Refugee
Sponsorship Committee

Waiting was the hardest part. Even as our sponsorship group gathered at the airport to greet our Syrian family we could hardly believe that, after more than a year, we were finally getting to meet them.

Stepping off the plane in Edmonton on November 14, 2016, the mother, father and their two children, a girl (8) and a boy (11), looked exhausted, but their smiles lit up the world.

Our adventure with sponsoring a Syrian refugee family began in December, 2015, when my daughter Catherine, who lives with her husband in California, came home for Christmas determined to sponsor a family. Having seen the horrific news reports of three-year-old Syrian boy Alan Kurdi drowning while trying to cross to Greece, Catherine had called me in tears to say “we have to do something.” But private sponsorship is not possible in the

United States.

We gathered five people together and called ourselves the Sadaqah Group (which means giving to others with love and compassion in Arabic). We found it would be much less complicated if we worked under the umbrella of a Sponsorship Agreement Holder (SAH). After some searching, we saw an article in the paper and got in touch with Gail Millard, who has been in charge of the Edmonton area Anglican refugee sponsorship program for more than 20 years. Gail was instrumental in finding a parish to co-sign for us. Two members of our group are church members (Lutheran) but most are not affiliated with any denomination – just a group of friends, old and new.

Gail’s parish, St. John the Evangelist, Edmonton, was already sponsoring a family and could not handle any of the finances, but when we assured them we would be raising all the needed funds, they agreed to co-sign. The Edmonton diocese graciously agreed to distribute the money we raised.

It was heart-breaking to have to choose just one family from Gail’s huge stack of sponsorship requests. We knew our small group could not handle a large family, so we narrowed our choices down to five small families and agonized over our decision. We read and reread the letters and finally made our choice.

Gail submitted our application at the end of March and we waited. The anxiety of waiting was difficult. The family’s city of Homs was completely destroyed and they had been living as refugees in Lebanon. (During the Syrian civil war, Homs, the country’s third largest city,



The Sadaqah Group anxiously awaits the arrival of its sponsored family. Pictured from left are: Juliana Scott (Marilyn’s granddaughter and designer of the colourful welcome poster), Marilyn Scott, Ray Rideout and Paul Chell. Not pictured are: Catherine Scott, Judy Bauer (photographer) and Diocese of Edmonton Refugee Sponsorship Coordinator Gail Mallard. Out of concern for their relatives in Syria, the family requested their names and photo not be publicized.

became an opposition stronghold and thousands of residents were killed and much of the city destroyed when the Syrian government launched a military assault against the city between 2011 and 2015.) Would the family pass the interview process? Did they have the required documents? When would they arrive?

Continued on next page.

St. Patrick’s REACHes out to senior newcomers

St. Patrick’s Anglican Church is continuing its mission to welcome newcomers to Canada and the community of Mill Woods in southeast Edmonton by helping seniors overcome social isolation.

From July through October, 2016, a successful program saw the parish partner with the Welcome Centre for Immigrants (WCI) and the Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers (EMCN) to offer free English language and computer literacy classes to senior newcomers. Upwards of 40 people from several regions of India and Africa participated in the morning classes offered three times a week.

Having identified language development and cultural awareness as key learning priorities, the seniors were given an opportunity to realize their goals through presentations and fieldtrips organized by Julie McArthur, EMCN instructor; Chand Gul (WCI community connector and volunteers from St. Patrick’s.

At Fort Edmonton Park they learned about Canadian geography, culture and history (with an emphasis on aboriginal history). In bringing an element of fun to their learning, the seniors enjoyed such activities as baton races, tent-pitching, and making S’mores during a camping



In the fall, St. Patrick’s, Edmonton held a graduation event to mark the first session of English & Computer Literacy Classes for Senior Newcomers offered by the parish in partnership with the Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers (EMCN) and the Welcome Centre for Immigrants (WCI). Back row (left to right): Chaturbhai Patel (student), Renuka Gupta-Jantz (volunteer), Rosalyn Murray (St. Patrick’s volunteer), Sarah Bohnet (St. Patrick’s volunteer), Kevin Kraglund (St. Patrick’s Rector), Mohinder Banga (Edmonton City Councillor, Ward 12), Askok Kumar (student), Chander Kanta (student), Urmi Desai (volunteer), Chand Gul (WCI Community Connector). Front row: Julie McArthur (EMCN Instructor), Felicia Tatum (volunteer), Harpreet Kaur (volunteer).

trip at the church. Some of the topics covered by the group included civic services, recycling and waste management, and preparing for a visit to the doctor.

During the computer classes, held at WCI in Millbourne Mall, the seniors acquired basic computer literacy and operating skills. They learned to set-up an email account, save and download files, and navigate the internet using search engines.

Nineteen participants completed a survey conducted by Linda Guenther, Seniors Community

English Program Coordinator. Overall responses indicate they were less fearful and more confident about going out into their community having attended the classes:

- 84% reported an improved ability to speak on the phone, get places (bus, etc.) and do their shopping
- 79% reported they were more able to attend appointments (school, legal, medical, etc.)
- 74% reported an improved ability to do their banking
- 68% reported an improved ability to use computers and

technology

- 26% reported they were better equipped to address housing-related issues
- 10% reported they found it easier to look for a job.

Additionally, some of the students received assistance with counselling/therapy, employment, medical (help with obtaining Alberta Health cards), and referrals to programs/community resources based on interest and/or need, as well as information about seniors centres and other multicultural centres.

This year, St. Patrick’s will use surplus funds from its \$15,000 Anglican Foundation grant and parish proceeds from contributions to the Diocese of Edmonton REACH fundraising campaign to continue hosting job fairs in cooperation with WCI and EMCN. In January, 2017, the parish will partner with the PEGASIS (Pan-Edmonton Group Addressing Social Isolation of Seniors) Program to offer another installment of English Literacy Classes, helping connect senior newcomers to resources and one another.

“It is a great joy to see our prayers for the unemployed and newcomers to Canada being put into action,” says St. Patrick’s Rector Kevin Kraglund.

Canada and US neighbours bring Syrian family to Edmonton cont.

Continued from page 2.

Catherine created a roles and responsibilities (RACI) document that covered every aspect of supporting a family. The Sadaqah Group became a vibrant group of 10.

Each member is responsible for a portfolio, complete with job description and responsibilities. We met monthly, with Catherine leading the meetings via Skype from California. We decided to do peer-to-peer fundraising which meant appealing to our friends and families for donations. We have been astounded by their generosity which has extended beyond money to people sharing their experiences as well as donations of furniture, household goods and grocery gift cards.

There were tears of joy when the family finally arrived in November. Edmonton has quickly become their new home. Within a week we had helped them settle into a duplex and enrol the children in school. Members of our group took turns each day teaching the parents English until a language assessment could be done. In the meantime, we helped them complete countless forms and applications.

The parents both have university degrees and are eager to find employment. They began full-time English classes in January. They have shared with us that, before being notified of their sponsorship, they were planning to flee to Turkey and make the treacherous crossing to Greece and then to Germany.

It scares us to think how things might have turned out had we not intervened on this family's behalf.

Certainly there have been tears and, at times, they have said 'everything is different and everything is hard.' But sponsorship has been a very rewarding experience for all of us! The family celebrated Christmas Day with 25 members of my extended family on my brother's acreage near Sherwood Park. They went on a hayride, carried lanterns on an evening walk through the forest and took part in our joyful Christmas dinner (they ate the turkey, but skipped the ham). When we asked them what they liked best about Christmas Day they said: 'All of it! Very fantastic! Viva Canada!'

They are a very liberal Muslim family who read the Koran and also the Bible. The father says 'both are good books that teach us much about life.' They showed us a cellphone photo of a tree they had decorated in Syria to celebrate the New Year. They were familiar with some of our Christmas carols and nativity scenes since Syria does have a large Christian population.

Many thanks to St. John the Evangelist Parish, Diocese of Edmonton Bishop Jane Alexander, John Gee, Jeanette Madill, Gail Millard and the Edmonton diocesan staff for their enthusiasm, dedication and support. We couldn't have done it without you.

City paves ways for building pathways out of poverty continued

Continued from front page.

"The CDC is one more tool in the toolbox of resources available to the non-profit sector," said Garber-Conrad. "For the most part, non-profit organizations have had very few financial resources and have almost never had any loan capital, for example."

Across North America, CDCs have transformed distressed communities through the creation of stable housing, increased employment opportunities and economic and social development. More than 4,600 CDCs operate in the United States, collectively contributing to more than 96,000 housing units, 7.4 million square feet of commercial space and 75,000 jobs annually.

Next door in Saskatchewan, following the closure of a corner grocery store in a core neighbourhood in Saskatoon, the Quint CDC started Station 20 West, a \$10 million community enterprise centre that includes affordable housing, a public library, a health clinic and café in addition to a community grocery store.

As Canada's oldest operating CDC, Nova Scotia-based New Dawn Enterprises has encouraged a culture of self-reliance in Cape Breton for 39 years. A private, volunteer-directed business dedicated to community-building, New Dawn employs more than 175 people from the Cape Breton community and services 600 Cape Bretoners each day through its companies and projects. Early examples of New Dawn's approach as both a business and social development organization include the establishment of dental clinics and the Cape Breton School of Crafts, half-way houses and seniors' supportive housing.

At its essence, a CDC listens to and addresses the needs of its community – linking housing and business ideas with investors, lenders and mentors. In addition, a CDC has the capacity to develop projects itself, particularly in cases where there is no other appropriate developer. (*Edmonton Community Development Corporation: Making the Case, April 2016* [http://vibrantcanada.ca/files/imce/communitydevelopmentcorporation-](http://vibrantcanada.ca/files/imce/communitydevelopmentcorporation-makingthecase.pdf)

[makingthecase.pdf](http://vibrantcanada.ca/files/imce/communitydevelopmentcorporation-makingthecase.pdf))

Moving forward, the CDC will recruit senior leadership, aiming to have its CEO and board of directors in place by spring. It will then begin working with communities to identify local needs, opportunities and resources. It will work closely with Edmonton's social housing societies (E4C, Habitat for Humanity, etc.) to develop affordable and supportive housing, and promote employment opportunities enabling people to earn a living wage.

Garber-Conrad hopes the CDC will eventually be able to engage with other levels of government and initiate programs, such as a micro loan program through the Bissell Centre, to help people overcome adversity and gain financial stability.

There is much work ahead for the CDC and its supporters, but they are an essential tool for helping Edmonton build pathways out of poverty.



Athabasca and Edmonton Parishes
Invited to
Messy Church Alberta Meet-up
Saturday, February 11, 2017
10 am to 4 pm
Holy Trinity Anglican Church
10037 - 84 Ave Edmonton AB
RSVP by Feb 4th to
churched@edmonton.anglican.ca



SUBMISSIONS DUE MONTH PRIOR to PRINTING DATE

DEADLINE for MARCH, 2017 ISSUE: FEBRUARY 1

Submissions:
We welcome letters to the editor, news, stories (max 500 words), event notices, book reviews and photos.

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PWRDF focuses on helping others help themselves



DOROTHY MARSHALL
Diocesan Representative
PWRDF

I am remembering a time last spring when I was asked to give a talk at my daughter's graduation banquet. I felt the need to say something profound; advice that would be life-changing (we all know how much teenagers love to get advice). I was coming up blank, so I decided to seek some advice: what did these young people need to know?

I conducted a randomized, double blind, scientific survey - sort of. Actually, what I did was ask friends and family what they wished they had known when they were 18. I questioned more than 40 people and the results were very interesting. Some of the responses were practical, like 'I wish I knew that credit card interest would kill you,' or 'I wish I had

known how to load a dishwasher.' My personal favorite came from a person who said, as an 18-year-old they didn't realize the value of other people's experience. They could have saved themselves a lot of trouble if only they had listened to older people's advice (their parents', maybe?). The largest number of responses touched on the theme of growing and learning. Many people said they had no idea how much they would change in the 10 years after high school. They didn't realize at the time of their graduation how much they didn't know and how much they would learn!

As I reflect on my past two years as the Edmonton diocese's representative for the Primate's World Relief and Development Fund, this idea of not realizing how much we don't know certainly rings true. Like many of us, I grew up in an Anglican home, where my mother always supported the work of the PWRDF. It was always assumed that supporting world development and disaster relief through this organization was the right thing to do. Since becoming the diocesan rep, I have learned a great deal and, although I still know this is

a good thing to do, I now know why.

At its very core PWRDF is an organization of Christian faith in action – it is an instrument of our faith, which advances development and responds to emergencies, acting for positive change throughout the world. PWRDF responds to the Marks of Mission of the worldwide Anglican Communion and, in 2016, more than one million men, women and children in 16 countries benefitted from a range of PWRDF projects. The Federal Government has shown its confidence in PWRDF by partnering with us in a \$20-million 5-year program to improve maternal, newborn and child health in four countries in Africa; contributing \$6 for every \$1 raised by PWRDF.

At my first gathering with diocesan reps from across Canada, the verb "enabling" was repeated often. This is an organization that enables others. We do not helicopter in from our advantaged position to offer our solution to a development need. Working with partners on the ground, who have found a solution to their community's problem, we provide financial support and technical guidance so that they can sustainably

improve their lives. Providing a dairy cow to vulnerable women in Tanzania, for example, gives women enough milk for their family, with some left over to sell and produce an income. Providing seeds and training



Providing farmers with seeds and advice on best practices enables people to feed themselves and their community

community farming instructors enables people to reclaim the land and grow their own food.

Fiscal responsibility is a key priority for PWRDF as it empowers people to improve their quality of life. Unlike other aid organizations which can spend more than 20% of funds on administration, PWRDF enlists the help of volunteers and spends just 7.94% of its income on administration and a further 3% on fundraising.

PWRDF is a network of volunteers who share the stories of the organization's good work throughout the world. Many of the parishes in our Diocese of Edmonton have a PWRDF

representative whose mission is to spread the good news of this ministry. If your parish does not have a rep. and you are interested in this life-giving opportunity for involvement, please speak to your rector or contact diocesan rep. Dorothy Marshall by email at camfarm@syban.net.

I have learned that as the Canadian Anglican response for emergency relief, refugees, development and justice, PWRDF is making a difference in the world. If you would like to offer support, please donate through your church envelope, or online at www.PWRDF.org.

Social Justice Roundtables begin with a focus on food

DOROTHY MARSHALL
Diocesan Social Justice
Committee

In early December, "champions" of social justice ministries gathered for a roundtable discussion on Food Security. The first of a series of conversations facilitated by the diocesan Social Justice Committee, this was an opportunity for parishes in the Edmonton diocese to collaborate and share their passion, experiences, best practices and resources.

Meeting at St. Augustine of Canterbury Church in east Edmonton, we began with a short theological reflection on Food Security and all

that term encompasses. We also discussed the term "Food Sovereignty," which ensures that people not only have a sustainable food supply but, also, a choice in what they will eat and how it is grown.

Members of the group shared stories of the particular food-related ministries ongoing at their church. We heard about how Holy Trinity Riverbend is working hard in their community to supply affordable food baskets through the Wecan Food Basket Society of Alberta. We learned of St. Mary's long-time support of the Edmonton Food Bank as



St. Augustine of Canterbury, Edmonton launched the Sunshine Community Garden in June 2015.

a food drop-off and distribution site, and the community connections the parish has made through this valuable ministry. Holy Trinity, Old Strathcona told us about the strength that comes from nurturing relationships with their neighbours at the community suppers they hold jointly with Trinity Lutheran Church. St. Andrew's shared how their parish works with the faith community in Camrose to facilitate the local food bank, school lunch program and other support programs.

St. Andrew's also hosts a weekly soup kitchen in their hall. The host parish, St. Augustine's, spoke with passion about the history of the community garden which flourishes on their church property: how this initiative started by the community and supported by the church has brought everyone together.

The group was encouraged by what we heard. We were blessed to learn that very often a project initiated by an individual, blossoms into a successful Food Security ministry.

Continued on page 8.

We are missional disciples because our God is missional



The Ven. RICHARD KING
Archdeacon for Mission and
Discipleship
Diocese of Edmonton

For those who read this column last month, were you shocked to read that Jesus used mission to catalyse the discipleship of the early disciples? I find that is how most people react. Indeed, I was shocked when it was pointed out

to me. I was brought up with the model that church attendance, receiving the sacraments, bible study; these things are the primary cause of spiritual growth. I was shocked to learn that Jesus used a different model.

Why does Jesus do this? Jesus uses mission to catalyse discipleship because we have a missional God. The Bible tells the story of a God who, having brought into being and blessed creation, sees it all go awry. What does God do about it? In Genesis 12 we see God's missional strategy begin to be revealed. He calls Abraham to trust Him and in two imperatives in Genesis 12:1-3, tells him to 1. 'go' and 2. 'be a blessing;' that through Abraham and his descendants all the

nations of the world will be blessed. This God is a God of Love. It's a love that searches, reaches out and invites. It is *missional*.

Just like the disciples when Jesus calls them in Luke 9, Abraham knows absolutely nothing! He learns as he *does*. Through the next 10 chapters, in spite of some horrendous mistakes, God works in and through him. Fast forward to the Exodus and God's mighty deliverance of a people who had become enslaved after 430 years in Egypt. God gives Abraham's descendants a charge: be a light to the nations of me, the God who has redeemed you. Israel being this 'light' is one of the stated purposes of the Law (Deuteronomy 4:6-8) and a strong theme

in the Old Testament (e.g. Isaiah 42:6, 49:6, 60:3); that the nations might be drawn to God. Jesus sums up the story of this missional God, and thus the entire Bible, in the one-and-a-half verses of Luke 24:46b-47. "This is what is written (i.e. Old Testament): the Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem."

Understanding that mission catalyses our discipleship helps us make sense of the Bible! In his book, *The Mission of God*, Christopher Wright writes: 'The whole Bible renders to us the story of God's mission through God's

people in their engagement with God's world for the sake of the whole of God's creation.'

Our role as missional disciples is to be part of that ongoing story of God's missional love that began with Abraham; that, like Israel, we will be God's light to the people around us (Matthew 5:14-16) and be part of the ongoing sharing of God's love in Jesus name (Luke 24:46b-47). As we do this, God catalyses our discipleship and causes us to grow in faith, trust, love and understanding, for missional discipleship reflects His very character.

So let it shine folks! Go and be a blessing!

Yours in His Service,
Richard

A couple's confirmation

STAFF
The Messenger

Two active members of St. Luke's Edmonton, Rob and Gabriela Jessome, took the step of confirmation on Sunday, November 27.

Bishop Jane Alexander said it was the first time she had confirmed a husband and wife together.

The two were presented for confirmation by Gabriela's daughter, which was very meaningful, as well as the fact that this

confirmation took place on the first Sunday of Advent.

Rob and Gabriela have a heart for outreach and service and are a great blessing to St. Luke's.

They can be counted on every year to organize and participate in the Christmas Pageant, and this year were single-handedly responsible for raising nearly two-thirds of the proceeds from the Christmas Bazaar through their production and sale of homemade tomales!



Pictured above, left to right: Samira (daughter of one of Gabriela's students), Bishop Jane Alexander, Gabriela and Rob Jessome and the Ven. Richard King.

Photo: Karen MacDonald, Rector's Warden

EUSI commissions Padre Holmström

The Rev. Sarah Holmström and the Edmonton United Services Institute (EUSI) celebrated a new journey together on November 13, 2016. At a commissioning service held at All Saints' Cathedral, members of the EUSI, led by president Major (Retired) Alex Tsang, welcomed Holmström as their padre. Holmström succeeds the Rev. Joshua Phillpotts, now deceased, in this ministry.

Holmström serves as assistant priest at All Saints' and, as EUSI Padre, will provide counsel and support to service members and their families, and lead funeral services for veterans.

"The effects of war are close to my heart," says Holmström who has a brother who served in the military. "Any time I can be of service to service members or their families, is a joy and honour."

Founded in 1912, the EUSI promotes the welfare and wellbeing of the men and women currently serving in the Canadian Armed Forces, as well as veterans and their families.

"We help retired soldiers



Pictured from left: Second Lieutenant (Retired) Gordon J. Smith, EUSI and All Saints' member; Stephen Gallard, veteran, EUSI and Holy Trinity, Old Strathcona member; Padre the Rev. Sarah Holmström; Major (Retired) Alex Tsang, EUSI Edmonton President; piper Glenn Stewart.

Photos: Capt. Grant Cree, *The Sentinel*

copied with injuries, suffering from PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder) or with other concerns such as pension issues," says Second Lieutenant (Retired) Gordon J. Smith, a member of the EUSI and All Saints' Cathedral.

During the service a stole consecrated by the

Very Rev. Neil Gordon, Dean of Edmonton, was presented to Holmström. Emblazoned with the EUSI crest, the stole is a symbol of her new office. You can watch a video of the commissioning service online at

<https://youtu.be/TBG6JWLGvQI>

Unwrapping the meaning of Christmas at Christ Church

MARGARET GLIDDEN
Edmonton Editor

Families, friends and neighbours of Christ Church, Edmonton came together to share a meal and the peace and joy of God's love, December 3.

More than 120 guests turned out for the annual Messy Christmas dinner, their arms loaded with donations of warm mitts and socks. Guests enjoyed a catered turkey dinner with all the trimmings (generously provided by a family from the parish).



More than 120 people brought gifts of socks and mitts to the Messy Christmas dinner.

After dinner, an enormous gift-wrapped box was delivered by elves. Christ Church Rector the Rev. Susan Oliver gathered all the children and invited them to unpack the gift. In so doing, they revealed several smaller boxes, each containing a symbol of Christmas. As they listened to the story of the baby born in a manger in Bethlehem, the children were reminded that Jesus, the light of the world, is God's greatest gift to us.

Oliver then invited Messy Christmas guests to wrap their gifts of socks and



The Rev. Susan Oliver shared the symbols of Christmas with an enthralled audience.

mitts, which had been piled in the center of each table. The children filled the box to overflowing with these gifts from the "Christ Church family," which would be given to guests attending the next parish community dinner.



Plenty for all at the annual Christ Church Christmas feast.

Singing songs of the season at St. John the Evangelist

BART WEST

St. John the Evangelist, Edmonton

Under the direction of our gifted organist and choir director, Dr. Kobie Kloppers, junior and senior choirs at St. John's started preparing in early September for our annual Festival of Lessons and Carols.

In October, a call went out for "guest choristers" who might like to join us until the big day on December 11th. Around 10 singers answered the call, mostly people who have sung in the choir before but, as always, a few new ones worked up their courage to volunteer. (We are Anglicans after all!). The volunteers added an element of richness to the choir's sound. We practised every week for 90 minutes, followed by two special practices just before the service, under the direction of our guest conductor Dr. Melanie Turgeon from The King's University. We were joined by 10 instrumentalists on classical guitar, flute, piccolo, trumpets, viola, cello, harpsichord, a small African drum and a tambourine to supplement the organ and piano.

In addition to the 22 members of the Senior Choir, (who, as the *Book of Common Prayer* so gently puts it, are mostly of "Riper Years"), we have 16 junior members ranging in age from six to eleven. They practice each Sunday at 8:45 am before the 9:15 am Contemporary Service. They join the Senior Choir again after Communion to prepare for anthems/Lessons and Carols. The Junior Choir has been in existence for the last 12 years. It was and is inspired by Dr. Kloppers, whose endless patience and



Dr. Melanie Turgeon, guest conductor.

Photos: Doug Cowan

non-condescending way of sharing his mastery and love of music have contributed to the strength and vitality of our ever-growing choir.

"The collective voice of the youth choir brings a quality of freshness and brightness to the sopranos of the Senior Choir," says Kobie. "They're very keen about the music, even though



Dr. Jacobus (Kobie) Kloppers, choir director, at the harpsichord.

it's classical and demanding. They did, for example, sing three selections from the *Messiah* since last year and even asked me if they might sing the whole of the *Messiah* next year!"

I suspect other church choirs in the Edmonton diocese have gone through a similar mix of pain and pleasure in preparing for their own service of lessons and carols. You may be interested to know that this tradition originated in England on Christmas Eve, 1878 at a service presided over by the then Bishop of Truro, Edward Benson. Later, after Benson became Archbishop of Canterbury, the service was universally adopted by the Anglican Church. The service held at King's College, Cambridge has been broadcast world-wide by the BBC every year since 1931 and is available through the US Public Radio System.



Choirs, instrumentalists, director and guest conductor after the service.

St. Mark's, High Prairie brings the nativity story to life

PETER CLARKE
St. Mark's, High Prairie

Over the last 13 years, the ringing of St. Mark's church bell has called the community of High Prairie together during Advent for a "Live Nativity" presentation of the Christmas story.

Gathering on the church lawn the first Friday of December, no matter how cold or snowy, the people of St. Mark's proclaim the story of Jesus' birth to their neighbours. This year more than 100 people came out on a mild winter's eve to observe or to take part in this much-anticipated community event.



Angels bringing good news of great joy for all the people.

No fewer than four narrators read passages of scripture from Matthew and Luke as people in costume enacted the story accompanied by the singing of favourite hymns.

Appearing before Mary in a bright, shiny halo and festooned with lights our six-foot-tall angel Gabriel was truly a glowing sight to behold.

Not to be outdone, our herd of animals - a pygmy goat, a young donkey, a fully grown donkey and a very placid sheep called Cotton - stood out in their cameo roles.

The animals were certainly not a passive display. As our Mary and Joseph set off on their journey to Bethlehem, (walking around the church driveway past rows of people), they were followed closely by the large donkey.

Cotton, meanwhile, led shepherds to fields nearby where Gabriel's Heavenly Host of angels enthusiastically and very loudly proclaimed the birth of Jesus to all of High Prairie.

Herod, portrayed by our Filipino parish priest, addressed the three resplendently robed Magii,

who then presented their gifts to the Christ child in the manger.

All of these colourful characters, as well as the church, its cross and surrounding trees adorned in colourful lights, were no doubt quite a sight to behold for the many motorists passing by on the main highway through town.

The local radio station and ecumenical community support this joyous celebration of the TRUE meaning of Christmas, with members of several churches taking part in the performance. After the show there was much rejoicing as people crowded into our small church hall to warm up over mugs of hot chocolate topped with whipped cream.



Shepherds in the stable with Cotton the sheep.

Whether the temperature is a balmy -3C, as it was this year, or a frigid -30C, as it has been in past years, we keep warm by singing praises to God and proclaiming His Word.



Mary (Kelsey Marquardt), shepherd (Cameron Waikle) and Joseph (Pastor Brian Gilroy) proceeding with donkey to the stable. Photos: Chris Clegg, South Peace News

If you are ever in High Prairie on the first Friday in December, follow the lights to St. Mark's stable for a truly joyous presentation. Who knows? You may quickly find yourself dressed in costume and helping to proclaim the story of God coming into this world in human form.

Athabasca community comes together for ecumenical lessons and carols

MARY GISLASON
All Saints', Athabasca

Churches and singing groups from the Athabasca community came together at All Saints' Church on December 22, 2016, to present the 5th Annual Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols.



For the past five years during Advent, All Saints' musician Marvyn Rogers has organized the ecumenical concert benefitting local charities. Photos: Mary Gislason

Organized by All Saints' musician Marvyn Rogers, the ecumenical Christmas concert raised more than \$1,000 for Road to Hope (transportation for cancer patients) and other local charities.

The wondrous story of Jesus' birth was told to the large congregation through readings by local dignitaries, government officials and church leaders, including: the Athabasca Mayor and Chamber of Commerce President, Athabasca County Reeve, Athabasca University President, Athabasca Riding MLA, Family Support Services representative, Aspen School Board Chair, RCMP member, and clergy from All Saints' Anglican Church and St. Gabriel's Roman Catholic Church.

Carols were led by church and community choirs, accompanied by musicians on the violin, guitar, piano, keyboard, organ, and handbells.

At least 100 people (from Anglican, Roman Catholic, United and Latter Day Saints churches, as well as other ecumenical groups) were involved in the performance. Many volunteers also worked



The Athabasca Community Handbell Ringers are a beloved presence at the community lessons and carols service.

hard to prepare the donated lunch which was offered following the program.

Enjoying food and fellowship, audience members commented on how great it was to 'hear the old carols once again!' 'What a way to bring everyone into the Christmas spirit!' 'We continue to be fascinated by the story of Jesus as God's son 2,000 years after His birth!'

Thanks be to God.

Church Communities Extend through Cultural Events



On Sunday, November 6, St. Saviour's Mission, Wabamun celebrated its rural roots with Cowboy Church, a tradition which began several years ago to celebrate the Canadian Finals Rodeo (CFR). Each year in November, rural Alberta families journey to Edmonton for CFR Week and Farmfair International, held at the Expo Centre.

"It was a cool, overcast and rainy morning in Wabamun, but it was warm and cozy inside St. Saviour's church (located in the Wabamun Senior's Centre) as the Rev. Coleen Lynch prepared for Cowboy Church," said Bethanne O'Neil, who attended the "remarkable and delightful" service for the first time. A lay reader at Holy Trinity, Old Strathcona, O'Neil said: "The music was uplifting and, after reading to the Word, Rev. Coleen spoke of how Jesus suggested we 'do unto others.' If we simply count our blessings, smile or touch someone who needs it and pray, it is healing, both for us and for those whose lives we touch. A wonderful time of fellowship and unexpected connections with some old friends followed the service."

St. Patrick's Anglican Church in Whitecourt offered its now annual Jiggs Dinner and Silent Auction in the fall. It is such a popular event they have done it six years in a row! One hundred and fifty dinners were served out of the local Royal Canadian Legion Hall. At \$15 a ticket, organizers say the dinner was an overwhelming success. We are grateful to everyone involved in organizing this event, as well as all those who came out to support the dinner and auction, said the Rev. Rita Milne, deacon-in-charge of St. Patrick's.



For the second straight year, the Emmanuel Anglican Church Outreach Committee hosted a benefit dinner for the Gibbons community. At our "Cowboy Cookout," November 13, 2016, we offered a menu of comfort foods including smoked beef on a bun, cornbread, baked beans and apple tart dessert. The outreach committee was led by our chefs Liz Maci, Penny Pawlechko, Barb McCallum, Patti Selman and Patsy Hawryluk, assisted by volunteers Brent Pawlechko who cooked the memorable beef. Doreen Pawlechko and others helped with the setup and cleanup. We gave all \$2,515 (\$1,440 from ticket sales and \$1,075 from the silent auction) to the Bon Accord/Gibbons Food Bank. The cost of putting on our Cowboy Cookout was covered by monies raised by Emmanuel's REACH campaign. The Pembina Company graciously offered to match the monies raised by this year's event. Georgina Melnyk, president of the Bon Accord/Gibbons Food Bank, expressed her appreciation to the organizers and to the community for their hard work and generous donation: "We can't wait to see what you cook up next year!"

Social Justice Roundtables begin with focus on food continued

Continued from page 4.

The Social Justice Committee of the Diocese of Edmonton is endeavouring to be a bridge between church-led social justice activities and a resource for parishes seeking to foster

their own ministry. Last year, this committee had conversations with each parish in the diocese to determine the social justice needs in their area, hear about current initiatives, as well as the parishes' vision for future ministry.

The data gathered from these conversations was grouped into eight "clusters." As a next step, "champions" of these ministries have been invited to gather for roundtable discussions. These talks are an

opportunity for those present to share their experiences and learn from each other. Parishes with established ministries can offer insight into their best practices and identify any hurdles they have encountered, while those wishing to expand their activities in a particular area can acquire new ideas and enthusiasm.

All are welcome to attend the roundtable discussions which will continue into the spring on the topics of Aboriginal Reconciliation (January 28 at Good Shepherd Anglican Church, Edmonton) as well as Global Justice; Poverty, Homelessness and Youth; Seniors Issues and

Refugees; and Persons with Disabilities. Watch the *Synod Scene* newsletter (www.edmonton.anglican.org) for details.

The Social Justice Committee welcomes your input. For more information and to express your interest, email socialjustice@edmonton.anglican.ca.



St. Augustine's Sunshine Garden continues to bring parishioners together with other members of the community.

The Social Justice Committee of the Edmonton Diocese invites you to:

1+1=3

discuss • engage • synergize

Roundtable Schedule

November 2016

- Food security
- January 2017
- Indigenous reconciliation
- Global justice
- Persons with disabilities

February 2017

- Poverty & homelessness
- Youth

March 2017

- Seniors
- Refugees

Share Your Experiences • Engage Your Passions
Further God's Kingdom

For more information
& to RSVP, contact:
socialjustice@edmonton.anglican.ca