



Learning through Lent

A PWRDF resource by

Bishop Jane Alexander and
the Rev. Patrick Stephens



PWRDF

The Primate's World Relief
and Development Fund

The Anglican Church of Canada

2021

Table of Contents

Introduction, Lent 2019.....	3
Easter Garden Activity Plan.....	4
Creation is our story	
Ash Wednesday to Saturday: February 17–February 20	6
Creation: A relationship of respect	
The First Week of Lent: February 22–February 27	14
Who we are and how we are called	
The Second Week of Lent: March 1–March 6	26
Water and fire: life in the balance	
The Third Week of Lent: March 8–March 13	42
One world, one faith, many nations	
The Fourth Week of Lent: March 15–March 20.....	54
Incarnation and redemption: a natural connection	
The Fifth Week of Lent: March 22–March 27	66
A personal commitment to creation discipleship	
Holy Week to Easter: March 29–April 4	78



How to read this resource

ON PAPER

Download and print the PDF. Links to PWRDF stories are included for your reference.

ON A SCREEN

PWRDF story links are also embedded within the text of the reflection and will take you directly to our website.

IN AN EMAIL

Subscribe at pwrdf.org/Lent2021 to receive an email every morning. Story links are embedded in the text.

Introduction

Welcome to PWRDF's 2021 Lent resource, "Creation care: climate action," prepared as part of our three-year education focus of the same name.

While COVID-19 has swept climate change concerns from the headlines over the past year, PWRDF partners around the world and here in Canada, continue to address the impacts of a changing climate on the communities they serve. In this resource, and over the next three years, PWRDF is seeking to lift up those partner stories and invite Canadian Anglicans to learn, reflect and act both through PWRDF and through broader ecumenical initiatives.

PWRDF is grateful to our writers, Bishop Jane Alexander (Diocese of Edmonton) and Rev. Patrick Stephens (Diocese of Ottawa). Through scripture, reflections and prayers, they invite us into the story of Lent, the story of God's created order, and the story of PWRDF's partners. As Bishop Jane writes, "There is simply no getting around it – the love story of God and humanity starts with creation. There is no way to distance ourselves from being part of, and responsible to, God's wonderful creation." And Patrick observes, "Incarnation is important... When God is revealed to us through Jesus, God takes on the fulness of the human experience. In Christ, the Creator is not only connected to creation, but the Creator becomes part of creation itself!"

On Sundays in Lent, together with the writers, we invite you to take a Sabbath rest, to reflect on the scriptures, reflections, prayers and stories of the past week, and prepare to enter into the coming week's theme.

In addition to the contributions of our two writers, Su McLeod, PWRDF's Youth Coordinator, has prepared an accompanying resource for families with children, and Patrick has developed an Easter Garden Activity Plan.

"Creation care: climate action" will be available for you as a daily reflection in your e-mail inbox. It will also be provided as one downloadable PDF, should you wish to access it that way. To subscribe to the daily reflection, or to download the Children's resource, visit pwrdf.org/Lent2021.

May your journey through Lent and through this resource offer you glimpses of that incarnational God who is alive in us, in our partners, and in creation of which we are all part.

– Suzanne Rumsey, PWRDF Public Engagement Program Coordinator



ABOUT THE AUTHORS:

Born and Raised in England, **Bishop Jane Alexander** relocated to Canada in 1990. After several years of academic pursuits in Educational Psychology, Bishop Jane was called to ordained ministry in 1998. Since her consecration as Bishop in 2008, Jane has served on numerous municipal, provincial and worldwide committees. Bishop Jane is passionate about matters of social justice and furthering God's Kingdom.



The Rev. Patrick Stephens grew up in the Diocese of Ottawa and graduated from Algonquin College as a Registered Practical Nurse. He then volunteered for a year with the Mennonite Central Committee in Mymensingh, Bangladesh. After working as a palliative home-care nurse, Patrick discerned a call to ministry and was ordained in 2012. He now serves as incumbent of the Parish of St. Barnabas in Deep River and is the Diocesan Representative for the Diocese of Ottawa.

Easter Garden Activity Plan

A Traditional Lenten Activity, Adapted by The Rev. Patrick Stephens

Week	Garden Tasks	Tell the Story	Pray
Lent 1	Sculpt the soil in the basin, creating a cave/tomb (by covering a small side-lying cup or planter.) Also form a hilltop mound of soil.	Today we begin a new project. We are making a new garden. When we make something new, we remember that God made us. We need to take care of this garden. When we care for it, we can remember that God cares for us. We are all part of God's creation and God loves all of us!	We thank you God for creation and for everything that reminds us of your power. Thank you for loving us. Help us to care for the world you have made. Help us to love you and to love other people as you love us. Amen.
Lent 2	Sow grass seed by mixing seed into surface of soil. Water every few days from this point on.	Green grass is a sure sign of life. So many animals find their food, their homes, and their safety in the fields of the earth. Grass is often the first thing that grows after a fire, or after land is cleared by people. Grass reminds us that God's promise of new life is always true.	We thank you God for the gift of new life. Help us to always see the signs of your love and life in the world around us. Help us to also be signs of your love in the world. Amen.
Lent 3	Make a stone path that passes from the edge of the garden to the hilltop and the entrance of the cave.	We share the journey of faith with Jesus and with each other. We are invited to travel together on the path (the way) of Jesus. God's love guides us on our journey.	Thank you God for guiding us. Help us to follow Jesus. Bless us and our fellow travelers on the road of faith. May we always be guided by love. Amen.
Lent 4	Plant a small tree or vine in the garden.	Trees and vines begin as tiny plants but they grow and can become big and strong. Some even give fruit. Faith is like a tree or a vine. We may start out with small delicate faith but over time, our faith can grow! Jesus helps us to grow in faith every day!	God, we thank you for big trees and vines. Help us to have faith in Jesus so that we can grow like young trees and vines. Help us to know you better every day. Amen.

Lent 5	Stand three wooden crosses on the hilltop.	The cross is a symbol of our faith in Jesus. It is also a special sign of God's love for us. When we see the cross we remember that we are loved and that we can love others also. Today we place crosses in our garden to get ready for a very holy story.	Thank you God for the sign of the cross. When we see this special sign, help us to remember your love for us. Help us to learn the holy story of Jesus. Amen.
Palm/ Passion	Place palms and cut clothes on the outer path. Wrap a figure of Jesus in cloth and place it in the tomb. Cover the entrance with a large stone.	Today we remember how happy everybody was when Jesus entered the city of Jerusalem. They laid palms and clothes on road for his donkey to walk on. But only a few days later, some of those same people wanted Jesus to die. He was killed on a cross next to two other people and his body was placed in a tomb. This is a sad story but it helps us remember that Jesus never stopped loving others. Not even in death.	God, we know the joy that people felt when Jesus entered Jerusalem. We also know the sadness of Jesus' suffering and death. We give thanks that Jesus never stopped loving, even when he was being killed. Help us to remember your love when we think about this sad story. May we never stop loving others. Amen.
Easter	In advance so it is a surprise..... Roll stone from the entrance of the tomb. Remove the figure of Jesus and set folded cloth in tomb. Plant or place small flowers and butterfly decorations throughout garden.	What happened to our garden? (Briefly recount the story of Jesus' death and burial.) The sad ending of the story isn't really the ending at all! Jesus is not dead but has been risen from the dead. This means that not even death is strong enough to separate us from God's love. Jesus is alive and he invites us to live forever with him. If we believe in Jesus, we know that God's love is even more powerful than death. We celebrate this truth by praising God and shouting a special word: Alleluia!	Thank you God for creating us, for the gift of new life, and for giving us the holy story of Jesus Christ. Help us to have faith in Christ and to live our lives in his way of love. May we grow in faith as we travel on this journey together. And may we always know the saving power of your love. We celebrate by praising you and shouting together... Alleluia!



PWRDF has created a children's resource for Lent that also looks at creation care and climate action. To view or download, go to pwrdf.org/Lent2021.

Scripture

Genesis 1:26; 2:15 (paraphrased)

You made us in your image to reflect your love in our care for your creation, and we reaffirm our calling to be your stewards of the Earth, whose bounty provides us life.

Reflection

There is simply no getting around it — the love story of God and humanity starts in creation. There is no way to distance ourselves from being part of, and responsible to, God's wonderful creation. Human beings have a role in Creation Care whether we think we signed up for it or not. It's simply in our DNA.

As Canadian Anglicans through the work of PWRDF we are familiar with the third Mark of Mission to tend to human need by loving service. Now more and more we see the connection between the third and fifth Marks of Mission — that human needs are exacerbated by the current climate crisis. It is time for us to be bold and face this present time in a spirit of lament and repentance that pushes us to hope and to action. Perhaps you gave the gift of climate action through the PWRDF World of Gifts catalogue. Now in this Lenten season the time has come to take on Creation Care. To be a person of hope, prayer and action for the world, in the name of Jesus.

At the 2016 meeting of the Anglican Consultative Council, the whole Anglican Communion was reminded that care for creation is part of intentional discipleship for Christians. The Anglican Communion Environmental Network asked us to "love the world as much as God does." As we begin these Lenten reflections on Creation Care let's take a good look around us and really see this world and begin to love it anew. In that love may we find hope, not just for the future of the natural world but also for ourselves who were given the task of caring for all God's creation. Let us prepare to give up those parts of our former lives that degrade or misuse creation and commit to change. Each day the PWRDF partner stories will inspire us and reconnect us to God's creation.

"As people of faith, we don't just state our beliefs — we live them out. One belief is that we find purpose and joy in loving our neighbours. Another is that we are charged by our creator with taking good care of his creation. The moral crisis of climate change is an opportunity to find purpose and joy, and to respond to our creator's charge." —Justin Welby, Archbishop of Canterbury, *New York Times*, November 2017

Prayer

*Receive this cross of ash upon your brow,
Brought from the burning of Palm Sunday's cross.
The forests of the world are burning now
And you make late repentance for the loss.
But all the trees of God would clap their hands
The very stones themselves would shout and sing
If you could covenant to love these lands
And recognise in Christ their Lord and king.*

*He sees the slow destruction of those trees,
He weeps to see the ancient places burn,
And still you make what purchases you please,
And still to dust and ashes you return.*

*But Hope could rise from ashes even now
Beginning with this sign upon your brow.*

— Malcolm Guite (from *Word in the Wilderness*, Canterbury Press used by permission of the author)



PWRDF and climate change

THE UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) calls climate change the defining issue of our time. From shifting weather patterns that threaten food production, to rising sea levels that increase the risk of catastrophic flooding, the impacts of climate change are global in scope and unprecedented in scale. Without drastic and immediate action, scientists warn that changes to major ecosystems, the planetary climate system and food supplies are irreversible. Perhaps nowhere are these changes more brutally felt than in many of the vulnerable communities where PWRDF partners work with people who do not yet have the knowledge or infrastructure to cope. Small holder farmers struggle to feed their families. Soil degradation and expanding deserts decrease food security, increase poverty and drive migration. Climate-related disasters, such as drought, floods, cyclones and tropical storms, increase food insecurity, both

in the immediate aftermath of a disaster and in the long term. In 2018, climate and natural disasters — so-called climate shocks — jolted 29 million people into acute food insecurity. Nearly 23 million people in 20 African countries and 3.8 million people in Central America and the Caribbean (mainly in El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras and Nicaragua) were affected. As scientists sound the alarm over climate change, there is also reason to see hope. There are small changes afoot. As part of PWRDF's 2019-2024 Strategic Plan and our commitment to Sustainable Development Goal #13 (Climate Action), we are working with partners in Tanzania, Bangladesh, Cuba, Uganda, Kenya, Zimbabwe and Colombia on strategies to mitigate the impact of climate change.

**Read the whole story on our website at
<https://pwrdf.org/climateaction/>**

Scripture Psalm 8:1, 3-4

O LORD our Sovereign,
 how majestic is your name in all the earth! ...

When I look at your heavens,
 the work of your fingers,
the moon and the stars that you have established;
what are human beings that you are
 mindful of them,
mortals that you care for them?

Reflection

“When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what are human beings that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them?” Those verses are a psalmist, David in fact, saying “WOW.” You can imagine this man writing something to express how he felt about the greatness of God as seen in the beauty around him. In other words, this psalm as well as many others, shows us that creation is busy glorifying God even if we might be too preoccupied to notice. Then one day David looks up and says “WOW”.

Somewhere in the many boxes of children’s stuff in our house are each of our four children’s first paintings. They are beautiful, to my eyes, but probably would look like big blobs to most other people with no apparent worth or beauty. It’s all about how you look at things. Sometimes we take things for granted. I have recently started feeding the birds in our back garden and spending time watching them. I notice now their colours, the texture of their wings, their behaviours. They were always there before but I never really looked closely. In December 2020 the great conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn had us all looking up at the stars and perhaps seeing them as if for the first time.

Perhaps this week you could talk with a friend or with your family about the beauty that is all around us if only we would pay attention. If you can’t get outside, look at old photos, pull up scenes from your memories – even fire up Louis Armstrong singing “What a Wonderful World.” See if you can recapture that gift of joy and wonder in all God’s works that we pray for at baptism.

We know that we do not live in a perfect world, but one with the potential for perfection. We know that we do not share this planet with perfect people, because we ourselves are not perfect, but since all of us are made in God’s image we have incredible potential. Let us pray that tomorrow when we wake up we might look out on this world with a child’s eyes of wonder, with the eyes of the writer of our psalm. Then, go and find a ‘thin place,’ places which in Celtic spirituality are touching places between earth and heaven.

A Reading attributed to Meister Eckhart

Apprehend God in all things,
for God is in all things.
Every single creature is full of God,
and is a book about God.
Every creature is a word of God.
If I spent enough time with the tiniest creature — even a caterpillar —
I would never have to prepare a sermon,
so full of God
is every creature.

Prayer

*There is no plant in the ground but tells of your beauty, O Christ.
There is no life in the sea but proclaims your goodness.
There is no bird on the wing,
there is no star in the sky,
there is nothing beneath the sun but is full of your blessing.
Lighten my understanding of your presence all around, O Christ.
Kindle my will to be caring for Creation.*

– Phillip Newell



For the love of creation

FOR THE Love of Creation builds on a long history of engagement by Canadian churches and faith-based organizations in ecological conservation, environmental activism, and advocacy for climate justice. Indigenous Peoples have long reminded us of the interconnectedness of all creation. Faith organizations understand the importance of respecting this interconnectedness as we speak to this moment through our values and collective action. Faith

organizations are also attuned to the young voices in our midst who are leading the way in showing the urgency of the climate situation. The COVID-19 pandemic has dramatically impacted people, amplifying economic, political, cultural, and social fissures and shown how government and societies can change quickly when convinced of the need. For the Love of Creation is an active and growing voice for collective and immediate action.

Read the whole story on our website at

<https://pwrdf.org/pwrdf-among-faith-groups-launching-climate-conversation-initiative/>



For Children

Old Turtle, by Douglas Wood, describes a world where animals and rocks and trees can speak to and understand one another. But idyllic as this may sound, the beings of the world are arguing because everyone sees God in different ways. The breeze sees God as a wind that is never still. The star sees God as a faraway glimmer. The fish see God as a swimmer in the depths of the ocean. No one can agree. But Old Turtle hears this commotion and speaks up, teaching all of creation who God really is. When people join the Earth, creation needs to share Old Turtle's message of hope in an attempt to save the beauty around them and help them to see God in one another.

<http://www.scholastic.ca/books/view/old-turtle>

Scripture

Psalm 19:1-6

The heavens are telling the glory of God;
and the firmament proclaims his handiwork.
Day to day pours forth speech,
and night to night declares knowledge.
There is no speech, nor are there words;
their voice is not heard;
yet their voice goes out through all the earth,
and their words to the end of the world.
In the heaven he has set a tent for the sun,
which comes out like a bridegroom from his wedding canopy,
and like a strong man runs its course with joy.
Its rising is from the end of the heavens,
and its circuit to the end of them;
and nothing is hid from its heat.

Reflection

Psalm 19 reminds us that all heavens declare the glory of God. God speaks to us through the wonders of the sunrise and sunset, through the glories of the sky and nature. It was common in the early church to talk of the “two books of God”: the Book of Nature and the Book of Scriptures. We need daily experience of both if we are to have a FULL sense of the awesomeness of God. Nature needs to do what it is created to do, human beings need to do what we were created to do, each full of the presence and glory of God. The heavens are not empty, the natural world was not empty until people showed up. And yet sometimes our lack of care for what surrounds us would seem to imply that only people declare the glory of God. Not so says the psalmist.

“Our present ecological crisis, the biggest single practical threat to our human existence in the middle to long term, has, religious people would say, a great deal to do with our failure to think of the world as existing in relation to the mystery of God, not just as a huge warehouse of stuff to be used for our convenience.” – Rowan Williams, former Archbishop of Canterbury

So today, try stepping back and taking a long view. Human beings are in a symbiotic relationship with the whole world, to love and to be loved, to nourish and to be nourished. How has this happened in your life already? What have you seen that drew you to tears with natural beauty? Where did you take the deepest breath of mountain or sea air? Did you remember to say thank you to the one who created this?

That's what we can do right now — notice, really notice. Think today on these words from The Brothers Karamazov by Fyodor Dostoevsky: “Love all God's creation, the whole and every grain of sand in it. Love every leaf, every ray of God's light. Love the animals, love the plants, love everything. If you love everything, you will perceive the divine mystery in things. Once you perceive it, you will begin to comprehend it better every day. And you will come at last to love the whole world with an all-embracing love. Love the animals: God has given them the rudiments of thought and joy untroubled. Do not trouble it, don't harass them, don't deprive them of their happiness, don't work against God's intent.”

Prayer

*This world,
Your creation,
Rolled into a sphere,

Packaged in sunshine,
Gift-wrapped in love,
Given to us,
Thank you.*

© John Birch, 2016



Living the fifth mark of mission

“...In this short video I want to share some of the ways that people across the whole world are being impacted by environmental problems and climate change. But I also want to share some of the ways Anglicans across the Communion are responding to some of those challenges and how they are living out the fifth Mark of Mission, and how all of us can ‘strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, and sustain and renew the life of the earth.’...”

“For example, in South Africa, Burundi, Kenya and Uganda, Anglican churches are engaged in reforestation initiatives which will help mitigate climate change. They’re taking action on pollution and waste. Churches are helping people adapt to a changing climate. In the Pacific, the Anglican Church of Melanesia is helping with food security and preparing people for relocation. People are greening their churches using renewable energy, adopting net zero targets, using their land for environmental projects and committing to green protocols, all of which will help prevent further climate change. They’re celebrating the Season of Creation; praying and fasting for the climate and bringing creation care into the worshipping life of the church. They’re speaking out and calling for change. Young people are often leading the way. Churches are divesting from fossil fuels and investing in solar projects and other renewable energy schemes. And of course, churches are always amongst the first responders when disasters hit and they’re active in long-term recovery...”

“As well as responding at the local level, Anglicans are also connecting and sharing across the Communion to respond to the impacts of climate change. They’re using the Pastors and Disasters toolkit to be equipped for disaster preparedness and response... There’s a climate resilience

community of practice and there are things happening at Communion-wide level. A number of resolutions on the environment and climate change have been adopted by the Anglican Consultative Council and Lambeth conferences. There is an Anglican Communion Environmental Network which connects people across the Communion. There are Eco-bishops who make ecological concerns a particular focus of their ministry. The Anglican Communion has a presence at the United Nations and is accredited to the UN Environment Assembly. And the Anglican Alliance itself provides a convening platform after disasters, coordinating responses across the Communion. There is a huge amount happening across the Communion...”

“It seems to me that what we need more than anything is a heart, or mind level change; to change the way we see the world and relate to it in our deepest being. We need that ‘spiritual and cultural transformation’...”

“There are other world views, including within the Anglican Communion. Indigenous Christians across the Communion, share a world view that is about relationship. So, Indigenous, Maori and Pacific peoples understand Creation as inherently unified, with a profound connection among all that exists with Creation... Human beings are positioned *in* Creation, not as supreme masters over the Earth community, but as interdependent members *of* the Earth community...”

—Dr. Elizabeth Perry, Programme and Communication Manager, Anglican Alliance

Watch this video at

<https://youtu.be/oSiFmLgZMqg>

Scripture **Psalm 65:9-13**

You visit the earth and water it,
 you greatly enrich it;
the river of God is full of water;
 you provide the people with grain,
 for so you have prepared it.
You water its furrows abundantly,
 settling its ridges,
softening it with showers,
 and blessing its growth.
You crown the year with your bounty;
 your wagon tracks overflow with richness.
The pastures of the wilderness overflow,
 the hills gird themselves with joy,
the meadows clothe themselves with flocks,
 the valleys deck themselves with grain,
they shout and sing together for joy.

Reflection Today we travel in our imaginations through this country of Canada. We think of journeys we have made, or hope to make. In this beautiful part of God's creation what have we seen and what do we hope the children of 2121 will still be able to see? Because the world is changing and we know it. Try just a few of the reflection questions from Living Ecological Justice: A Biblical Response to the Environmental Crisis (Citizens for Public Justice).

Imagine:

1. Travelling to Banff National Park in Alberta and not finding any glaciers
2. Visiting the wetlands on the shores of Hudson Bay in northern Ontario and finding no vegetation or wildlife
3. Sitting outside your house during the summer with temperatures over 40 degrees C, plus humidity
4. Receiving more than 350 cm of snow next winter, setting a world record for the most snowfall in a season
5. Planting a garden and experiencing the driest growing season on record
6. Moving to a new home in southern B.C. and experiencing one of the worst wildfires in 50 years. The fire destroys your home and 200 other homes around you, as well as the surrounding forest.

Consider

1. Scientists predict the glaciers in Banff that are less than 100 metres thick could disappear in the next 20 years.
2. Environment Canada reports that climate-induced rises in sea levels are contributing to declining plant and animal life in the wetlands.
3. Global warming is resulting in more frequent, hotter and longer heat waves that already impact poor people disproportionately.
4. Climate change is resulting in heavier than normal snowfalls.
5. In Atlantic Canada and Southern Ontario and Quebec, the Spring of 2012 was the driest ever recorded.
6. The Canadian Forestry Association reports that climate change leads to an increase in the number of forest fires due to warm and dry weather.

Prayer

*Lord, make us people who recognise, nurture and act towards a more sustainable world for the benefit of all who draw life from this planet.
Raise up campaigners who will speak out for wisdom, restraint and compassion.
And teach us to partner with you in protecting this precious world
and the lives of our most vulnerable global neighbours. Amen*

– Tearfund “Hope for Creation” prayer



PWRDF supports water project in Kenya

In MAKUENI County, located in the southeast of Kenya, there is very little rain, and it falls in just two short rainy seasons per year. As climate change pushes average temperatures higher and precipitation lower, drought and water scarcity are common.

Here, as in many parts of Kenya, much of the population gets its drinking water from unsafe sources such as ponds, streams or unprotected wells. Water from these sources is often contaminated with dangerous bacteria that can cause serious illness.

According to cultural practice, it is typically women's and girls' responsibility to gather clean water, usually far away. This means long walks to collection points and hours lined up in scorching heat, leaving them vulnerable to sexual assault and other dangers.

To make it easier for people to get safe water, PWRDF has partnered with Utooni Development Organization (UDO) in a project to install shallow water wells with hand pumps in nine communities in Makueni County, Kenya.

UDO has already been involved in constructing sand dams, which are reinforced concrete walls built across a river to collect water. Now with more than \$30,000 in funding from PWRDF, sealed pump wells are being installed in order to make the water from these sand dams easier to collect, and safer to drink.

Thanks to a sealed concrete slab on the surface and underground filtration chambers, these wells will also minimize contamination, protecting the community from water-borne illnesses such as cholera and typhoid fever, which are prevalent in the area.

The wells will also drastically cut down the distance and wait time for women and girls to collect clean water, keeping them safe and freeing up time allowing them to focus on other priorities.

The project will provide the community with training on how to properly conserve and protect sources of water as well as how to store and treat water within households. Priority will be given to the most vulnerable communities with a plan to directly benefit 1,620 people, including 1,080 women and girls.

UDO has been active in helping Kenya achieve sustainable development since its inception in 2005. The organization was awarded with the United Nations Development Program Equator Initiative Award in 2014 for its outstanding work promoting local sustainable development and PWRDF looks forward to a strong partnership with UDO.

Read the whole story on our website at
<https://pwrdf.org/pwrdf-supports-water-project-in-kenya/>

T O M M O R O W:

The First Sunday in Lent, take a Sabbath rest
and reflect on last week's readings.

Creation: A Relationship of Respect

Rev. Patrick Stephens

THE FIRST WEEK OF LENT

Monday, February 22

Scripture

Proverbs 8:22-31

The Lord created me at the beginning of his work,
 the first of his acts of long ago.
Ages ago I was set up,
 at the first, before the beginning of the earth.
When there were no depths I was brought forth,
 when there were no springs abounding with water.
Before the mountains had been shaped,
 before the hills, I was brought forth—
when he had not yet made earth and fields,
 or the world's first bits of soil.
When he established the heavens, I was there,
 when he drew a circle on the face of the deep,
when he made firm the skies above,
 when he established the fountains of the deep,
when he assigned to the sea its limit,
 so that the waters might not transgress his command,
when he marked out the foundations of the earth,
 then I was beside him, like a master worker;
and I was daily his delight,
 rejoicing before him always,
rejoicing in his inhabited world
 and delighting in the human race.

Reflection

Upon graduating from college in 2005, I was accepted as a participant in the Mennonite Central Committee's Serving and Learning Together program. This led to me living for one year in Mymensingh, Bangladesh. I was extremely fortunate to be able to participate in the program and to be able to experience life in another part of the world. Although I really loved the opportunity to learn another language, make friends, and be fully immersed in Bengali culture, there were times that I really missed home.

In 2012, Chris Hadfield was preparing to serve as commander of the International Space Station. It was the first time that a Canadian astronaut would be serving in that particular role. During his mission, Hadfield brought much attention to the life and work of astronauts through regular social media engagements. I found myself following his progress with fascination and learning much about his experience of space travel. What I found most moving about Chris Hadfield's story was the candid way in which he spoke about missing home while he was in outer space. I suppose I had never before heard about the concept of being homesick for Earth itself.

Sometimes the best way to gain a perspective of appreciation for our home is to spend time away from it. Very few people have been to outer space. Their experience, however, can serve as a message for the rest of us. When viewed (or missed) from a distance, the cultural and political divisions of our world seem to fade away. The uniquely hospitable features of our planet seem to become more obvious. And the goodness of creation becomes something worth defending.

Prayer

*It is right to give you thanks and praise,
O Lord, our God, sustainer of the universe,
you are worthy of glory and praise.
At your command all things came to be:
the vast expanse of interstellar space,
galaxies, suns, the planets in their courses,
and this fragile earth, our island home;
by your will they were created and have their being.
From the primal elements
you brought forth the human race,
and blessed us with memory, reason, and skill;
you made us the stewards of creation...
Glory to you for ever and ever.*

(Portions of Eucharistic Prayer 4, *Book of Alternative Services*)



Conservation farming makes an impact in Tanzania

WE LEFT Masasi early in the morning for Nachingwea where we paid a courtesy visit to the District Executive Director (local government official) who had helped coordinate the Preventive Health and Food Security project since its start. This project, supported by PWRDF and the Canadian government, took place between 2011 and 2016. Today was an opportunity to see some of the results of that project.

We then drove to the rural village of Ruponda to meet with project beneficiaries and farmers like Joyce Mtauka (below). Some of our delegation met Joyce during the PWRDF Sharing Bread (Two) food security course at Sorrento, B.C. in 2015. Through the program there, Joyce has been able to expand her production and in so doing, contribute to the food security of her community. Joyce was also involved with training many other farmers on food security and how to continue to benefit the community with their production. The delegation visited Joyce's farm and after seeing some of her maize and cassava crops, had the opportunity to harvest and cook some fresh cassava. We helped chop the roots off of the short tree-like plant, and then proceeded to peel and wash the pieces. It was sliced into smaller sections and then the starchy plant was put to cook in a pot of water with a pinch of salt, before being served to us to be eaten with honey. Cassava is a high calorie, low nutrition crop, used as a staple throughout central eastern Africa. Joyce uses her cassava plants as a cover crop and gives branches of it for

other farmers in her community to grow. Eating cassava was new and an interesting experience!

After returning to the village for an honorary meal shared with the community, we visited the Mwenge dispensary which is powered by solar panels and allows for the delivery of babies at night through this PWRDF provision. We then continued our journey to visit the Chip Agro-vet Input Centre where we were surprised with a welcome of singing and dancing. Bishop James and Reverend Geoffrey had surprised us by not telling us that we would be there for the centre's official opening. They even asked Maureen (as the President of the PWRDF board) to open the doors officially. The Chip Agro-vet Input Centre, established by the Diocese of Masasi in collaboration with PWRDF and the Canadian government, is providing advisory services on agriculture techniques, agriculture and veterinary inputs, and how they apply. It is also selling the inputs at affordable prices to farmers, thus contributing to food security beyond the life of the PWRDF project.

After a busy day we came to a hotel in Nachingwea to enjoy an evening and night of rest. Tomorrow the delegation looks forward to seeing more of the projects within the diocese and the effects they have had on the communities they involve.

-Leah Marshall, PWRDF Youth Council

Read the whole story on our website at
<https://pwrdf.org/sharing-bread-in-tanzania/>

Creation: A Relationship of Respect

Rev. Patrick Stephens

THE FIRST WEEK OF LENT

Tuesday, February 23

Scripture

Genesis 1:11-12

Then God said, ‘Let the earth put forth vegetation: plants yielding seed, and fruit trees of every kind on earth that bear fruit with the seed in it.’ And it was so. The earth brought forth vegetation: plants yielding seed of every kind, and trees of every kind bearing fruit with the seed in it. And God saw that it was good.

Reflection

I am not an artist, though I have always enjoyed creating things. Craft kits, meal recipes, and step-by-step instructions have mostly led to good results for my efforts. I also enjoy gardening. There is nothing that compares with the simple satisfaction of watching a tiny corner of cultivated land spring forth, season after season, under my care and supervision. It brings me much satisfaction and delight.

As I plan the planting of my garden this spring, I am interested in the connection between stewardship of the Earth and what so many of us do in our own backyards, on our balconies, and at neighbourhood garden plots. Whatever the scale of our horticultural endeavours, we are all participating in the ancient and necessary work of nurturing life.

Some gardening practices are much more kind to the earth than others. A small commitment I have made is to avoid using pesticides, and to plant native species, whenever possible. Perhaps you have a highly sustainable approach to gardening. Perhaps you are not experienced in growing plants at all. Whatever our level of engagement with horticulture, caring for even a single plant can help us feel more connected to our natural ecosystem.

Give it a try: try caring for a small garden this year and immerse yourself in the work and joy of getting your hands dirty. As you do so, allow yourself to be open to the care for creation on a much greater scale.

Prayer

*For the fruit(s) of all creation,
thanks be to God;
for the gifts of every nation,
thanks be to God;
for the ploughing, sowing, reaping,
silent growth while we are sleeping,
future needs in earth's safe-keeping,
thanks be to God.*

– Fred Pratt Green, Hymn #259 *Common Praise*



Small gardens yield big in Burundi

THE MAYENGO Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camp in Burundi is filled with displaced people from around Bujumbura who were victims of a landslide in 2015, killing dozens of people and destroying 349 houses, a health centre and a school. The disaster left behind families without anything, not even their basic needs. In March 2018, those people were displaced to the colline or hillside area of Mayengo. Mayengo is one of the 18 collines in the catchment area for Village Health Works, PWRDF's Burundi partner in the All Mothers and Children Count program, funded with a 6:1 match from the Government of Canada. The four-year program concludes at the end of March 2020. VHW has seen an increasing number of patients from this area, especially high numbers of malnutrition patients. As part of the AMCC project, VHW decided to implement a kitchen garden project with households from the camp. The project has improved food security and nutrition among the people. "I would like to sincerely thank the Village for bringing us knowledge about the importance of building kitchen gardens," says Rekatubane Annonciate, one of the 94 people who received vegetable seeds. "I have seven children,

five of whom were malnourished. I kept coming to the clinic for food supplements, and I did not see a significant change in their evolution because coming home, we took the same foods and my children were still relapsing." Rekatubane notes that learning about kitchen gardens helped her discover how to plant seeds in a small amount of space. "Now my meals are varied, and I do not come to the Kigutu clinic for food supplementation anymore. My kitchen garden provides me with enough food to harvest and feed my family. I have almost everything, including carrots, salads, cabbages, onions, tomatoes, radishes. I really do not know how I could thank the Village. It is like a parent who cares for us, he has saved us and our children from hunger." In addition to the seeds, the 94 households also received sprayers, shovels, and wheelbarrows to facilitate their maintenance of these kitchen gardens.

**Read the whole story on our website at
<https://pwrdf.org/small-gardens-yield-big-in-burundi/>**

Creation: A Relationship of Respect

Rev. Patrick Stephens

THE FIRST WEEK OF LENT

Wednesday, February 24

Scripture

Psalm 126:4-6

Restore our fortunes, O Lord,
 like the watercourses of the Negev.
May those who sowed with tears
 reap with shouts of joy.
Those who go out weeping,
 bearing the seed for sowing,
shall come home with shouts of joy,
 carrying their sheaves.

Reflection

Rogation is a seasonal tradition in the life of the church. The word comes from the same Latin root as interrogation and simply means “to ask.” It is a fitting name because asking is exactly what we do when we begin the planting season. Farmers, gardeners and everyone who is mindful of the food supply chain are invited to pray as the planting season begins. The prayers involve dedication of the human labours to God’s glory and a request for God’s blessing upon the work and the crop itself. The practice was present in Europe before Christianity was widespread, but as Christianity became the dominant religious expression in the region, many previously existing practices took on new meanings.

Many Canadian Anglican communities celebrate Rogation Sunday every Spring, on the Sunday before Ascension Day. As we begin the planting season, we pray for God’s blessing upon our work and the plants and fields we nurture.

Rogation is an act of humility. Asking for God’s blessing upon the growing season is an opportunity to remember and express our reliance upon God’s grace, and upon the interconnected relationships of the created world. It is an invitation to ask for that which we cannot provide on our own.

Prayer

Almighty and merciful God, from whom cometh every good and perfect gift: Bless, we beseech thee, the labours of thy people, and cause the earth to bring forth her fruits abundantly in their season, that we may with grateful hearts give thanks to thee for the same; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

– Collect for Rogation Days, *Book of Common Prayer*



Rogation service celebrates growing hope

WE DROVE southwest from Winnipeg along highways and country roads, along fields green with spring planting. After about two hours, the endlessly flat eastern prairie vista opened suddenly below us to reveal the Pembina River Valley. There, nestled at the bottom was our destination, was the small white church of St. Luke's, Pembina Crossing. A large white tent had been erected behind it to hold the more than 100-member congregation gathered from parishes in the valley, from the Morden area, and from Winnipeg to celebrate Rogation Sunday together. Rogation Sunday is celebrated on the fifth Sunday of Easter, though it is not part of every church's calendar. In Pembina Crossing, this year it was moved to June 9 to accommodate other schedules. I was invited to bring greetings and gratitude from PWRDF. This special gathering was asking for particular blessings on a large field of newly sprouted canola, and a small calf that together represent the "Anglican Grow Hope" project in the Diocese of Rupert's Land. Now in its second year, Anglican Grow Hope has brought together urban and rural parishes in an effort to raise funds for the PWRDF account at the Canadian Foodgrains Bank (CFGB) with the goal of ending global hunger. Last year, this effort raised \$14,588 in addition to the regular donations to PWRDF from the diocese. The Rev. Chris Lea led the worship service.

Rev. Chris Lea, also the farmer who donated the land and is growing the canola crop, led us in worship. During his homily he described a recent visit to Ethiopia, the people he had met there, especially the children, and the difference that CFGB-supported food security programs were making in their lives. Nancy Howatt, a local cattle farmer who is donating the proceeds from the sale of the calf to Grow Hope, spoke

about her recent visit to Haiti and how that experience has affected the way she views the relative abundance that surrounds her in Canada. Both Chris and Nancy movingly recounted the hospitality and generosity they experienced from those they visited who, out of their scarcity, shared so abundantly.

The Rev'd Cathy Campbell has been instrumental in connecting rural and urban parishes in the Diocese as they raise funds for Anglican Grow Hope.

Together we asked for God's blessing upon the canola seeds and sprouts, upon the calf and his mother, upon the farm machinery and the farm, and upon PWRDF, the Foodgrains Bank and the Grow Hope project. And then, we asked God's blessing on the country feast that awaited us following the service. Because as the Primate, Archbishop Fred Hiltz, said when launching PWRDF's 2013-2016 Fred Says food security campaign, "It all begins with food."

This Rogation Sunday together we prayed, "Loving Creator God, we acknowledge you as the source of growth and abundance. You provide us with food for body and spirit. With your help we plant our crops, and by your power they produce our harvest... In your kindness and love, make our work fruitful. Grant favourable weather to make these fields productive... Loving Creator God, be gracious to us and bless us, and make your face to shine upon us."

Read the whole story on our website at
<https://pwrdf.org/rogation-service-celebrates-growing-hope/>

Creation: A Relationship of Respect

Rev. Patrick Stephens

THE FIRST WEEK OF LENT

Thursday, February 25

Scripture

Psalm 104:14-16

You make grass grow for flocks and herds
and plants to serve mankind;
That they may bring forth food from the earth,
and wine to gladden our hearts,
Oil to make a cheerful countenance,
and bread to strengthen the heart.

Reflection

The natural symmetry of the growing season is seen in the acts of planting and harvesting. The introduction and conclusion of the season is expressed spiritually by the Christian community as Rogation and Harvest Thanksgiving.

Cultures around the world and throughout history have long celebrated harvest festivals. As the labours of the season are brought in for preparation and storage, it is natural to be moved by the abundance of food. The celebration of a bountiful harvest is exciting and can even be overwhelming.

But harvests are not always abundant. Environmental, social, political and other factors often lead to scarcity in the fields, meagre harvests in villages, and shortages of food in the home.

Thanksgiving is an opportunity to celebrate the local harvest. But it is also an opportunity to acknowledge our dependence on God and on our environment.

Harvest Thanksgiving is also an opportunity to move beyond “counting our blessings” and to participate in the redistribution of the wealth that is represented by the abundance of the earth’s yield. Our reliance on God and creation extends naturally to also include the web of relationships that connects all people through our universal human needs and a united desire to live and thrive in a healthy, just and peaceful world.

Prayer

Creator of the fruitful earth, you made us stewards of all things. Give us grateful hearts for all your goodness, and steadfast wills to use your bounty well, that the whole human family, today and in generations to come, may with us give thanks for the riches of your creation. We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ the Lord. Amen.

– Collect for Thanksgiving, *Book of Alternative Services*



Emergency food support in Zimbabwe

ZIMBABWE, DECREASED rainfall, poor harvests, reduced opportunities to earn an income due to COVID-19 restrictions and high food prices are adding up to acute food insecurity in 35% of the population.

In response, PWRDF is currently supporting an emergency food relief project, starting January 25 running through to the end of March. Working with DanChurchAid Zimbabwe (DCA), PWRDF was able to leverage \$161,554 from its equity in the Canadian Foodgrains Bank and receive a match from the Government of Canada. The total project budgeted is \$843,948.

If it weren't for emergency humanitarian food assistance programs like this one, more families would likely be worse off, says the IPC Acute Food Insecurity Analysis for October 2020 – March 2021.

This intervention is targeting the worst affected seven rural wards of Lupane district in Matabeleland North Province. These wards have a combined population of approximately 44,590 people in 8,918 households.

The intervention is providing emergency food assistance to 3,600 food insecure households (18,000 individuals). Food rations include:

- 10 kg of maize meal
- 1.5 kg of bean
- 0.75 litre of cooking oil per person per month

The most vulnerable households are prioritized for food assistance including those headed by children, elderly and

women and to families with special needs (e.g. disabled people, chronically ill people, and pregnant and lactating women).

A one-time distribution of fast-maturing sorghum and cowpea seed will help re-establish crop production in 1,450 households, and ensure access to food staples when the assistance ends. The crops will be ready to harvest in April. The program will select and train 140 lead farmers, who will then share their knowledge and skills with other farmers in their neighbourhood.

DCA Zimbabwe works with Agritex (government agriculture extension department) to support the farmers on soil and water conservation techniques and also to train them save seeds for future crops.

A sharp rise in COVID-19 infections in early December is being met with a hard lockdown for one month. All but essential services have been closed – including the informal markets where most Zimbabweans shop or trade. The lockdown is making it harder for people to sell their food at markets, to buy food or to travel for work to South Africa, which has shut all its land borders in an effort to curb rising numbers.

**Read the whole story on our website at
<https://pwrdf.org/pwrdf-supporting-food-relief-in-zimbabwe-with-foodgrains-bank/>**

Creation: A Relationship of Respect

Rev. Patrick Stephens

THE FIRST WEEK OF LENT

Friday, February 26

Scripture

Genesis 1:24-26

And God said, ‘Let the earth bring forth living creatures of every kind: cattle and creeping things and wild animals of the earth of every kind.’ And it was so. God made the wild animals of the earth of every kind, and the cattle of every kind, and everything that creeps upon the ground of every kind. And God saw that it was good.

Then God said, ‘Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.’

Reflection

St. Francis of Assisi is one of the most famous human friends of nature. Raised with extreme wealth, as a young man, Francis was moved to voluntarily embrace a life of poverty, charity and preaching. Famous for his devotion to Christ and his skills in ministry, Francis became an important leader in the monastic movement of the late middle ages.

Francis' environmental message, preached to a 13th-century audience, holds relevance today. He believed that the world is created by God and is good. He also preached that the earth is in need of redemption because of human sin. He demonstrated his passion for nature in his poetry.

He was also known as a friend of animals. He was said to preach to birds, befriend dogs, and treasured a woolen cloak which was made by members of a convent with wool from his favourite sheep.

I can relate to Francis' love of animals. I have a pet dog and I feel blessed that she shares a home and a life with me and my family. When I provide and care for her, I am reminded of the love God has for creation and the redeeming care to which we are called. The relationship between people and domestic animals is really important because it helps us understand the call to care for all of God's creatures and creation itself.

Prayer

*The animals of God's creation inhabit the skies,
the earth and the sea.
They share in the fortunes of human existence
and have a part in human life.
God, who confers gifts on all living things,
has often used the service of animals
or made them reminders of salvation ...
We, therefore, invoke God's blessing on these animals.
As we do so, let us praise the Creator
and thank God for setting us as stewards
over all the creatures of the earth.*

– “Occasional Services: A Service for the Blessing of Animals,” *The United Methodist Church Book of Worship*



How goats support community health workers

IN THE NENO District of Malawi there are no paved roads servicing the district hospitals, making it a great challenge for its 160,000 people to access healthcare. The district is one of the poorest and most rural, underdeveloped areas of the country.

Community Health Workers (CHWs) are on the front-line of healthcare in the district. They live in the communities in which they work and reduce the need of vulnerable patients to travel. CHWs are trusted in their communities and ensure patients are receiving necessary care, treatment and even provide psychosocial support.

CHWs spend significant time each week attending to the health needs of their assigned households, conducting home visits, monitoring treatment, screening patients and even accompanying them to distant health centres.

As vital community members it's imperative CHWs have a sufficient livelihood to stay motivated and able to complete their work. Partners In Health (PIH) Malawi, locally known as Abwenzi Pa Za Umoyo (APZU), runs the CHW program in the district. CHWs fall into two categories: senior CHWs, who receive a monthly stipend of \$34 and junior CHWs who receive \$23. Considering the amount of work they have been assigned and their duties as household heads, these stipends are inadequate.

Realizing the needs of CHWs in Neno District, PWRDF partnered with APZU to improve livelihoods by providing CHWs with breeding goats. These goats will provide CHWs with another income source, additional food security and open up more time for them to fully participate in health delivery for the community.

CHWs will receive training and support from APZU in collaboration with the Malawi Ministry of Agriculture to ensure the goats thrive and families receive the full benefits of owning them.

In the first year of the project, 270 CHWs will receive goats and over the course of the three-year project, as the goats breed, they will be distributed to all 1,227 CHWs across the district.

This project will not only benefit the CHWs and their families, but the whole community. When CHWs worry less about their livelihoods they can spend more time ensuring the entire community has access to safe and proper healthcare.

Read the whole story on our website at

<https://pwrdf.org/pwrdf-supports-goat-program-for-community-health-workers-in-malawi/>

Creation: A Relationship of Respect

Rev. Patrick Stephens

THE FIRST WEEK OF LENT

Saturday, February 27

Scripture

Matthew 25:34b-36, 40b

Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me ... Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.

Reflection

Sometimes I hear people say that they feel they do not pray as much as they think they should. While I believe that spending time speaking to God and listening for God's Spirit to speak to us is very important, I also have the feeling that most people spend more time in prayer than they realize. There are many ways to pray: speaking from the heart, reading or reciting written prayers, silent meditation, singing hymns, praying scripture passages and walking a labyrinth are a few good examples.

Another important type of prayer is that of actively caring for others. Caring for other people helps us build empathy and compassion. It also allows us to encounter the presence of God in another person's life and to reflect on how God is at work in our own lives. Whether big or small, these acts have a way of breaking down barriers and building trust through the shared experience of vulnerability and care.

In the same way that caring for other people can build trust and empathy for our neighbours, actively caring for nature builds an appreciation for, and investment in, God's creation. As we curb our consumption of natural resources, reduce pollution, revive traditional knowledge and practices of care for our ecosystems, and advocate for climate justice at home and abroad, we participate in the renewal of a relationship between us and the earth itself.

If, like many people, you feel the pull to spend more time in prayer, consider encountering God's goodness through the active care of God's creation. At the conclusion of each small action, feel free to say a hearty "Amen!"

Prayer

*Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.
Where there is hatred, let me bring love.
Where there is offence, let me bring pardon.
Where there is discord, let me bring union.
Where there is error, let me bring truth.
Where there is doubt, let me bring faith.
Where there is despair, let me bring hope.
Where there is darkness, let me bring your light.
Where there is sadness, let me bring joy.
O Master, let me not seek as much
to be consoled as to console,
to be understood as to understand,
to be loved as to love,
for it is in giving that one receives,
it is in self-forgetting that one finds,
it is in pardoning that one is pardoned,
it is in dying that one is raised to eternal life.*

- Prayer traditionally associated with St. Francis of Assisi



Worship resource promotes caring for the earth

In THE TIME before COVID-19 (remember then?) I developed “A Covenant for Climate Justice,” a worship resource for PWRDF focussing on climate justice and creation care. Using the two “trees of life” that frame the biblical text – in Genesis and Revelation – I invited worshippers to consider what it means to “keep covenant” with God and with God’s creation as we witness the growing impacts of climate change: “fires, floods, storms and devastating destruction.”

While COVID-19 has swept climate change off the front pages, it is still very much with us. And some are arguing that COVID-19 is itself a result of humankind’s impacts on God’s created order. In downtown Toronto where I live, the “pause” that resulted from lockdown brought quiet to the city, cleaner air and wild animals. An enormous falcon appeared one morning on a courtyard tree, right next to my balcony. My son spotted a fox while out running. NASA satellite imagery showed significant reductions in pollution above major cities.

We CAN keep covenant.

There IS hope.

Whether celebrated online or in-person, PWRDF’s worship resource is an opportunity to consider the ways in which we and our development partners are called to keep covenant,

to have hope. A Eucharistic order of service and a Service of the Word are accompanied by prayers, readings, PWRDF partner stories and a sample sermon. A recorded version of the sermon is also available for use in your parish. To download an MP4 of this sermon, please contact Christine Hills, our Public Engagement Program officer. Share a recorded version of Suzanne Rumsey’s sermon with your congregation.

As we enter what has come to be observed in many churches as the Season of Creation, (September 1 to October 4) we invite parishes to dip into this worship resource and discover how it can be used. If not during this September window, it can also be used for a “PWRDF Sunday” that your parish designates, including the Sunday before or after Earth Day (April 22) on Rogation Sunday (May 9, 2021). As ever we invite such a service to be an opportunity to take up a special offering for the work of PWRDF’s partners throughout the world who are keeping covenant in many important ways with and for their communities and God’s creation.

Read the whole story on our website at
<https://pwrdf.org/covenantforclimatechange/>

T O M M O R R O W:
The Second Sunday in Lent, take a Sabbath rest
and reflect on last week’s readings.



**Who we are and
how we are called**
Bishop Jane Alexander

THE SECOND WEEK OF LENT

Monday, March 1

Scripture

Psalm 104: 1a, 24a, 33a

Bless the Lord, O my soul...
How manifold are your works!
In wisdom you have made them all...
I will sing to the Lord as long as I live;

Reflection

Psalm 104 has always filled me with delight especially the thought of the sea ‘teeming with creatures,’ the frolicking Leviathan, the mighty smoking mountains. Yes humans are there in the ships on the sea, but there is an abundance of life below the surface. If you have ever gone fishing or snorkeling you know that. The psalmist speaks about the importance of biodiversity, the abundance of living things on land and sea, great and small, ‘creatures beyond number,’ all looking to the creator. God rejoices in the work of creation, and the psalmist prays in an outpouring of joy, that the glory of the Lord will endure forever. God is seen every day, in every living thing.

In Psalm 104 God is the King, the Creator as well as the provider of life on earth. The psalm is entirely concerned with God’s relationship with the world which means that the presence of God is experienced everywhere every day. The response to this beauty is joy and wonder and worship.

So what do we do when we see a marring of beauty and the suffering of creation? In our family we have a couple of people with asthma as I am sure do many of you. These past couple of years have been increasingly difficult because the air is changing. We know that forest fires are increasing in frequency and severity because of climate change and they’re harming the health of millions of people annually. The World Health Organization has said that forms of air pollution, including those from factories and vehicles, lead to an estimated 8.79 million premature deaths each year. The forest fires in Australia that burned from 2019 into 2020 resulted in tens of thousands of people fleeing their homes. But escaping the flames didn’t put people out of harm’s way. Those who managed to flee are still being affected by the intense pollution being released into the air. The 2019 fires in the Amazon rainforest in Brazil made the air poisonous for children. Here in western Canada forest fires have raged in the past couple of years in Fort McMurray and in Saskatchewan. In 2019, 13,000 people, mostly Indigenous from Northern Saskatchewan, were displaced into makeshift shelters in Alberta. The Fort McMurray fires closed a whole city and sent the population on the road.

These kinds of situations are becoming more common and although wildfires have been a fact of life in this part of the world they are happening more often. PWRDF has been there to help, to heal and to restore. Their commitment to the third Mark of Mission is exemplary. What can each of us do to change our ways, our habits, deny ourselves in order to lift up the fifth Mark of Mission “To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, and sustain and renew the life of the earth?”

Prayer

Almighty God,

You created the heavens and the earth and all that is in them.

And you created humankind in your own image and it was very good;

Grant us the courage to recognize our failure to maintain your creation.

And by your grace help us to halt the degradation of our environment.

Through Jesus Christ our Lord,

Who came that we might have life in all its fullness. Amen.

—From *Season of Creation ONE*, www.greenanglicans.org/resources/liturgical/



“What can I do to help?”

Editor's note: McMurray wildfires written by the Rev. David Greenwood, a priest in the Diocese of Athabasca and brother of PWRDF Diocesan Representative, Dorothy Marshall (Diocese of Edmonton).

MY NAME is David Greenwood, and I am an Anglican priest in the Diocese of Athabasca, where I serve as an honorary assistant to the parish of All Saints in Fort McMurray. I am also a Sr. Systems Advisor for the Human Resources department of Syncrude Canada Ltd. and I am a husband, father of four great kids (who each married, so I now have 8 great kids) and, at present, five grandchildren.

And over us all, of course, is God. In other words, I'm a person just like you, doing what I think God wants me to, as best as I can.

[As a result of the wildfire] I lost everything — which is true, and which is false. You see, I have found there are many degrees of ‘lost everything.’ The clothes I am wearing are all that I have had for the past week; all that I left the house with. So, emotionally and literally all I had WERE the clothes on my back. But literally as opposed to emotionally, I still have my house, with all my belongings in it — which I may not be able to get back into for about a year, and which is basically worthless financially now.

While all I had with me for the past week was this one set of clothes, I knew my wife was safe, for she was in Toronto on a field trip with students from her school. I knew my kids were all safe, for they had grown up and moved away. And I knew that I, indeed all of us, we're with God. Others though, even though they had been able to pack a bunch of stuff, they totally lost their homes — and for many people, that is very hard to take.

We knew there were fires about — Monday night water bombers had been going over where I live because of a fire just in the north of the city which they successfully put out. I was told there was another fire four km to the south that they were also working on.

That night I was at Compline with a good friend. We prayed, and I felt led to say, “no one will be harmed because of

these fires.” It was a statement for which I had no factual competence to say.

For me, the fire experience started shortly after noon on Tuesday [May 3, 2016]. I worked in downtown Fort McMurray, and a co-worker showed me a picture of a wall of smoke with an orange tinge to it from the flames, behind trees on a hill. I asked, “Where did you get that picture?” And she said, “I just took it right behind us.”

Running out, I saw for myself: looking up at the valley hilltop to an area known as Abasand you could see a ridge of trees, and behind them the sky was filled with billowing clouds of smoke, orange and yellow at the bottom and sooty grey at the top.

I burst out laughing. And I thought, “Well, this is exciting!”

We left work, with the idea that we could pack up and get ready to evacuate, just in case things got bad. I felt confident though that we'd be okay — the fire was on this side of the Athabasca River, my house on the other. The river valley was about a kilometre wide. I really expected we'd be fine.

Getting home around 3:00 p.m. I filled the bathtubs with water to drink from in case there were problems with the water supply. I took our will out of the freezer, grabbed our passports, and was starting to pile up what I thought would be useful on the kitchen counter. I received a note from my friend Fr. Christopher, who was uncertain what to do. I said I would be right over and that he and his family could stay at my house until this blew over. Leaving everything on the counter, I drove the 5 minutes to his place. Heading back to my house, we hit gridlock on the main road. The Mounties were directing traffic and made me turn right instead of left, saying I'd have to take the long way home.

I'm still taking it.

**Read the whole story on our website at
<https://pwrdf.org/what-can-i-do-to-help-a-first-hand-account-from-fort-mcmurray/>**

Scripture

Psalm 111: 2-5, 10

Great are the works of the Lord,
studied by all who delight in them.
Full of honour and majesty is his work,
and his righteousness endures forever.
He has gained renown by his wonderful deeds;
the Lord is gracious and merciful.
He provides food for those who fear him;
he is ever mindful of his covenant.
The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom;
all those who practice it have a good understanding.
His praise endures forever.

Reflection

Interconnectedness: As Christians throughout the world we are interconnected. One great family. What we do affects what others do. How we live affects how others live. The same is true in the natural world, everything has an effect on everything else. For example, floods might lead to agricultural damage, which lead to a loss of food security, perhaps an effect on trade, which in turn affects consumption and the economy.

Today I share with you a story from an Eco Bishops conference I attended in South Africa in 2015. Every attendee told stories of climate change in our countries. We were sobered beyond belief when we heard from Archbishop Winston from Melanesia. He said: "Some may see information on climate change on television and take it as interesting reading, as entertainment; some would read it in newspapers and treat it as something to occupy time, but for me – and especially for us in Melanesia — it is actually an urgent matter... The weather pattern throughout the year is no longer consistent, creating surprise cyclone seasons — we have more cyclones than before causing flash flooding. Some places where there [were] no floods we are getting flash flooding happening....the climate change is affecting the soil — the whole overall environment where you could plant two or three times before and you could harvest the same amount of food, is no longer there. Many Melanesians are subsistence farmers who can no longer grow crops to feed themselves and their families. The rising sea level is affecting some of our islands [which are] now under water. It is a serious issue. It is a serious concern."

Today, 21% of the world's population lives within 30 km of coastlines. The rise of sea levels , which could reach one metre or more by the end of this century, will profoundly affect low-lying areas in the most vulnerable countries like Bangladesh, resulting in the complete loss of fertile land, massive migrations of human populations, and starvation. More intense storms and flooding along coasts and mountain valleys will create a staggering number of environmental refugees in search of food and shelter at re-location centres that most governments will be unable to provide.

Four sovereign states — Tuvalu, The Republic of the Marshall Islands, The Republic of Maldives, and Kiribati – are home to nearly a half million people whose habitable land will be completely inundated by the end of this century. The impact of increasingly severe coastal storms together with sea level rise would displace roughly 130 to 450 million people during this century. That is between three and 12 times the entire population of Canada. Each of those affected is a beloved child of God. Where will they go? How will they live? Who will welcome them?

Prayer

God of all the earth, where people suffer because of the actions of an authority motivated by ego, money and self-interest, by your mercy intervene and raise up leaders anointed by you with an authority that heals, that speaks truth to power, that silences lies, that is confident in you, that is faithful and just. For the sake of your earth, and all its people, Amen

- Christian Aid



Project protects shorelines with mangrove planting

THE PRIMATE'S World Relief and Development Fund is pleased to announce that the Manitoba Council for International Cooperation (MCIC) is supporting two ongoing projects in Bangladesh and India. The project in Bangladesh involves training locals in the coastal regions to be more resilient to the effects of climate change. The project in India will support refugees from the Sri Lankan civil war who have been living in camps in the Tamilnadu region to acquire civil documents and other requirements so they can return home to Sri Lanka. Fighting the effects of climate change in Bangladesh

Bangladesh has become increasingly vulnerable because of climate change. PWRDF has been working in climate vulnerable areas that have suffered visible effects of natural disasters, targeting 22,000 Bangladeshi farmers in 10 villages threatened by drought, floods and cyclones. MCIC has matched PWRDF's contributions on a 1:1 basis to support the second year of the three-year project.

The project has already made great progress in the first year thanks to PWRDF and its donors. Two villages have been prepared for mangrove regeneration in order to help protect the shorelines against erosion, flooding and high winds. The communities have been trained on how to protect these plants to ensure their survival and growth.

Bamboo bindings have been set up to redirect water and

prevent river erosion and flooding of valuable farm land. Four of these binders, locally known as chatkas, have been built. With the support of MCIC, PWRDF looks forward to assisting the local partner and communities in building more of these binders, protecting more communities from flooding and river erosion.

PWRDF partner UBINIG has begun to set up farmers field schools in six villages in climate vulnerable areas. These schools are sharing knowledge about farming in drought and flood prone areas as well as discussing the challenges that climate change is presenting.

The project has a focus on increasing knowledge, as well as the capacity to adapt to climate change in the local communities. Men and women in disaster prone areas have gathered to discuss common concerns. Women have taken up the cause of seed preservation as a way to address the losses associated with natural disasters and extreme weather. These discussions help to share knowledge and identify the gaps as well as plan to take action to protect the communities and make them more aware of the effects of the changing climate.

Read the whole story on our website at

<https://pwrdf.org/mcic-projects-will-protect-environment-in-bangladesh-and-facilitate-sri-lankan-refugee-return/>

For Children



Operation Noah's new video, Salote, aims to help Christians around the world recognise the human cost of climate change, and particularly its impact on women and children.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OLAfhMOIWql>



**Who we are and
how we are called**
Bishop Jane Alexander

THE SECOND WEEK OF LENT

Wednesday, March 3

Scripture

Psalm 148:1–4

Praise the Lord!
Praise the Lord from the heavens;
 praise him in the heights!
Praise him, all his angels;
 praise him, all his host!
Praise him, sun and moon;
 praise him, all you shining stars!
Praise him, you highest heavens
 and you waters above the heavens!

Reflection

Did you sing “Joy to the World” this Christmas? If you did, then this psalm is for you! Heaven and nature indeed singing to God in joyful praise. This Psalm celebrates the diversity of God’s creation. Hallelujah! The relationship though between human beings and the wider world has become fragile. We see beauty and wonder only in special places rather than all around us. Cracks start to appear in the relationship especially when we exploit the natural world, instead of seeing ourselves in communion with creation.

As a Christian woman I have to really think about how I live my life and what it says about my belief and my theology. “We are living in a material world” but do I have to be such a material girl? For reflection today, I remind you that March 3 is the UN International World Wildlife Day. What is your favourite wild animal (no pets please)? How is that animal doing, is their habitat safe or endangered? What is their relationship with humanity, are they valued or exploited? What actions can we take to ensure that this animal will still be here, displaying the glory of God and singing God’s praises well into the next century?

Prayer

O God, enlarge within us the sense of fellowship with all living things, our brothers the animals to whom thou gavest the earth as their home in common with us.

We remember with shame that in the past we have exercised the high dominion of man with ruthless cruelty so that the voice of the earth, which should have gone up to thee in song, has been a groan of travail. May we realize that they live not for us alone but for themselves and for thee, and that they love the sweetness of life.

– St. Basil the Great



World of Gifts: another successful campaign

DESPITE THE enormous challenges facing Canadians in 2020, Anglicans came together and made PWRDF's World of Gifts a success yet again.

Thanks to generous individuals and groups across Canada more than \$420,000 was raised for PWRDF partners and programs during the Christmas campaign. Just over 3,800 gifts were purchased this year with an average gift amount of \$110 per transaction. More than \$72,000 of the funds raised went toward protecting health clinics in Africa with our All Mothers and Children Count COVID-19 extension program, which will be matched 6:1 by the Government of Canada.

As usual, livestock and farming gifts were a popular choice among donors. Goats were again the number one item, with 730 goats donated to provide Community Health Workers with supplemental income and food security in Malawi. Donors purchased 83 donkeys to make it easier for Kenyan families to carry clean water from community well to their homes, and more than 2,500 chickens were purchased to support organic women farmers in Colombia.

For some of our higher priced gift items, groups teamed up to raise money get the most bang for their buck. Such as in British Columbia, where St. Andrew's in Langley teamed up with St. Dunstan's in Aldergrove in order to "buy the whole farm." Working together to raise money in our new virtual setting, volunteers used PWRDF resources like customized Zoom backgrounds to raise awareness during online church services. The team also created a "virtual farm" on the St. Andrew's website where they added items to the farm as funds were raised. In total, the two churches raised more than \$3,200, enough to purchase five farms with some funds left over.

Across Canada, individuals, churches and other groups donated raised and donated \$56,936 to buy 96 farms!

Clean water was a running theme in this year's World of Gifts and PWRDF donors responded. Generous donors purchased 117 pipes for water wells with our partner in Kenya, Utooni Development Organization (UDO). On top of that, donor purchased 16 complete water wells with hand pumps and 4 water wells with solar pumps. This means a total of \$36,295 will support UDO's program to improve health in vulnerable communities and reduce travel times to retrieve clean water.

Anglicans in Canada also made sure PWRDF was ready to respond when disasters strike. Raising more than \$26,000 for our equity in the Canadian Foodgrains Bank, PWRDF will now be ready to respond with food assistance and crop restoration when disasters strike around the world. These funds are also eligible for up to a 4:1 match from the Government of Canada.

Indigenous programs were also popular this year with donors funding 94 shawls, that Indigenous midwives use to carry herbs, ointments and oils necessary during childbirth. Donors are gave more than \$10,000 to help Indigenous youth start their own businesseses through our partner NEDC in British Columbia.

Additionally, \$17,600 was raised to support the Anglican Church of Canada's Indigenous Ministries with pandemic relief in indigenous communities.

PWRDF's World of Gifts is available all year long and can make great gifts for Easter, birthdays anniversaries and more.

Read the whole story on our website at
<https://pwrdf.org/world-of-gifts-wraps-up-another-successful-campaign/>



**Who we are and
how we are called**
Bishop Jane Alexander

THE SECOND WEEK OF LENT

Thursday, March 4

Scripture **Isaiah 24:5**

The earth lies polluted under its inhabitants;
for they have transgressed laws, violated the statutes,
broken the everlasting covenant.

Reflection Yesterday we considered all parts of creation being in this together. Today let's think about how we might work for a just sharing of the basics of life. When friends from Burundi first came to visit my husband, Tim and me in Edmonton, they were so delighted to be able to get clean drinking water from a tap. Their delight was contagious. Even though I know that not everyone in the world has access to clean drinking water – even to our shame here in Canada – but I had become blind to the blessing of the availability of this gift. Is this true for you perhaps? Did you know that more than one billion of the poorest people on earth do not have access to clean drinking water whilst over one third of the world's population has inadequate access to sanitation?

We know that droughts intensified by climate change are putting immense pressure on the world's freshwater supplies. 1 in 4 people around the world face dire water shortages. By 2050, it's predicted, as many as 50% of people in the world could face water shortages. Many of you may remember Cape Town in South Africa almost completely running out of water in 2018. They almost got to Day Zero — completely running out — can you imagine that? Through three consecutive years of dry winters from 2015-17, authorities implemented water restrictions, banning outdoor and non-essential water use, encouraging toilet flushing with grey water and eventually limiting consumption to about 13 gallons (49 litres) per person in February 2018. That level of conservation was foreign to many residents of the coastal tourist destination and would likely be jarring to many in Canada where water consumption was an average 329 litres per person per day in 2017.

What can we do to reduce our wastage of earth's most precious resource, given for all God's children? Start by praying every day, pray fervently and fiercely for all God's children to have what they need.

Prayer

*When we are unkind to people,
and forget they are God's children,
When we are careless with the beasts,
and forget they are God's creation,
When we ill-treat the land,
and forget the splendour of God,
Forgive us, O God of love,
and reconcile us to yourself,
to one another and to the Creation.
Teach us that the earth and all its fullness is yours,
the world and all who dwell in it.
Remind us that your Son too enjoyed the fruits of the harvest in Galilee,
and joins us now as we celebrate your good gifts together.
Call us again to safeguard the gift of life, now and forever. Amen*

www.operationnoah.org/day_of_prayer



Gender rights start with health care

In Tanzania, PWRDF partner the Diocese of Masasi was part of the All Mothers and Children Count program. AMCC improved maternal, newborn and child health, food security and nutrition and access to clean water. Underpinning all these goals was gender. Here are just some of the ways AMCC made a world of difference in the lives of girls and women.

The ripple effects of clean water

Thanks to the AMCC project, funded by PWRDF donors and Global Affairs Canada, a borehole well was built in their village. “I am now more than happy because I no longer have a lengthy walk every day to fetch water, and my daughter no longer arrives late at school.”

But there's more. Mindu villagers now have access to safe water year-round and the outbreaks of waterborne diseases have diminished. With the long and arduous task of fetching water off the to-do list, women have time to operate profitable home vegetable gardens, breastfeed their babies and get to the health clinic for scheduled visits. The borehole has also brought women together, giving them time to connect with each other through drawing the water from the well.

Let there be light – and cold

For the area with two adjacent villages (Ngapa and Mnazimmoja) and a population of 3,837, providing health and medical services at night using kerosene lamp light is very worrisome. Without electricity, the clinic could not effectively cool vaccines. If a woman went into labour at night, their relatives or partner would have to bring their own kerosene lamp or flashlight to the clinic.

Then AMCC installed solar panels to provide electricity. Now the refrigerator is running 24/7. “Delivery service at night is properly done with sufficient light and no more smoky

oil lamps or faint-light torches used. Costs to purchase gas to run a refrigerator and transfer vaccines to a nearby health centre in Nakapanya (80 km return trip) have reduced tremendously,” says Ndunguru. Before solar power, it was difficult to take up critical cases and deliveries at our clinic, especially at night says Mbilinyi. “We were forced to make many referrals even for minor cases and accompaniment to patients including pregnant women, mothers and children under five to other health centres.”

Educating men in prenatal care

At the Muungagno health centre, health care staff worked diligently and struggled to encourage community members, especially pregnant women, to use the delivery services. However, inadequate supplies and lack of services had discouraged men from allowing and accompanying their wives or partners to deliver there. Instead, they were transferred to the district hospital about 45 km away.

This increase of facility-based deliveries and vaccinations caught the attention of the regional health officers who came for a monitoring visit and wanted to know what made this noticeable jump. Our simple answer was AMCC. Improving the supply chain of essential medical equipment and drugs, close monitoring and supporting CHWs, SMPs and health providers and providing education to community members including pregnant women and their partners have raised more awareness especially among men. Abdallah is now fully motivated and happy to accompany his wife, Sofia. “Always knowledge transforms people,” he said. “I’m happy that AMCC has been my eye-opener and I will continue accompanying my wife when she is pregnant. I will also educate other men to be supportive to their wives and partners and willingly make accompaniment to them for clinic services and for the health of a mother and a child to come.”

**Read the whole story on our website at
<https://pwrdf.org/gender-rights-start-with-health-care/>**



Who we are and how we are called

Bishop Jane Alexander

THE SECOND WEEK OF LENT

Friday March 5

Scripture

Isaiah 42: 5-6a

Thus says God, the Lord,
 who created the heavens and stretched them out,
who spread out the earth and what comes from it,
 who gives breath to the people upon it
and spirit to those who walk in it:
 I am the Lord I have called you in righteousness,
I have taken you by the hand and kept you.

Reflection

Be an advocate for the climate. Advocacy is about influencing people and public policies to bring about change. It involves influencing those in power to act more fairly, in order to bring justice. Advocacy is firmly rooted in the Bible and is based on God's commitment to justice:

'Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy' –Proverbs 31:8-9.

Advocacy involves building relationships with people in authority and raising their awareness in order to influence them about a particular issue. It includes suggesting potential solutions.

I am aware that I am encouraged to be an advocate by the advocacy of young people. Of course we can all bring the Swedish environmental activist Greta Thunberg to mind, but I have been so inspired by the stories of young Anglicans in Green Anglicans and through the ACEN (Anglican Communion Environmental Network). Check out their stories and be inspired.

Being an advocate could also mean fasting from things that pollute — single use plastics and styrofoam should already be on our lists, but what could we add to it? Like many ventures this is one that is best done in community. Is there a friend you could covenant with? Someone who would hold you accountable? Do you have a prayer partner, could you begin there? Would you consider giving up eating foods that are not in season or trying a month of supporting local farmers and food producers?

The 2021 COP26, is scheduled to be held in Glasgow, United Kingdom, from 1 to 12 November 2021. How will you prepare — what do you want to know?

Prayer

*That we can glimpse you
within creation is a beautiful thought,
but also tells us
that you desire to be seen,
to be found and known.
Open our eyes, Lord,
as we walk through this world,
feel the wind and sunshine,
see the majesty of creation unfolding before our eyes.
Help us to see you.*

Copyright © John Birch, 2016



Youth council rep fights against climate change

PWRDF YOUTH Council member Jessica Steele is one of two women climate activists representing KAIROS Canada, as observers at the 24th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP24), in Katowice, Poland this week. They are accredited by The United Church of Canada, the only Canadian church with official observer status at COP.

Along with Cameroon-based Georgine Kengne, Jessica's mission is twofold:

- to urge the Canadian government to increase its greenhouse gas emissions reductions targets, backed by an ambitious action plan;
- to join other women climate activists in adding their voice to the COP24 process on the gendered impacts of climate change.

Steele is an environmental educator and climate change activist from Coast Salish Territory in Vancouver and the Youth Council Representative for the Diocese of British Columbia. She works with the Ocean Wise Conservation Association's Ocean Bridge program, where she empowers youth and young adults across the country to participate in ocean conservation service projects.

Kengne is a francophone and the Senior Projects Coordinator on Consent and Just Alternative Development with WoMin: African Women Unite Against Destructive Resource Extraction, which seeks to build a women-centred and ecologically responsive African alternative to mining's current destructive model. Read Jessica's blog posts after week one and after week two.

As women on the frontlines of climate action, Steele and Kengne's participation is significant. Recognizing that women

disproportionately bear the brunt of climate impacts but also tend to crops, manage water and develop adaptation strategies, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) adopted its Gender Action Plan at COP23 in Bonn. The plan becomes operational at this year's COP and aims to bolster women's influence in climate change dialogue and action.

Both women are deeply connected to the ecumenical community in Canada and globally. Besides being a long-time member of the PWRDF Youth Council, Steele represents PWRDF on the KAIROS Ecological Justice Circle. Kengne is the former General Secretary of the Nairobi-based World Student Christian Federation – Africa, which has worked closely with KAIROS on climate change, debt cancellation and HIV/AIDS advocacy issues in Africa.

Canada's current greenhouse gas emissions reduction target is to be 30 percent below 2005 levels by 2030. Climate Action Network Canada, of which KAIROS is a member, recommends increasing the target to 50 percent below 2005 levels by 2030.

"It is time that Canada steps up to this challenge by agreeing to more ambitious climate targets," says Steele. "We need to commit in word and in action to facilitate a transition away from fossil fuels and support communities both in Canada and abroad who are most affected by the climate crisis."

Read the whole story on our website at

<https://pwrdf.org/steeley-determination-youth-council-rep-fights-against-climate-change-at-cop24/>



**Who we are and
how we are called**
Bishop Jane Alexander

THE SECOND WEEK OF LENT

Saturday, March 6

Scripture

Job 12: 7-9

But ask the animals, and they will teach you;
the birds of the air, and they will tell you;
ask the plants of the earth, and they will teach you;
and the fish of the sea will declare to you.
Who among all these does not know
that the hand of the Lord has done this?

Reflection

We have been blessed in the Diocese of Edmonton with a companion diocese relationship with the Diocese of Buye in Burundi. Through visits and discussions over 12 years we have learned about one another – the places we live, the challenges we face. This relationship has added to our understanding of the world and informed our prayers for one another. We know that our own ecological challenges and those in Buye call for different responses. In learning from one another our common life is enriched and blessed.

What is the story of the land where you live? For reflection today try these questions adapted from Living Ecological Justice: A Biblical Response to the Environmental Crisis (CPJ). Why not compare your answers with a friend.

1. Point north from where you are right now.
2. Describe the soil around your home.
3. Name five native edible plants in your area and identify when they are in season.
4. Name five species of animal that live in your area, are they native?
5. Name five trees in your area.
6. Name five resident and migratory birds in your area.
7. What primary geological event or process influenced the landform where you live?
8. On what First Nations land do you live?
9. What is the most common land use in your area?
10. Which spring flower is the first to bloom?
11. How long is the growing season where you live?
12. From which directions do storms usually come in your area?
13. What kinds of rocks and minerals are found in your area?
14. What is the largest wild region in your area?
15. Where does your water come from?
16. Where does your garbage go?

Prayer

Blessed are you, Creator of the universe.

*May the pastures be rich for grazing, and the hills be clothed with joy;
may the fields be covered with grain; and may we, with all creation,
shout for joy and sing your praise through Jesus Christ our Lord,
in the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.*

– Book of Occasional celebrations



Burundi farmers harvest beans, maize and rice

WE HAVE received greetings from the Rev. Audace Kwizera, diocesan secretary, on behalf of our brothers and sisters in Buyé. They are well and hope we are also well.

The pictures are of a food security initiative which members of the Edmonton diocese support through a partnership with PWRDF. They show the Rev. Damascene Bagirubwira, a diocesan development officer, with farmers and their crops of beans, maize and rice which are expected to yield a satisfactory crop in January, 2020.

In the meantime, Kwizera reports that the Mothers' Union (MU) is busy enrolling new members and we can look forward to receiving more pictures in the new year.

Read the whole story at

<https://edmonton.anglican.ca/news/crops-of-beans-maize-and-rice-ready-for-harvest-in-new-year>

T O M M O R O W:

*The Third Sunday in Lent, take a Sabbath rest
and reflect on last week's readings.*



For Children

Life by Cynthia Rylant gives readers a glimpse through the eyes of animals who are excited to share what they love about life. They love the world around them for exactly what it is! Yet, the reality that “life is not always easy” is confronted head on. The final pages of this book are powerful and reveal to the reader that even when we feel like there is nothing more we can do, all we need is to look to creation for hope.

<https://www.simonandschuster.ca/books/Life/Cynthia-Rylant/9781481451628>

Scripture **Isaiah 45:12, 18**

I made the earth, and created humankind upon it; it was my hands that stretched out the heavens, and I commanded all their host. For thus says the Lord, who created the heavens (he is God!), who formed the earth and made it. He established it; he did not create it a chaos, he formed it to be inhabited!

Reflection During my twenties, I changed residences many times. Over the course of a decade, I must have lived in at least a dozen homes. School, work, family, and finances each had a pull on my life, causing frequent changes in housing. Though some of my housing arrangements during that transitional time were much more suitable than others, I am thankful that my homes were generally safe, healthy and relatively comfortable.

When I think of what makes a good home, a few basic needs come to mind: warmth, access to clean water and other basic utilities, shelter from the elements, and general security from outside threats. Additional features can make a home much more comfortable and appealing: extra space, quality construction, a favourable location and an attractive design.

As members of the human species, creatures of God, we have been collectively provided with a very well-appointed home. The world in which we live is a truly magnificent setting. Among the planets within our understanding, earth alone provides the specific needs for human life. Heat from the sun and the abundant presence of water are often identified as important features for life on earth. Whatever landscape the peoples of earth live in, we all share the same household of this planet. And everything we require to live and thrive is right here.

Despite the imagination of some outer space enthusiasts, there is no “Plan B” to this home. Through creation, God has provided a well-appointed home. It is our responsibility and vocation to care for it. This stewardship involves both conservation and sharing of resources. As creatures of God, we live here together. And this is our collective home.

Prayer *Creator God, we enjoy the abundant fruits of the earth,*

*Yet, we acknowledge that we in the developed world,
have often wasted the gifts of the earth, taking more than our share,
leaving our sisters and brothers in other places in poverty and need.
Renew our minds and transform us into servants of the earth,
so that her richness and bounty will sustain, not only us,
but generations to come after us.
In gratitude let us pray to the Lord
We give you thanks, O God.*

– Karen Turner, for the Diocese of Toronto, Earth Sunday 2018



From the ground up

IT ALL STARTED with a pair of piglets.

Josephine Kizza Aliddeki and her husband John were teachers in Kampala, Uganda in the early '80s. But teaching didn't pay much, so they decided to improve their lot by becoming produce marketers. It was 1984 and they began by buying cereals, maize and beans and selling them at the local markets. One year later, to make more money, they decided to add value to their products by buying a mill and selling ground maize.

Then in August 1985, war broke out. Concerned for their parents in their hometown of Masaka, about three hours west of Kampala, they decided they should travel along the highway to check in on them. While they were there, the highway bridge (Katonga bridge) back to Kampala was bombed and they were completely cut off from their home.

"We had no money," recalls Josephine. "We had used it all on our parents." Kiganda culture does not allow daughters-

in-law to freely share a homestead with fathers-in-law, forcing daughters in-law to live in complete hideouts, she explains. "Despite having been welcomed at my husband's family, I thought it better to start an independent home of our own; John had a piece of farmland that was handed down to him from his grandfather." This land came with a squatter, an elderly man who was in need of a shelter.

Josephine finally convinced John to utilize the inherited land from his grandfather, which she says showed her power as a woman. "This was the beginning of our lives together," says Josephine. "We prayed a lot to St. Jude then, the patron saint of lost causes."

**Read the whole story on our website at
<https://pwrdf.org/from-the-ground-up/>**

Scripture **Isaiah 54:10**

For the mountains may depart and the hills be removed,
but my steadfast love shall not depart from you,
and my covenant of peace shall not be removed,
says the Lord, who has compassion on you.

Reflection Although we celebrate the beauty and life-nurturing abundance of our planet as gifts from God, we also know that the magnificence of creation can wield dangerous force. Natural disasters have always complicated humanity's relationship with both creation and the Creator. The very same water, wind, fire, stone and vast array of organisms that offer such abundance are also associated with extreme danger.

Fear of the elements is very real and appropriate. Despite our best efforts to understand and prepare, we are always vulnerable to extreme weather and other natural dangers. In some parts of scripture, fear and respect are used almost interchangeably. Perhaps it is our familiarity with the environmental dangers of our world which allows us to appreciate natural beauty. Perhaps it is also our dependence on the goodness of creation that causes us to feel such betrayal when we find ourselves vulnerable to creation's forces. It is very humbling to face danger at the hand of creation's forces.

Natural disasters can lead to extreme humanitarian emergencies. Although we may not have immediate control over such threats, we stand in awe of creation's power, and in solidarity with those who suffer.

Through their world-wide network of partners, PWRDF is there when disasters occur. Through fast-acting relief efforts we can all be part of the ministry of compassion toward those who find their lives suddenly changed by natural disasters.

Prayer

O God, our heavenly Father, who by thy blessed Son hast taught us to ask our daily bread of thee: Behold, we beseech thee, the affliction of thy people, and send us a seasonable relief in this our necessity. Increase the fruits of the earth by thy heavenly benediction; and grant that we, receiving with thankfulness thy gracious gifts, may use the same to thy glory, the relief of those who are needy, and our own comfort; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

– A prayer In Time of Dearth and Famine, Book of Common Prayer



When disaster calls, Naba Gurung answers

AS THE Humanitarian Response Coordinator for PWRDF, Naba helped lead responses to four hurricanes in the Caribbean, a drought and famine appeal in East Africa, a wildfire in British Columbia, flooding in Nepal and a mudslide in Peru. That was just 2017.

Yet Gurung says his job takes him to places and to people he never in his “wildest dreams thought of going and meeting.”

What he really loves is being a part of effecting change. In his native Nepal he had been involved in community-based international development work, then later did his Masters in International Environment and Development Studies in Norway. He arrived in Canada as a skilled immigrant intending to pursue a PhD at Western University but took an eight-month contract with PWRDF instead. Sixteen years later, he's still here.

Because PWRDF is not an implementing agency, “we don’t do the projects ourselves,” says Gurung. “We have the office in Toronto, but our development projects happen all over the world, in countries where we have long-standing relationships, including programs in Canada itself.”

PWRDF relief projects, he says, are primarily implemented by members of the ACT Alliance, a coalition of more than

140 churches and church-related organizations that work together in more than 100 countries to create sustainable change in the lives of the poor and marginalized. “The main advantage of ACT is they are deeply rooted in the communities they serve,” says Gurung. He and other PWRDF staff are involved in setting up strategies, policies, guidelines and procedures of the Alliance.

The system is effective because of the simple chain of communication — organizations on the ground, who know the context and the specific community they’re engaged in, send an alert to the regional office about who is doing what, who’s most vulnerable, most impacted. That information is then circulated to the rest of the members, including PWRDF.

Gurung works closely with the regional offices, reviewing appeals and advising where necessary. For example, ACT recently took his advice and included the emergency response work of Al Ahli Hospital in Gaza into the appeal that is responding to the treatment and care of those affected by the Gaza conflict.

**Read the whole story on our website at
<https://pwrdf.org/60-stories/when-disaster-calls-naba-gurung-answers/>**

Scripture

1 Kings 19:11b-13b

Now there was a great wind, so strong that it was splitting mountains and breaking rocks in pieces before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake; and after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire; and after the fire a sound of sheer silence. When Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave. Then there came a voice.

Reflection

Most people have some experience with trauma and loss. Each person's life is marked by the experiences that we have lived through and witnessed. We have such abundant access to images, stories, and in-depth coverage of tragic events in our own region, and around the world. It is almost routine to be exposed to human suffering every time we access news media.

We cannot always know how we will be affected by the situations we witness. Sometimes I am surprised by my own response to the news of a troubling event or tragic occurrence. It is important to ask for help in dealing with the strong feelings that come with witnessing suffering.

While news coverage of major tragedies comes and goes so quickly, there are some constants in the stories of human tragedy. As the commotion of the camera crews and reporters subsides, the quiet work of neighbourly care and solidarity gets underway. Almost universal to the experience of destruction is the human will to rebuild and offer care to those in need. Another constant, not unrelated to that of neighbourly care is that of God's loving presence. At all times, in the midst of every tragic situation, God is always with us, offering the quiet but timeless invitation to reach out in love.

Prayer

Keep watch, dear Lord, with those who work, or watch, or weep this night, and give your angels charge over those who sleep. Tend the sick, Lord Christ; give rest to the weary, bless the dying, soothe the suffering, pity the afflicted, shield the joyous; and all for your love's sake.

– Augustine of Hippo, fourth century



Dealing with post-wildfire stress

PWRDF previously reported on the important work the Stemete7uw'I Friendship Centre has done for the 100 Mile House community in the wake of the 2017 wildfires. The centre is working with PWRDF again to help with suicide prevention. The area is at risk due to the high Indigenous population and added stresses following the wildfires.

Recognizing the increased risk of suicide, PWRDF provided two Anglican Churches — St. Peter's Williams Lake and St. Timothy's 100 Mile House — with \$5,000 each to provide suicide prevention training in their communities.

The Rev. Dr. Keith Dobyns and The Rev. Kristen Dobyns are implementing the project.

"Our goal was for each church to host one ASIST course, and then follow-up with several Safe Talk events in each community," said the Dobyns. "We especially sought individuals who could respond to the increased suicide risk of Indigenous peoples and of middle-aged and older men. We sought to time the ASIST courses for mid-winter, when we understood that suicidality was highest."

ASIST is a two-day course that educates community leaders and those in helping professions. Safe Talk events are for the

entire community and focus on recognizing the signs and risks associated with suicide and provide training on how to refer at risk individuals through the right channels to receive help.

The ASIST course took place in February 2018 and despite a heavy snow and ice storm, nearly 20 people made their way to St. Peter's. Fifteen participants were in helping professions, five were Indigenous and three were clergy. The St. Timothy's ASIST course had 12 participants, despite bad weather and scheduling conflicts. However, the course evaluations for both churches received scores of good to excellent.

The project partnered with the 100 Mile House office of the Canadian Mental Health Association who recruited the course facilitators. The Safe Talk courses will take place this October and November in the communities. After feedback from the community, the recruitment for the courses will expand to include other members of the community.

**Read the whole story on our website at
<https://pwrdf.org/suicide-prevention-programs-designed-for-post-wildfire-stress/>**

Scripture

Matthew 23:37-38

Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing! See, your house is left to you, desolate. For I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, 'Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.'

Reflection

In the quest to understand and explain the human experience, Christian theologians have long separated the suffering we experience into two categories. The Protestant study of Christian ethics discusses ontological and historically situated suffering. Similarly, Catholic moral theology speaks of natural and human evil. In both academic traditions, there is the understanding that some tragedies occur as a result of being part of a larger natural system, while others can and must be prevented.

Ontological suffering (natural evil) refers to the suffering people endure as a result of interacting with our environment. Natural disasters, disease and accidental harm are generally understood to fall under this category. Christians are to endure such suffering as best we can and respond with grace to the suffering of others through acts of compassion.

Historically situated suffering (human evil) is the harm that people inflict on each other. War, oppression, violence, discrimination, and the violation of trust are examples of this type of harm. As Christians, we are expected to confront and prevent this type of evil behaviour.

This way of thinking about tragic human experiences is helpful to some degree. Lately, however, I have been very concerned by a quiet tendency to confuse or conflate these two categories of suffering. If ontological suffering is to be endured, while historically situated suffering is to be confronted, I am worried that our economic and political systems have mutated to the point that they have become like geological and meteorological systems over which we have little direct control. Meanwhile, human activity now affects climate and geology more than ever before through pollution, resource extraction, and deforestation.

The risk is that we will passively expect our global neighbours to endure war and poverty as if these were earthquakes and cyclones, while feeling powerless in the face of governments and industries that seem as immovable as tectonic plates and the weather itself.

PWRDF is committed to confronting both natural and human evil through its humanitarian response program (disaster relief, refugee support, etc.), as well as its long-term development, education and advocacy work. We are all invited to respond to the invitation to work toward "a truly just, healthy, and peaceful world."

Prayer

*Dear God,
You asked for my hands
that you might use them for your purposes.
I gave them for a moment
then withdrew them for the work was hard.
You asked for my mouth
to speak out against injustice.
I gave you a whisper
that I might not be accused.*

*You asked for my eyes
to see the pain of poverty.
I closed them
for I did not want to see.
You asked for my life
that you might work through me.
I gave you a small part
that I might not get “too involved”.
Forgive me for the calculated efforts to serve you
only when it is convenient for me to do so,
and only in those places where it is safe to do so,
and only with those who make it easy to do so.
Forgive me,
renew me,
send me out as a usable instrument,
that I may take seriously
the meaning of the cross.
Amen.*

– Joe Sereman, South Africa (alt.), “Prayer of Confession,” reproduced in *From Hope to Harvest – A Worship Service for World Food Day*, Canadian Foodgrains Bank, 2015 and PWRDF 2020 Worship Resource



Rohingya refugees

NEARLY 1 MILLION Rohingya, a Muslim ethnic group, are currently in refugee camps in Cox's Bazar, a district of Bangladesh, after fleeing violence in Rakhine state in neighbouring Myanmar, which a UN official called “a textbook example of ethnic cleansing.”

Naba Gurung, PWRDF’s development and humanitarian response co-ordinator, was part of a team that visited the camps in November for a midpoint assessment of an appeal project through ACT Alliance, a humanitarian, development and advocacy coalition of churches and church-related organizations of which PWRDF is a member. PWRDF contributed \$95,327 to the appeal.

The appeal is funding projects in food security, livelihood, shelter, hygiene, psychosocial work, and other areas.

In addition, ACT partners have helped to set up learning centres for school-age children. “The Rohingya girls are

trained and employed as teachers,” says Gurung. “And the good thing is, for these little girls, kids, these teachers are their role model.”

Community kitchens have also been set up to create space for vulnerable women who may lack fuel or cooking utensils to make food and socialize. Other food projects include food distribution, nutrition education and “micro-gardens” that can be grown in small spaces within the congested camps.

Refugees living in the camps are not able to work, use the official Bangladeshi school curriculum or build permanent structures, Gurung says. The government of Bangladesh is eager to repatriate the Rohingya to Rakhine state.

Read the whole story at
<https://www.anglicanjournal.com/pwrdf-donates-to-support-rohingya-refugees/>

Scripture **John 19:28,30**

After this, when Jesus knew that all was now finished, he said (in order to fulfil the scripture), ‘I am thirsty.’
...Then he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

Reflection As Jesus approaches the final moments of his life, he calls out in thirst. This is a simple expression of the fully human experience of being in pain and in need of hydration. Dying in such a public and violent way, Jesus offers us a glimpse of the fullness of his humanity and vulnerability.

Long before Jesus’ crucifixion, and long after as well, the same familiar refrain cries out from all corners of humanity, and from creation itself.

People need access to safe, clean water. It is one of the most basic and universal needs which unite us. Water is life-giving, cleansing, and refreshing when it is present. When it is absent or contaminated, water becomes a very real symbol of suffering and vulnerability.

Not only people, but entire ecosystems depend on water for their health. Along with deforestation and pollution, the effects of climate change expose new vulnerabilities in the life of the earth on a regular basis.

When Jesus cries out in thirst, he gives voice to a very real threat faced by many people and ecosystems in our own time. PWRDF responds to this call by helping to secure clean water sources in communities around the world and by helping to mitigate the effects of drought in vulnerable ecosystems and farmlands.

Prayer

*God who brought water out of the rock,
God who quenched the thirst of those dying in the wilderness,
God who in Jesus gave the living waters
so that those who taste them would never thirst,
God who in Jesus died on the Cross thirsty,
for there was none to quench his thirst,
listen to all those who truly confess
and grant us forgiveness so that we act responsibly in our use of water,
become sensitive to the desperate needs of those without water,
and gain wisdom in conserving
and preserving water so that rivers roll out in justice among all nations and all peoples.
Amen.*

– From prayers related to SDG#6, World Council of Churches and Student Christian Movement, India



Clean drinking water in Pikangikum

ALACK OF access to clean drinking water is a significant health and quality of life issue for many First Nation communities across Canada. On June 20, 2018, Indigenous Services Canada listed 78 First Nations that have long-term drinking water advisories in effect. The Indigenous people of Pikangikum, a remote fly-in Ojibwe community in northern Ontario, know what it's like not to be able to drink water directly from the tap – they have been under a boil water advisory for more than a decade. Not only that, just 109 of the 500 homes in Pikangikum even have a tap – the rest must travel to one of six watering points in the community to collect water in buckets for drinking or cooking. The elders of the band identified finding, and implementing, a solution to providing access to clean drinking water in homes as a top priority for their community.

They tasked this problem to the Pikangikum Working Group (PWG), a volunteer-run group of Indigenous and non-Indigenous people who have offered their professional experience to identify actionable solutions to some of the major issues facing this First Nation community. Tasked with bringing clean drinking water to 10 more homes in the second phase of the project, the group reached out to Habitat for Humanity Manitoba.

Read the whole story at

<https://habitat.ca/en/stories/clean-drinking-water-in-pikangikum>

Saturday, March 13

Scripture **Isaiah 37:31**

The surviving remnant ... shall again take root downwards, and bear fruit upwards.

Reflection An extremely vast forest system, the Canadian Boreal forest stretches right across this country and has long shaped the life and culture of its inhabitants. Among the many examples of biodiversity found within the Boreal Forest is the iconic jack pine tree.

As trees go, the jack pine is not especially large or beautiful. It is, however, reliably present from the Atlantic Ocean to the Rocky Mountains. And it stands as a sign of hope for those who know its secret.

Perhaps the most remarkable feature of the jack pine tree is the way by which it reproduces. While the tree itself is extremely vulnerable to damage by fire, the seeds actually require very high temperatures to be released from their cones. Forest fires burn quickly and fiercely through jack pine populations, apparently destroying all vegetation in their path. But as the charred remains of a natural forest fire begin to cool, newly released seeds offer the promise of new life. Having been protected by tightly armoured and resin-sealed cones, seeds are now ready to do what seeds do best. They thrive in the freshly charred ground, very quickly turning the landscape green again.

While the threats of danger in our world are very real, I draw much hope and comfort from the quiet example of the jack pine. As we witness, respond to, and endure the literal and metaphorical fires of this life, may we also be inspired to protect, nurture, and sustain new life for the future.

Prayer *God of life and nurture,*

*we entrust to you
the care and protection
of the most vulnerable members
of your creation.*

*When environmental threats loom,
help us to protect life,
nurture growth,
and to join you
in sustaining that which brings new life
to our barren land.*

Amen.

– Rev. Patrick Stephens, St. Barnabas Anglican, Deep River



Fort McMurray two years on

By The Rev. Dane Neufeld, April 30, 2018

IT IS DIFFICULT to believe that we are now approaching the two year mark from the Fort McMurray Horse River wildfire. It seems a long time ago now and yet the effects of the fire are always with us. While some of our lives have long since returned to normal, other people are still rebuilding their houses, negotiating with insurance companies or trying to settle in other places. Many more still struggle with the aftermath of trauma and the enormous stress of the evacuation and the ways in which it destabilizes many people's lives emotionally, financially and in some cases, employment and even health.

We are very grateful for the funds donated to PWRDF that have in many ways allowed our churches to have a meaningful and healing impact in our community. It has been rewarding to partner with agencies such as:

- the Center of Hope who care for the homeless and needy in our city
- Habitat for Humanity, who are assisting in rebuilding of houses for those whose insurance coverage was inadequate
- Stepping Stones youth shelter and Kings Kids Promotions who serve our city's youth, a segment of the population whose lives were greatly disrupted by the fire.

PWRDF funds have contributed to the construction and launching of a youth recording studio and music program through a local high school. This past fall the first youth event was held where young people were invited to share their musical and other artistic gifts, many of which expressed thoughts and emotions related to the fire. It was a powerful and healing event for all involved and we were grateful to have played a part in its creation.

A large portion of the funds was used to assist underinsured or uninsured individuals with living expenses. From the beginning there were many people in this situation and for some the problem has increased with time. Construction delays and in some cases abandoned contracts, have left a number of people without any resolution to their claims, and as we approach the two year mark, the insurance covering living expenses will expire for many people. Despite requests

from local government, it seems these policies will not be extended which means some people will be paying both rent and mortgage payments — a situation that may overwhelm many. We hope to continue providing assistance where possible in these circumstances.

The last two summers we have partnered with On Eagle's Wings who have come to Fort McMurray to run kids' camps. They have been a great success and an important opportunity for kids to reflect on what happened and to give thanks for the ways in which we were cared for during the disaster. Immediately following the fire the camps provided a structured way for children to be together after a long time apart, and after many families had not yet returned or decided to relocate elsewhere.

PWRDF funds have gone towards the building of a community garden on the property of All Saints' downtown. The garden was built in collaboration with the YMCA and many other donors and community members, who saw the importance of making a beautiful space in the downtown and creating the opportunity for people to come together to build something new and living in the wake of the fire's destruction. The garden committee, made up of Church and community members, has hosted numerous events for families and children and workshops for gardeners. Many people in the neighbourhood use it as a place to sit, relax and enjoy. Habitat for Humanity donated two playhouses that are a huge hit with the neighbourhood kids. We are very grateful for the ways that the garden has drawn people together. The visual effects of the fire remain with us every day. The once beautiful and lush river valleys of Fort McMurray have been dramatically altered so it has been a source of joy and renewal to be engaged in the planting and beautifying of a once vacant lot.

**Read the whole story on our website at
<https://pwrdf.org/fort-mcmurray-two-years-on/>**

T O M M O R R O W:
The Fourth Sunday in Lent, take a Sabbath rest
and reflect on last week's readings.



One World, One Faith, Many Nations

Bishop Jane Alexander

THE FOURTH WEEK OF LENT

Monday, March 15

Scripture

Jeremiah 12:11

They have made it a desolation;
desolate, it mourns me.
The whole land is made desolate,
But no one lays it to heart.

Reflection

As with the COVID-19 pandemic, everyone in the world is facing the storm of climate change and is being (or will be) affected. But, as with COVID, people are not affected equally, with the already disadvantaged facing the worst impacts and lacking the financial resources to weather the storm. The World Bank Group in the Shock Waves report said that due to climate change there could be more than 100 million additional people living in poverty by 2030. So this is a pressing issue of our time, but we have hope and we do not give up.

There are certain population groups throughout the world who, due to entrenched stigmatization and discrimination, are the most likely to be living in extreme poverty. This includes women; racial, ethnic, and linguistic minorities; members of castes; migrants (especially irregular migrants); refugees and asylum seekers; stateless persons; Indigenous populations; persons with disabilities; and persons living with HIV and AIDS. In addition, people who live in extreme poverty are often looked down upon simply because they are poor. This is not the world as it should be.

The COVID-19 pandemic has shown us possibilities, not least that when the world genuinely recognizes it is facing an emergency, it takes action... and whether that action is protective and effective is deeply dependent on the calibre of the leadership. We have seen how this new crisis of the pandemic has reshaped our world; the climate and ecological crises are just as real and require a response that matches the best of the responses we have seen to the pandemic. It is time for the church to lead – and not the institutions we call church, but the real church – the people, you and me. This is a time for us to lead. Have you noticed in PWRDF's partner stories the grassroots nature of many of the stories? Ordinary folk just like us have stepped up and said 'what can I do?' What does your heart burn to do?, I believe we are diminished as human beings when we know the causes of extreme poverty and don't do anything. It diminishes our humanity if we don't speak out, pray and act to end poverty. We need to speak about our common humanity found in Christ.

The Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby said: "Climate Change is the greatest challenge that we and future generations face. When we look at Jesus, we see one who instinctively stood alongside the most vulnerable in society. It is absolutely clear that following Jesus must include standing alongside those that are on the frontline of this unfolding catastrophe." (*Anglican Alliance*)

Prayer

*Creator of the land, the water, and the sky,
come and renew the face of the whole earth:
Giver of life, we are the sons and daughters of your holy breath;
give us new purpose to care in love for the world of your making:
Saviour of the world, touch our lips in the power of your new creation,
that we may proclaim your word of life:
God of steadfast love, turn our hearts and the hearts of the whole human family
to care in thanksgiving and reverence for the world you have given:
God of sparrows and wild flowers,*



*teach us to see and preserve the simple beauty of the gifts of your hands:
Friend of the helpless and the poor, strengthen the will of people everywhere
to use your creation to the benefit of all:
Creator of the fruitful earth,
you made us stewards of all things.
Give us grateful hearts for all your goodness,
and steadfast wills to use your bounty well,
that the whole human family,
today and in generations to come,
may with us give thanks for the riches of your creation.
We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ the Lord. Amen.*

– Book of Occasional Celebrations



PWRDF directs \$200,000 to COVID-19

THE PRIMATE'S World Relief and Development Fund today announces a plan to allocate \$200,000 to respond to COVID-19 around the world and in Canada. The money will be spread across four partners: Village Health Works (Burundi), Partners in Health (global response), ACT Alliance's Global Appeal and HelpAge Canada, supporting vulnerable seniors here.

To address the needs of underserved communities in developing countries, PWRDF has granted \$60,000 each to Partners in Health and Village Health Works. Both are long-time partners of PWRDF and are well placed to support people dealing with COVID-19. PIH Rwanda and VHW have been key partners in PWRDF's All Mothers and Children Count program, supported by tens of thousands of Canadians and with funding from the Government of Canada.

"As always, we are heartened by your solidarity, support, compassion, and tenacity," writes Cathryn Christensen, Clinical Partnerships Director at VHW. When VHW first reported back to PWRDF on March 19, there were no identified cases of COVID-19 in Burundi, and 11 cases in Rwanda. Since then, Christensen notes two cases of COVID-19 have been diagnosed in Bujumbura, Burundi. There are now 75 cases in Rwanda. These numbers can be partly attributed to low rates of testing and access to

tests. Health care professionals at VHW are concerned they don't have sufficient equipment or staff if COVID-19 infections follow a trajectory similar to that of Italy, Spain or the United States. "There are fewer than 10 ventilators in all of Burundi (with a population of more than 11 million people) and, as we know, the health system's capacity is challenged even without the additional threat of a pandemic," says Christensen. "Our sewing co-op face masks, made from local kitenge fabric, have since been improved."

Given the lack of ICU beds, personnel and treatment options, VHW's strategy is in line with Burundi's Ministry of Health and will focus heavily on containment efforts. Initial measures will be education, prevention and protection, with the goals "to protect patients, health workers, the population (including workers who are building our urgently needed hospital), and to treat what we can treat," says Christensen.

A further allocation of \$40,000 will contribute to the ACT Alliance Global Appeal to support organizations building awareness about COVID-19 and working closely with health officials to prevent fatalities and intense pressure on already fragile public health systems. The global budget for this appeal is \$12 million US.

**Read the whole story on our website at
<https://pwrdf.org/pwrdf-directs-200000-to-covid-19/>**



One World, One Faith, Many Nations

Bishop Jane Alexander

THE FOURTH WEEK OF LENT

Tuesday, March 16

Scripture

Jeremiah 32:17

Ah Lord God! It is you who made the heavens and the earth by your great power and by your outstretched arm!

Reflection

Because of climate change, super typhoons are becoming increasingly common. In 2018 PWRDF responded to the earthquake in Indonesia, and Super Typhoon Mangkhut in the Philippines. In 2020 Super Typhoon Goni hit the Philippines. It seems that people do not have time to recover from one super climate event before the next one hits. We believe in the strong power of God to help and to heal. And God believes in us, that we have been designed to help and to heal because we are created in the image of God. Hundreds of years ago St. Teresa of Avila put it this way:

Christ has no body now but yours,
No hands, no feet on earth but yours,
Yours are the eyes with which he looks compassion on this world,
Yours are the feet with which he walks to do good,
Yours are the hands, with which he blesses all the world.
Yours are the hands, yours are the feet,
Yours are the eyes, you are his body.
Christ has no body now but yours,
No hands, no feet on earth but yours,
Yours are the eyes with which he looks compassion on this world.
Christ has no body now on earth but yours.

So even though the Philippines experiences an average of 20 typhoons every year and is vulnerable to frequent earthquakes and volcanic eruptions, tsunamis, rising sea levels and storm surges, the hands and feet and prayers of the Christian family are there with PWRDF and their partners like Cordillera People's Alliance. Part of Creation Care is responding to needs, reinforcing capacity and addressing poverty.

Prayer

We pray for people of the East.

For people in South East Asia who live in poverty and have limited choices in their livelihood.

Many of them are migrant workers living and working in a foreign land.

They are lonely, have limited access to resources and are separated from their families and loved ones.

Lord, give them strength, courage, love, peace and perseverance to face everyday challenges.

May they know Your presence and love.

We pray that they can be reunited with their families and have a better life in the future.

- PWRDF Prayer in the Four Directions, Anglican Alliance website



PWRDF supports typhoon relief in the Philippines

ON NOVEMBER 1, 2020, Super Typhoon Goni (Rolly) slammed into the Philippines with catastrophic winds, torrential rainfall, severe flooding, mudslides and storm surges. It was the world's most powerful tropical cyclone this year so far. Typhoon Molave (Quinta) hit the same region a week prior and another violent Typhoon Vamco (Ulysses) hit the country on November 11. More than 1.4 million people in five regions across Luzon were affected. These disasters have occurred while the COVID-19 pandemic continues to pose a serious public health risk. It has already caused the Philippine economy to contract by 7.3%, further impoverishing the most vulnerable and poorest Filipino families.

The National Council of Churches in the Philippines (NCCP) issued an appeal for cash and in-kind donations and its volunteers immediately started responding to the needs on the ground.

PWRDF gave \$20,000 to an ACT Alliance appeal. NCCP and PWRDF are both members of the ACT Alliance and longstanding partners. Established in 1963, NCCP has a wide network of churches rooted in the local communities and well-trained staff. The NCCP Program Unit on Faith, Witness and Service (PUFWS) will manage the various phases of the project through its member churches, organized as an Ecumenical Disaster Response and Management Committees.

"Our goal is to promote unity among our members in responding to the impact of Typhoon Rolly, where we

see how we can complement each other's responses, share resources with each other and coordinate to avoid duplication and reach more communities," says Edward Santos, NCCP Humanitarian Program Manager. Hot meals were prepared by the Brotherhoods at UCCP Faith Bible Church for those who were evacuated.

The typhoon has put the affected region in a state of crisis. Many are without access to food, shelter materials, safe drinking water and hygiene materials, and income opportunities. The dire situation is further compounded for people with vulnerabilities: the elderly as they have to leave their homes and stay in the evacuation centers or temporary shelters, together with other displaced families, which makes them vulnerable to acquiring SARS, COVID-19 or other health problems.

NCCP aims to support 8,000 households who are among the severely affected. Priority will be given to hard-to-reach areas and unserved or underserved communities, where minimal government presence or public service exists. Particular attention will be given to people with special needs such as pregnant and lactating women, the elderly and people with disabilities.

Read the whole story on our website at
<https://pwrdf.org/pwrdf-supports-typhoon-relief-in-the-philippines/>



One World, One Faith, Many Nations

Bishop Jane Alexander

THE FOURTH WEEK OF LENT

Wednesday, March 17

Scripture

Hosea 4:3

Therefore the land mourns, and all who live in it languish; together with the wild animals and the birds of the air, even the fish of the sea are perishing.

Reflection

In South America in 2020 severe droughts were experienced especially in northern Argentina, Paraguay, and the western borders of Brazil. In Brazil alone, the World Meteorological Organization estimated agricultural losses were nearly \$3 billion US. (State of the Global Climate Report 2020). That's a very high level view, so let's bring it closer. When the land mourns, how are we called to the work of restoration? Quite often we find that the women of the community start with small scale farms and businesses that gradually develop a stable food supply and income. In Edmonton where I live, I have seen many churches giving over their grounds to form community gardens. These gardens not only provide food for local communities they also instill a new sense of wonder and develop skills in tending the land. Such projects have moved some budding farmers into keeping bees and chickens. Urban land which was once major farmland in the region is producing fruit again. In the restoration of the land there is a certain restoration of the soul that takes place.

Prayer

*Holy God,
earth and air and water are your creation, and every living thing belongs to you:
have mercy on us as climate change confronts us.
Give us the will and the courage
to simplify the way we live,
to reduce the energy we use,
to share the resources you provide, and to bear the cost of change.
Forgive our past mistakes and send us your Spirit,
with wisdom in present controversies
and vision for the future to which you call us in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

—The Anglican Church of Australia



Empowering women to take climate change

IN THE PARAMO de Pisba highlands in the Department of Boyaca, Colombia, most people work in either agriculture, animal husbandry or traditional mining. But as mining activities continue to expand into agricultural land, more and more people are being forced to move higher in the mountains to cultivate the protected land in the paramos.

An economy based mainly on mining can be extremely damaging to the life of a community. When mining is the main industry, the environment is destroyed and traditional farming – usually the domain of women – disappears, leaving women without employment opportunities.

Women are then dependent on men's income perpetuating what is locally known as "machista" social patterns. Women have no voice in decision making, particularly in financial affairs and men make household and family decisions.

PWRDF's new partner ILSA (Instituto Latinoamericano para una Sociedad y un Derecho Alternativos) works with local women to address these needs. The program will train women in nine municipalities of Paramo de Pisba and empower them with the skills and necessary funds to create agricultural microenterprises, protect their environment and strengthen their leadership potential in the public sphere.

"The women face economic exclusion and discrimination, condemning them to poverty, unemployment and stripping them of their gender and political rights," says Jeannethe Lara, PWRDF's program coordinator for the ILSA project.

The project has identified 75 women and 400 family members who will take part in training and discussions on everything from women's rights, leadership, agriculture, public policy and environmental protection. These trainings will promote the women's participation in the public sphere and create community campaigns on climate change mitigation and environmental protection.

The women will use their new skills to establish a native plant nursery that will help reforest the land damaged by mining. They will also receive seeds and livestock for their family farms including hens, chickens and sheep, which can be used to obtain wool and bred for additional income.

The identified women will also receive training and coaching on entrepreneurship including financial, administrative and technical information. Together they will establish a "revolving fund" where everyone contributes and has access to a shared pot of money. These funds will allow the women to design and establish collective income generation enterprises in order to provide the women with the income they need.

"The project will improve the quality of life of women, their families and their territory," says Lara. ILSA was formed in 1978 to work with marginalized communities in Colombia, a country with a history of internal conflict leading to people's displacement and human rights violations.

ILSA works with Indigenous people, Afro-Colombians, women and displaced people to ensure their full human rights.

By transforming the leadership norms of rural women, ILSA seeks to work toward the recognition of women's rights to the rural economy and guarantee their economic autonomy while creating initiatives for the protection of their land.

"ILSA is creating an eco-feminist response to climate change in the region of Pisba," says Lara.

**Read the whole story on our website at
<https://pwrdf.org/new-pwrdf-partner-empowers-women-while-responding-to-climate-change/>**



One World, One Faith, Many Nations

Bishop Jane Alexander

THE FOURTH WEEK OF LENT

Thursday, March 18

Scripture

Romans 1:20

Ever since the creation of the world his eternal power and divine nature, invisible though they are, have been understood and seen through the things he has made. So they are without excuse.

Reflection

We know who God is and we have been taught throughout scripture where to witness his image, power and nature. If you were to read on in the first chapter of Romans from our scripture today, you will find the well-known reminder that we ALL fall short of the glory of God. But of course, we should try not to deliberately fall short. Let's think for a moment about care of creation in making sure that the soil can produce food and that all God's children can have enough to eat.

In 2019, for the first time in years, the prevalence of world hunger rose. The sharpest increase was seen in sub-Saharan Africa, where years of severe drought have ruined agricultural output. The numbers of people involved is truly shocking. For example, in Zimbabwe, where more than 7 million people require food aid, the 2019 harvest was half as large as the year before and 2020's harvest was on track to be lower than previous years. In Southern Africa alone, more than 45 million people are experiencing severe food shortages.

Crop yields vary from year to year for all sorts of reasons – lack of resources and technology, economic downturns, conflict and political dysfunction. But climate change is a particularly disruptive variable that's reshaping food production around the world, threatening half a billion people with poverty and food insecurity.

PWRDF and their partners work with communities all over the world on issues of food security linked to climate issues. Here in Canada there are also communities where food security is a challenge and it is often churches who step into the gap with food programs varying from meals, food banks, community gardens, etc. Sadly however in Canada according to the National Zero Waste Council's research on household food waste, approximately 2.2 million tonnes of edible food is wasted each year. The cost of this wasted food is in excess of \$17 billion.

Part of care of creation for all of us is to look such obvious inequalities and wanton wastage straight in the eye and make a personal commitment to do something about it. We are called to look at how we live and how we share.

Prayer

O Creator of all living things:

We are all hungry in a world full of abundance.

The possibilities of food for bodies and souls overflow in this beautiful world.

*We ask for the grace to see the abundance of our world and
enough awareness to acknowledge our sins of greed and fear.*

*Give us openness of soul and courageous, willing hearts
to be with our sisters and brothers who are hungry and in pain.*

*We ask for your intercession on behalf of every person hungry
for earthly food and hungry for the taste of the Spirit of God.*



*We give thanks that we can be part of that intercession.
This world is blessed with enough food of the earth
for every person to eat and be satisfied.
We all can feed on the bread of Christ, through the Holy Spirit,
as God makes a home in our hearts.
We come together in awe and wonder
at the Creator who loves us so much
that we are invited and urged to be co-creators with God
in the care of our brothers and sisters.
In the name of the tender Mother-Father of all people
who hears every cry, Amen.*

– Prayer from “Lifting Women’s voices: Prayers to change the world,” Church Publishing 2009



Agricultural education fights climate change

DEBORA KANTOR is from Cambridge-Narrows, New Brunswick. She is a member of the Parish of Cambridge & Waterborough. Olient Nyasulu is a Malawian woman from the community of Kabanda.

They come from two very different worlds and life experiences, but they have three things in common: a love of tending the land, a strong Christian faith, and connection to the Canadian Foodgrains Bank.

Kantor travelled to Malawi in early February as part of a Foodgrains Bank learning tour, where she learned about the effects that climate change has on hunger in the country. As part of the tour, Kantor stayed in Nyasulu's home for three nights. She learned about some of the challenges Nyasulu faces, and how Nyasulu is working hard to meet those challenges head-on.

For example, through a Foodgrains Bank-supported project, Nyasulu learned new farming techniques that helped her increase the amount of food she grew. “One of Nyasulu’s greatest joys in life was having enough food to feed her family,” says Kantor. “Through the project, she learned to increase her yields by making compost to help fertilize her soil.”

“Eighty percent of people in Malawi rely on the land to grow food for themselves and their families,” she explains, noting that for Malawians like Nyasulu, there’s a fine margin between having enough food to eat and not. Subtle changes in the weather can make a big difference in the ability of small-scale farmers to earn a livelihood.

“Over the course of the trip, we heard from farmer after farmer how they were struggling with prolonged dry spells, or how their crops wouldn’t grow because their soil wasn’t fertile,” says Kantor. Although Kantor isn’t a farmer, she does love to garden, and the challenge of being disappointed by poor weather resonated with her.

Nyasulu also learned new food production techniques to increase the nutrients in her children’s diets. One technique she learned was to cook peanut flour with vegetables to increase the protein in meals.

“I said to Nyasulu, ‘Your children look healthy,’ and she said ‘Yes — because of the nutrition training,’” says Kantor.

Ultimately, Kantor believes it was her Christian faith that helped her create meaningful connections with Nyasulu and her family. “I had a heart-to-heart connection with them,” she says. “We were truly all brothers and sisters in Christ, and of all the places I’ve travelled, I feel most connected to Nyasulu and her community.”

Kantor’s faith is also a reason she believes Canadians should do what they can to help people overseas experiencing hunger. “We have been blessed in our country with adequate food,” she says. “And God calls on us to support all his children – all his brothers and sisters – around the world.”

Read the whole story on our website at
<https://pwrdf.org/n-b-woman-witnesses-effects-of-climate-change-on-hunger-in-malawi/>



**One World, One Faith,
Many Nations**
Bishop Jane Alexander

THE FOURTH WEEK OF LENT

Friday, March 19

Scripture

Romans 8:19, 22

For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God...We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labour pains until now.

Reflection

Romans 8:19 reminds us that “creation is standing on tiptoe for the children of God to be revealed.” We might not be able to hear the groaning of plants and soil and air, but we can see it. We can hear the groaning and the cries of our brothers and sisters. Every single step we take to care for creation is a tiny act of healing. Our individual choices make a difference – and when those many small changes are networked with multitudes of others, they can lead to transformational change. The voice of faith is important in the current ecological crisis because although we recognize the seriousness of the current situation, we do not lose hope.

The Arctic National Wildlife Refuge is under threat. It is known by the Gwich'in people as “the Sacred place where life begins” – they treat it as holy, not even stepping on it – for it is the calving area of the Porcupine Caribou herd. As one activist said “we have always depended on the caribou, now the caribou are depending on us.” The majority of Gwich'in people are Anglican/Episcopalian. Indigenous communities around the world are the frontline groups facing climate change and biodiversity loss – for they live in high risk environments. They include nomadic herders living on desert margins, fishers in small and low-lying islands, hunters across the Arctic and dwellers of the forests. Archbishop Mark MacDonald says “whatever hits society at large, be it climate change, epidemics, or other disasters, usually hits the First Peoples hardest.” (*Anglican Alliance*)

Prayer

*Creator of glaciers, vast reaches of tundra and pools of life, we pray for the North:
For northern migrating herds of caribou and pods of whales,
for polar bears, seals and reindeer;
For northern birds that migrate from farthest north to deepest south;
For the peoples of the far North across Siberia,
for the Saami of Scandinavia,
for Inuit and First Nations of Canada,
who have lived in and cared for the land and its creatures.*

– PWRDF Prayer in the Four Directions, Anglican Alliance website



Cold weather, warm hearts

In DAWSON City, St. Paul's Church supported PWRDF in its response to the wildfires in Fort McMurray and its contribution to safe water and sanitation in Pikangikum First Nation in northern Ontario. Built with money donated by gold miners in 1902, the church organizes a Shrove Tuesday Pancake supper to raise money for causes such as PWRDF, as well as a women's shelter and whatever local needs may arise.

In Moosehide, just north of Dawson City where many of the Tr'ondek First Nation went after gold prospectors descended on Dawson at the turn of the 19th century, St. Barnabas Church is still standing, but with an ever-so-weak floor. Georgette McLeod says Tr'ondek hope to see the church restored, for the community to grow more confident, and for settler populations to learn more and to right the wrongs of history, such as of residential schools and overfishing.

Dan Davidson, the editor of the local Klondike Sun says it well: "In St. Paul's and in all the parishes in the Yukon, we know how important it is to follow Christ's command to care for others and that the need is sometime local, sometime in Canada, something further afield... it's important to be involved. We need to try to do all these things, not choose one over another."

PWRDF Diocesan Representative Betty Davidson (right) talks to a parishioner at Christ Church Cathedral in Whitehorse about PWRDF.

The people of St. Paul's as well as St. Martin's got behind the purchase of a solar suitcase from last year's Gifts for Mission

gift guide. The process of working together to select a gift and organize fundraising was an entry point to learn of the needs and opportunities that solar-generated light can bring to health facilities in the most remote parts of Mozambique. The solar suitcases have really "perked up our eyes," says Bishop Larry. "People in the Yukon know what it's like to be isolated, where lights go out, in storm without power, 25 degrees below, when it's dangerous, in times of storm, when generators go down. It makes us realize that the work of PWRDF is such a great thing – an established way of giving for the church, part of who we are."

At the Church of the Northern Apostles and Christ Church Cathedral in Whitehorse, people asked how we partner with local churches and organizations, how we work ecumenically, how our support is making an impact and how we are increasing support in case of emergencies here in Canada. The Whitehorse churches have organized community barbeques to raise money for local needs and for refugee support – and of which there are an increasing number in the Yukon too.

"People are caring," says Betty Davidson. "If there is an emergency in Haiti or Nepal or famine in South Sudan, everyone is keen to know where we can send our money. It's our responsibility, it's a Christian thing to do."

**Read the whole story on our website at
<https://pwrdf.org/cold-weather-warm-hearts-pwrdf-in-the-yukon-diocese/>**



One World, One Faith, Many Nations

Bishop Jane Alexander

THE FOURTH WEEK OF LENT

Saturday, March 20

Scripture

Romans 8:26-27

Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words. And God, who searches the heart, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

Reflection

The reflection today is to watch a video from the incredible Joel McKerrow, an award winning writer, speaker, educator and performance poet. Based out of Melbourne, Australia, he is the Artist Ambassador for the aid and development organization, Tearfund Australia.

Let's just say, just purely hypothetically of course, I know it's completely ridiculous but what if we had, only ONE planet, just one. One planet to live on. One planet to eat and breathe from. One planet to make our day upon, make our way upon, make our cities upon, sink our teeth into, one ocean, one sky, one people, one life, one time we can make this right...

We argue the science. Forgetting the maths, the earth is a birthday cake and if there are ten people at the party and only one cake and I eat the whole thing then somebody must be starving to death around here. If everybody ate cake at the same rate that I do, we would need three more chocolate velvet and dirt. We have eaten too much of this earth...

I have taken much more than my fair share. Forget about the maths, what about the people? What about Rosalia from Mozambique? Her crops are washed away by the floods that only ever came once in a lifetime, yet now they rush the shore every other day...

We forget, because it is easier this way, the bliss of ignorance, the kiss of indifference. Yet from the bottom of this ocean, to the tips of the tops of the peaks that touch the sky, to the cities and the factories on the surface of her skin, to the smoke and the smut that we cover her in, we forget that we have only ever had one planet, one ocean, one sky, one people, one life for one time, and that we can make this right.

Happy Birthday World.

Let us blow out the candles of our indifference. And this year, I promise to eat less cake.

ONE PLANET

A video from Tearfund Australia which asks the question: 'What if we had only ONE planet, just one?'

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SljoYa4gd2g>

Prayer

*Creator, you bent the earth like a bow until it was one, round, shining planet.
At your word the land was drawn into mountains and tundra, forests and prairies;
the waters were gathered together into rivers, lakes and seas.
Many times, when people crossed these seas from other lands
they broke the circle of your creation by their greed and violence
and they shattered the lives of others.
Creator renew the circle of the earth
and turn the hearts of all people to one another;*



*that they and all the earth may live and be drawn toward you
through the love of Jesus Christ,
who lives with you and the Holy Spirit
in the circle of the Trinity, forever One. Amen*

– A Prayer to the Four Directions, adapted and revised from the prayer used at the National Cathedral, Washington, D.C. in A Celebration of Native American Survival Service, 1992.



PWRDF supports Australian bushfire appeal

AS CANADIANS watch the fires engulf Australia with no signs of abating, PWRDF has been in contact with our counterparts there: the Australian Board of Mission and Anglican Overseas Aid, both agencies of the Anglican Church of Australia and fellow members of the Anglican Alliance.

While the Australian government has pledged \$2 billion in relief spending, Anglicans in Canada are still keen to support Australians dealing with this disaster. In consultation with both Anglican agencies, PWRDF is today announcing a \$5,000 solidarity grant to be given to the Anglican Board of Mission's bushfire appeal which has been set up to accept overseas donations. Those wishing to give to this cause may do so through PWRDF (see below).

Anglican Overseas Aid primarily focuses its funding on overseas relief and development work, but is now supporting the Melbourne Anglican Foundation Trust's bushfire emergency relief fund, says Tim Hartley, Disaster Response and Resilience Coordinator for AOA. "This will provide relief and support to those in need across the Victorian dioceses impacted (currently this is predominantly in the north and eastern parts of the state). It's important to stress that we're only halfway through the bushfire season so we have a few more months to go — the emergency services, volunteers and communities have more trials ahead."

Read the whole story on our website at
<https://pwrdf.org/pwrdf-supports-australian-bushfire-appeal/>

T O M M O R R O W:

The Fifth Sunday in Lent, take a Sabbath rest
and reflect on last week's readings.

**Incarnation
and Redemption:
A Natural Connection**
Rev. Patrick Stephens

THE FIFTH WEEK OF LENT

Monday, March 22

Scripture

John 1:14

And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

Reflection

Incarnation is a theological concept that sees the full presence of God revealed "in the flesh" through Jesus Christ. While the mystery of God's incarnation is an important theme for the celebration of the birth of Jesus, the impact extends much farther.

Incarnation is important, not only to the story of Jesus' earthly ministry, but to the ongoing relationship between the Creator and creation. When God is revealed to us through Jesus, God takes on the fullness of the human experience. In Christ, the Creator is not only connected to creation, but the Creator becomes part of creation itself!

The relationship between creature and Creator is forever affected by the experience of God as human. As our world, our humanity receives the Creator in the person of Jesus, our entire world becomes forever marked as holy and can never be separated from our understanding of God.

As a people of the incarnation, we celebrate the fullness of God's presence, revealed in our world. As creatures of God, we recognize that the Creator is to be encountered in the holiness of creation itself. For us, care for the world in which we live is a godly pursuit. Indeed, it is our worship and our work.

Prayer

O Lord Jesus Christ, make me worthy to understand the profound mystery of your holy incarnation, which you have worked for our sake and for our salvation. Truly there is nothing so great and wonderful as this, that you, my God, who are the creator of all things, should become a creature, so that we should become like God. You have humbled yourself and made yourself small that we might be made mighty. You have taken the form of a servant, so that you might confer upon us a royal and divine beauty. You, who are beyond our understanding, have made yourself understandable to us in Jesus Christ. You, who are the uncreated God, have made yourself a creature for us. You, who are the untouchable One, have made yourself touchable to us. You, who are most high, make us capable of understanding your amazing love and the wonderful things you have done for us. Make us able to understand the mystery of your incarnation, the mystery of your life, example, and doctrine, the mystery of your cross and passion, the mystery of your resurrection and ascension. Blessed are you, O Lord, for coming to earth as a man. Amen.

– Angela of Foligno, thirteenth century



Nurse Latia has strong teeth

DEIVERING AN average of 198 babies a month at a birthing clinic in rural Mozambique, she often held her cell phone between her teeth so it would cast a light on her patient. Babies are more often born at night and her clinic – like many – was not equipped with electricity for proper lighting. As part of the All Mothers and Children Count project, PWRDF and its Mozambican partner EHALE installed 30 solar suitcases at government-run health facilities in 2017. A solar suitcase is a bright yellow, hard plastic, waterproof suitcase that is mounted on the wall of a clinic and wired to a solar panel on the roof. The suitcase is equipped with four lamps, one head lamp, a Doppler, and a lithium battery that lasts five years. The suitcase can also charge

cell-phones and other electronic devices such as laptop computers. We Care Solar provided the solar suitcases and trained four EHALE staff and eight staff from the Ministry of Health electronic maintenance department in Nampula province. The training included classroom instruction and theory as well as applied learning — trainees actually installed solar suitcases at six health facilities under We Care Solar supervision. The training has paid off. One year after installation, all 30 solar suitcase are still welcoming babies into the world at night.

Read the whole story on our website at
<https://pwrdf.org/60-stories/nurse-latia-has-strong-teeth/>

**Incarnation
and Redemption:
A Natural Connection**
Rev. Patrick Stephens

THE FIFTH WEEK OF LENT

Tuesday, March 23

Scripture **Psalm 111:9**

He sent redemption to his people; he has commanded his covenant forever. Holy and awesome is his name.

Reflection A definitive theme in Christian theology is that of redemption. As followers of Jesus, we believe that Christ has provided a way by which we can be saved from sin.

Sadly, we know a lot about sin. We are quite familiar with the harm of which we are all capable (and culpable). We hurt ourselves, each other, and creation itself. Appointed as stewards of creation, humanity collectively fails routinely at caring for that sacred gift that sustains us. We are now urgently aware that the planet is at the precipice of a major climate crisis. But what can we do?

Christ's message of redemption assures us that it is never too late to be saved. Even death appears to be powerless before the salvation of God in Christ.

But redemption involves a change of direction, a change of behaviour. Most of us are very new to environmental activism and stewardship. Some of us are barely getting by as things are and cannot bear to think of how becoming active in environmentalism would affect our lives.

Through a dedicated effort of education and engagement, PWRDF and their partners around the world are taking small steps to help ordinary people like us take small steps to care for creation. This is important work because it is directly related to Christ's universal offer of redemption.

Prayer

*Almighty God,
you wonderfully created
and yet more wonderfully restored
our human nature.
May we share the divine life
of your Son Jesus Christ,
who humbled himself
to share our humanity,
and now lives and reigns
with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and forever.
Amen.*

– Collect for Christmas Day, *Book of Alternative Services*



Planting the seeds of education focus

THE PROGRAM launched January 28 with a webinar that included prayer with the Rev. Ken Gray, some basic climate change information, examples of PWRDF partners' work around climate change and guide to PWRDF resources. The recording can be viewed here. Where to begin

Many Parish and Diocesan Representatives indicated an interest in climate change and requested more support in promoting it as a theme of PWRDF's work. In consulting a small focus group and surveying a wider group of supporters, we determined an education focus would help us engage our supporters in prayer, learning and action.

We hope to bring the perspective of how climate change is affecting the developing world and how it is being addressed. We know that we have much to learn from our partners and hope our volunteers will be able to take that learning to their parishes, communities and families.

On the PWRDF website, our Climate Action page includes resources and education opportunities. Though PWRDF will not be focusing on how you can make your parish more eco-friendly, we will share that information and links to campaign websites as we are able.

We will leverage Anglican and ecumenical initiatives such as For the Love of Creation to provide ways to get involved within Canada.

What's next?

There are many exciting ideas in the works.

- We will be creating videos and study guides that you can use to lead discussions in your communities or parishes.

- We will offer webinars that focus on Climate Action as it relates to PWRDF's work, including Food Security, Health, Women's Empowerment, Indigenous Peoples, Emergency Response, Refugees and Engaging Youth.
- We will continue to encourage the use of the resources that were prepared in 2020 including the seven Climate Action Leaflets. Use them as bulletin inserts if you are worshipping in-person, read them at in-person or online services, or include them in online bulletins or parish e-mails.
- We also encourage using the worship resource "A Covenant for Climate Justice." A Service of the Word and a Eucharist service are available to use in whole or in part. There is even a sermon to deliver or download the video to share with your community.
- We will share ways to get involved with the For the Love of Creation Campaign, including participating in advocacy and hosting climate change conversations.

We realize that this pandemic is not going to be over in the near future, so we expect that activities in 2021 will continue to be online. As public health guidelines allow, we hope to offer more face-to-face gatherings, including a course at the Sorrento Centre in British Columbia, and a visit to one of our partners.

Read the whole story on our website at

<https://pwrdf.org/planting-the-seeds-of-education-focus/>

Wednesday, March 24

Scripture

Galatians 4:4-5

But when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, in order to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as children.

Reflection

In the Fourth Century, Gregory of Nazianus, Archbishop of Constantinople, was responding to a trend in Christian thinking that downplayed the importance of Christ's human identity. He argued that faithful Christians must accept the essential humanity of Christ, saying "What has not been assumed has not been healed." He argued that in order for humanity to be redeemed through Christ, we must also recognize the divine and human essence of God in Christ.

Appreciating the divinity of Christ is to also appreciate the humanity of God in Jesus. As we connect the dots theologically, we begin to see the Creator taking part fully in the life of creation, and offering a new path for redemption. This is really big news for us as inhabitants of our planet!

In Jesus, God's presence is fully realized in human form. As Jesus lives, breathes, walks, eats and engages with the physicality of creation, he takes part in the life of the earth. In this light, when we care for creation through environmental advocacy, conservation efforts, and stewardship initiatives, we are caring for God's creation. We are also joining Christ in the divine work of healing that which God has indeed become!

Prayer

*O God of unchangeable power and eternal light,
look favourably on your whole Church,
that wonderful and sacred mystery.
By the effectual working of your providence,
carry out in tranquillity the plan of salvation.
Let the whole world see and know
that things which were cast down are being raised up,
and things which had grown old are being made new,
and that all things are being brought to their perfection
by him through whom all things were made,
your Son Jesus Christ our Lord;
who lives and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever. Amen.*

– from the Good Friday Solemn Intercession, *Book of Alternative Services*



How the national church is tackling climate change

FREELY RECEIVED, freely given: Helping subscribers and donors understand how Anglican fundraising organizations distribute donations.

Record-breaking temperatures. Melting polar icecaps. An entire continent literally on fire. And around the world, youth-led mass movements demanding action in response.

The global climate emergency has reached a new level of public awareness in recent years, spurred by phenomena such as the Fridays for Future movement—youth climate strikes—led by Greta Thunberg. Recently, scientists cited climate change as a factor in the unprecedented intensity of bushfires in Australia in 2019-20.

In the face of this crisis, Archbishop Linda Nicholls, primate of the Anglican Church of Canada, has called on the church to take action on climate change, calling stewardship of the earth and the care of creation “a core responsibility of our faith.” The primate compares concern of young people for the future of their planet with the fear of nuclear annihilation she experienced growing up during the Cold War.

“The question,” she asks, “is how do we proclaim that vision of creation as a gift of God that we are called to steward and that we should be at the very forefront of those that are fighting for it?”

The church’s response to the climate emergency has found expression in numerous venues, through the work of Public Witness for Social and Ecological Justice (PWSEJ) and through ecumenical initiatives. But supporting all the church’s efforts at the national level to confront climate change is Resources for Mission, which is tasked with raising funds for all General Synod ministries, including PWSEJ.

As a ministry of General Synod, the work of PWSEJ to coordinate the church’s response to climate change is based to a large extent on donations made through Resources for Mission.

“The ministries of the church are supported directly by the work that Resources for Mission does, and we couldn’t do

some of those ministries without the support of the people who respond to Resources for Mission,” acting general secretary the Rev. Peter Wall says.

The immediate body tasked with formulating sustainable environmental policies across the Anglican Church of Canada is the Creation Matters working group, a subgroup of the PWSEJ coordinating committee.

At their most recent meeting on Jan. 31, Creation Matters members decided to break into small groups that would determine how the church can put into practice three resolutions from General Synod 2019 related to climate change.

“With the small groups, we’re able to do more, I think, and get into...the actions that we’re asked to take and do something with them,” co-chair Gerald Giles says.

These groups will focus on three resolutions. Resolution A201 encourages Anglicans to reduce their use of single-use plastics—a major contributor to carbon emissions through their production and refining—with a goal to end their use by parishes and dioceses no later than 2023.

Another resolution is A202, which encourages dioceses to celebrate the annual Season of Creation from Sept. 1 to Oct. 4, and directs Creation Matters to network and share resources.

Finally, Resolution A203 encourages the Anglican Church of Canada and Primate’s World Relief and Development Fund to support the UN Global Goals for Sustainable Development and produce resources for Anglican parishes and dioceses to raise awareness of the goals.

Read the whole story at

<https://www.anglicanjournal.com/in-tune-with-creation-how-the-anglican-church-of-canada-is-taking-on-climate-change/>

**Incarnation
and Redemption:
A Natural Connection**
Rev. Patrick Stephens

THE FIFTH WEEK OF LENT

Thursday, March 25

Scripture **Psalm 19:1-2**

The heavens are telling the glory of God;
and the firmament proclaims his handiwork.
Day to day pours forth speech
and night to night declares knowledge.

Reflection A clue to the scale of importance with which the authors of the gospel stories perceive the events of Jesus' life is discovered in plain sight. Have you ever noticed descriptions of the sky in the Gospels?

First, a mysterious star guides wise visitors to the birthplace of Jesus. Later, Jesus warns about the signs of end times. And, at his death, there is a solar eclipse. Whether we, as readers of the bible choose to pursue historical and scientific explanations for these descriptions of celestial phenomena or not, the message of such descriptions remains: The earliest tellers of Christian story understood the events of Jesus' life as having universal, cosmic significance.

Our understanding of the solar system and universe continues to develop. Certainly, the access we currently have to knowledge of our planet's relationship to the sun, moon, stars and other planets is well beyond what could have been imagined in Jesus' time.

When I look up at the night sky, take in a sunrise or sunset, observe an eclipse, or watch a meteor shower, I am always moved to wonder. These displays are so grand, and yet they occur right before our eyes with regularity. When I witness these cosmic signs of God's creativity and power, I am moved by the magnitude and beauty of what I am seeing.

Beholding such magnificent cosmic beauty is part of the action of entering into the story of Jesus. When we witness the events of the cosmos, we enter into a story that is far bigger than anything we can control. God's creative, loving, redeeming energy is on the move in our world. Are we prepared to take part?

Prayer

*Creator of the universe,
As we behold the magnificence
Of your power,
Revealed in the beauty of the sky,
We stand in awe and wonder.
You design the patterns of moons and planets.
And you call us to join you
In the story of the Good News,
Which is brought to light through your Son:
Jesus Christ our Morning Star.
Help us to know the fullness of your grace,
This day and always.
Amen.*

– Rev. Patrick Stephens, St. Barnabas Anglican, Deep River, Ontario



Ride for Refuge shifts into high gear

AFTER THE COVID-19 pandemic struck in March of this year, nobody was sure how this year's Ride for Refuge was going to play out, but now with the Ride behind us, we are pleased to announce our most successful campaign ever!

Our original goal was to raise \$25,000 for our partner in Uganda, St. Jude Family Projects. Undaunted by the pandemic, the Ride organizers, Blue Sea Philanthropy, created a Freestyle category, allowing people the flexibility to choose an activity of their choice. With two weeks left to go in the campaign, we had met the initial goal, then boosted it to \$30,000. We quickly blew past that target too and moved the finish line to \$35,000, then surpassed that as well, thanks to the overwhelming support for our participants across Canada. Our final target was \$40,000, and we are proud to say we exceeded that goal as well.

As of today, PWRDF has raised \$42,000, our largest amount ever, more than doubling what was raised last year. Out of the 128 charities across Canada that participated this year, PWRDF is currently ranked 8th. With the ride freestyle option, 59 participants undertook all kinds of activities to raise funds while staying safe and socially distant.

From the traditional walking and cycling to reading Agatha Christie mysteries and knitting baby blankets, this year's participants really got creative. One of the biggest fundraisers was none other than Primate Linda Nicholls, who held two Facebook Live Hymn Sings, taking pledges and

hymn requests raising nearly \$3,500. Many participants experienced the rugged beauty of Canada's wilderness:

- James Mesich, a former Youth Council member, hiked with his father for nine days on the Lake Superior Coastal Trail.
- PWRDF Board member Cynthia Haines-Turner and PWRDF Diocesan Rep Mona Edwards (right) hiked to the top of Gros Morne Mountain in Newfoundland.
- And PWRDF staffer Carolyn Vanderlip and her partner paddled their kayak in 11 different bodies of water in Ontario.

St. Jude Family Projects teaches sustainable agriculture techniques to mostly women and youth from rural Uganda and across Africa, improving livelihoods and food security while also protecting the environment.

St. Jude's founder, Josephine Kizza Aliddeki, is amazed with the success of this year's Ride for Refuge. "I am happy to hear the good news," she said before attending Praying with PWRDF on Zoom in October. As part of this campaign Josephine and her son Daniel also participated in two webinars with PWRDF supporters. "Thank you for such a great opportunity. We appreciate the support from PWRDF staff and Canadians so much."

**Read the whole story on our website at
<https://pwrdf.org/ride-for-refuge-shifts-into-high-gear/>**

**Incarnation
and Redemption:
A Natural Connection**
Rev. Patrick Stephens

THE FIFTH WEEK OF LENT

Friday, March 26

Scripture

1 John 5:6

This is the one who came by water and blood, Jesus Christ, not with the water only but with the water and the blood. And the Spirit is the one that testifies, for the Spirit is the truth.

Reflection

The gospel accounts depict a strong literary connection between Jesus' birth and death. The biblical events of Christmas are very closely linked to those of Holy Week. In Jesus, God descends into the deepest and most universal experiences of humanity. The fullness of this incarnate reality is clearly made known in the graphic description of Jesus' body being pierced by a Roman soldier. The gospel of John tells us that when this occurs, "blood and water came out."

Later, in the first letter of John, the author reminds us of this event as he describes Christ as "the one who came by water and blood." To my ears, this description of Jesus seems to speak as much about his departure as it does of his arrival: his birth.

Childbirth is a universally familiar human experience. In every culture, there is the need for trained birth attendants, midwives, and healthcare workers who help ensure that mothers and newborns are safe and healthy throughout pregnancy, childbirth, and the early stages of infancy. Healthy mothers and children are part of a healthy community.

As we prepare to journey through the story of Jesus' suffering, death, and resurrection, let us reflect on the universality, not only of death, but of birth. And may we be moved to help ensure that all mothers and children can be safely and appropriately cared for as they welcome new life through childbirth.

Prayer

Gracious God, creator and sustainer of human life, we praise you that you have called us to share in your creative acts in the great mystery of childbirth. We pray for all women who are preparing to welcome new life. May they be brought safely through the time of pregnancy and labour. Grant that all may know your joy in bringing new life into this world which you love, in the name of him who was born of a woman, Jesus Christ our Redeemer. Amen.

– Adapted from the Prayers of Thanksgiving for the Birth of a Child, *Book of Alternative Services*



Indigenous Midwives partnership crosses borders

IN MANY of the world's Indigenous communities, women do not have access to midwives and must travel far from home, sometimes alone, to give birth in a hospital. The isolation from family and community can cause stress and fear, or worse, lead to an increase in maternal or infant mortality.

For the past three years, PWRDF has been nurturing a partnership of Indigenous midwives from Canada, Peru and Mexico. The support, more than \$100,000, has allowed midwives to share best practices, develop curriculum and learn from each others' Indigenous commonalities.

It started in May 2017, when representatives of Ryerson University's Aboriginal Initiatives (Canada), Kinal Antzetik (Mexico) and CHIRAPAQ (Peru) met in Toronto at an international conference of midwives to establish goals and terms for the partnership.

In 2018, they met again at the 17th session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII). There, Cheryllée Bourgeois, a Métis midwife and professor at Ryerson, addressed the session. She pleaded with member nations to tackle the oppression facing Indigenous midwives around the world and claimed that the oppression of Indigenous midwives is in violation of articles 24 and 25 of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

In April 2019, the third year of the program, close to 100 Indigenous midwives gathered in Peru for the First International Gathering of Indigenous Midwives of the Americas. Then in August, they met again in Mexico.

Both events began with traditional Indigenous ceremonies offered by the Elders and Traditional Spiritual Keepers. They safeguarded the gathering by grounding it on Indigenous principles and values such as respect, love and participation.

Midwives discussed the challenges of Indigenous midwifery and how to ensure the practice can continue in the three

countries. Sessions focused on pregnancy, childbirth and the use of medicinal plants in this ancestral practice. Other important discussions included:

- The importance of acknowledging midwifery knowledge rather than appropriating it.
- Acknowledging racism and discrimination in education systems, in the validation and recognition of traditional Indigenous midwifery knowledge, and in access to the Western healthcare system, not only for pregnant women but also for their mothers, caregivers and families.
- The criminalization of Indigenous midwifery and threats to eliminate this ancestral practice.

"I think that Indigenous people connecting across countries internationally is actually critical to the learning and building of Indigenous midwifery," said Bourgeois. "There are pieces of knowledge that midwives hold that are so different or don't exist in Canada, so it is a rich exchange in terms of ways to move forward, how people come together, and the relationship that people have with their communities in terms of the care that they are providing."

"The three partners have developed a relationship of trust," writes José Zárate, PWRDF's Canadian Indigenous Communities and Latin American- Caribbean Development Program Coordinator. He also credits the partners' appearances at the UNPFII (also again in 2019) with conquering a strategic space in the international arena. "This contributed to identifying strategic allies (midwives, health sector, civil society, etc.), who recognize their pioneering work as trailblazers in a sector that is very dismissive of their knowledge."

**Read the whole story on our website at
<https://pwrdf.org/indigenous-midwives-partnership-crosses-borders/>**

Scripture **Psalm 24:1**

The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it, the world and those who live in it.

Reflection Nestled in the very rock of the earth, caves offer shelter, protection, and a glimpse into the substance of earth itself. Whether naturally occurring or human made, caves are a well-established part of our experience as people.

Some caves serve as attractions for visitors; they offer an opportunity for adventure, beauty, and wonder. Some caves are much more functional in their use by people; they provide stability and structure for everyday human activity, at the same time, reminding us of our place in creation. The story of Jesus' bodily life begins and ends in caves.

Tradition locates the birth of Jesus in a humble dwelling, where animals and people shared accommodation together. There is every reason to imagine that this stable-home would have been a cave. Cave homes would have offered security, shelter, and welcome relief from the hot desert climate. Could it be that the saviour's earthly experience begins within the earth itself?

After his death, scripture describes Jesus' body being laid to rest in a rock-hewn tomb – a cave. Such a cave-tomb would have offered just the right balance of dignity, security, and functionality for the purpose of burial for Jesus' time and place. It is from exactly such a place as this cave, that the resurrection of Christ occurs.

Not much investment in the geographic (or geological) details of Jesus birth and burial is needed for the spiritual truth of the Gospel stories to shine through. It may, however, be helpful for us to imagine the two most important moments of Jesus' earthly experience to have occurred from within the earth itself.

I believe that the story of Jesus is a means by which creation is blessed. If, in Christ, God becomes part of the experience of creation, creation itself is forever changed by hosting the fullness of God's presence in the person of Jesus Christ. The stones and the earth itself are marked as holy by the holiness of the story they enable. The earth is in relationship with God through creation and the incarnation. Redemption is an opportunity to which we are called. And we bring our relationship with the earth into that redeeming work.

Prayer *Creator God,*

You have sculpted the very rock of this planet.

Thank you for the goodness of your creation, Which inspires awe and wonder.

As we meet you in the sacred stories of Jesus,

May our faith be deepened

Through the revelation of your love to us.

Help us to recognize the mark of your love,

Which you have left upon the Earth itself.

May we become living stones,

Proclaiming the wonder of creation,

Receiving the glory of your incarnation,

And proclaiming the hope of redemption,

Through Jesus Christ,

The chief cornerstone of our faith.

Amen.

– Rev. Patrick Stephens, St. Barnabas Anglican, Deep River



Typhoons test resilient Filipino community

THE FILIPINO towns of Namitpit and Patungcaleo sit on the winding Abra River in northern Luzon. The island is home to 53 million people, but that population is concentrated in Manila and Quezon City. The area around these two villages is rural and mountainous like much of this archipelago country, but also full of wide, flat rice paddies, the major crop of the area.

Since the 1980s, PWRDF has been a partner with Cordillera Peoples Alliance (a consortium of more than 250 community-based organizations) of which Cordillera Disaster Response and Development Services (CorDis RDS) is a member specializing in disaster preparedness and response. Last October, the area buckled under the weight of back-to-back typhoons. First, Typhoon Karen blew in with heavy rain, but Typhoon Lawin came in with stronger winds, combining to make a one-two punch. At the height of Lawin, the Abra River suddenly swelled and caused flooding of a thick residue of whitish silt, pebbles, stones and boulders that buried the rice fields. It wasn't mud from the river, but rather, suspected tailings from the Lepanto gold mine upriver.

The people of Namitpit and Patungcaleo are no strangers to this kind of deposit. Just a year before their paddies were buried in 74 centimetres of mine tailings from Lepanto at the height of monsoon rains triggered by Typhoon Ineng. The peasant farmers painstakingly cleared the land of the silt and recultivated it. To protect the land, the local government installed gabion dikes along portions of the riverbank. But they weren't able to stand up to Lawin's forces.

This time the silt deposit was much denser. The farmers, understandably, were reluctant to clear the land, for fear it would get buried again. Almost 500 homes were affected by this disaster. They have lost not only rice land but also swidden fields, banana groves and livestock. In addition, 10 farmsheds were destroyed, and six more were partially damaged. Lawin blew the roofs off 15 homes, and damaged water pipes and irrigation canals. The people met to discuss solutions and agreed to pool their labour to retrieve and repair the roofs, restore the water systems and repair some of the roads.

They also submitted reports to the local government that resulted in relief goods from both the local government and the Department of Social Welfare Development (DSWD).

However, this aid came in the form of one sack of fertilizer per household. For those who had no land left to till, it was not exactly helpful.

The DSWD delivered food relief twice. But each delivery was barely enough to last the people for one week. The people of Namitpit and Patungcaleo told CorDis staff that food relief was appreciated, but would surely run out. What they really needed was help with their livelihoods. It was harvesting season when the typhoon struck, thus their source of food and income which was expected to last for a few months was submerged in one day. Packing the food for distribution.

PWRDF contributed \$11,139 (401,000 Pesos) to provide additional relief. On December 18, 2016, CorDis purchased some of the relief goods in Baguio and packed them at the CorDis office with youth volunteers and other community agencies. They set out in the wee hours of the morning to arrive at Quirino, Ilocos Sur at 8:45 a.m. Men, women, and children of Namitpit and Patungcaleo were eagerly waiting. The men devised a makeshift shed and then explained the distribution, which took more than two hours to finish. Even though this was two months after the typhoon, the people were still badly short of food and it was greatly appreciated because in December, they have less food resources.

Representatives of all 511 affected households came to receive their relief packages. The beneficiaries remain in a quandary as to how they will survive with most of their rice fields gone. They continue to strive to rehabilitate their rice paddies and start gardening again because they cannot rely on relief packs from other NGOs or from the government. Some of the beneficiaries regularly go out of Quirino or Ilocos to find manual work and earn money for their daily expenses.

**Read the whole story on our website at
<https://pwrdf.org/typhoons-test-resilient-filipino-community/>**

T O M M O R R O W:
On Palm Sunday, take a Sabbath rest
and reflect on last week's readings.

Scripture

1 Corinthians 12:12

For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ.

Reflection

Former Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams said, “Christians are called by God to show to the world what the divine image looks like – the image of a divine creator who brought the world to birth, called it good, and summoned human beings to reflect this divine care and delight through their own work in the world, animated by the gift of Christ’s Spirit. Christian Climate Action seeks to respond to that summons; in the face of impending environmental crisis, we need to encourage one another to grow more fully into the joyful responsibility we are made for.” (From Living in the Light)

I love Rowan Williams’ writings, as those of you who have met me know. This piece though, I adore. Did you notice, “Christians are called....” Not ‘some’ as if that task of reflecting the divine image falls to her and not to him, or this family but not that one, or this country but not mine, you get my drift. I am pushed into considering how my work in the world reflects divine care for the world – of people but also of all creation. My whole life has been a journey of trying to get better at it, by the grace of God. My garden and vegetable plot say one thing, my garbage something different. There needs to be more congruity between the two. I freely admit it’s hard, not impossible of course, but hard nevertheless.

Since March 2020 when we were made fully aware of the global COVID-19 pandemic I think I began to make some clearer decisions to simplify life and also to see the incredible potential for a greater way of living in love and charity with all our neighbours. Director of Global Advocacy at Tearfund, Dr. Ruth Valerio, author of *Saying Yes to Life*: (The Archbishop of Canterbury’s 2020 Lent Book) said: “The current crisis has changed the way we see the world. It has reminded us of the fragility of life, exposed the gap between rich and poor, and revealed the damage we’ve done to the wider creation. But it has also helped us love our neighbours and brought communities together.”

I think that is very true. It is one full year later and there is still an outpouring of love and aid. We have heard from the International Red Cross and Red Crescent that in 2020 more than 50 million people were doubly hit by climate-related disasters (floods, droughts, and storms) and the COVID-19 pandemic. In many of the countries affected, PWRDF and its partners were there. Loving, restoring, helping us change how we view our resources and perhaps releasing our hold on things that were needed by others, because we are one body with many members. Thanks be to God.

Prayer

Lord God

*You gather up the pieces so that nothing is lost
Alert us to our carelessness and wastefulness
And teach us to share from the abundance in our midst
Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

– Season of Creation resources from the Episcopal Diocese of Washington



COVID-19 support for partners continued in 2020

PWRDF continues to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic by supporting our partners in Canada and around the world. Thanks to our generous donors, PWRDF is allocating an additional \$111,000 to support partners' initiatives.

Kenya

A gift of \$70,000 from Calgarian Richard Bird, through the Ptarmigan Foundation, will fund PWRDF partner the National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCK) as it supports people living in the Kakuma refugee camp. NCCK is using this grant to purchase much needed equipment such as pulse oximeters, digital blood pressure machines, electric suction machines, non-contact thermometer guns, oxygen concentrators, oxygen cylinders, oxygen gauges and personal protective equipment (PPE) such as N95 masks, reusable face shields and disposable gowns. In partnership with the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) and other partners, the equipment will be shared with local Kenyan health partners serving the refugee and host communities in Kakuma. The program will run until October 2020.

Bangladesh

Long-time PWRDF partner UBINIG has been monitoring the situation in Bangladesh at the national level and with those in its program area. Health protection supports and food support for families who have lost their sources of income are paramount. Farmers, traditional birth attendants, garment workers, domestic workers and weavers have all been affected. UBINIG is responding to the needs of these community members and to pregnant and breastfeeding women, and students. A grant of \$11,000 was used to support 965 families who received soap, masks, food items and seeds that will be given to Nayakrishi farmers who have expressed the need. As well, farmers who are experiencing problems in selling their crops will receive support. The distribution began May 1 and continued through the end of June. A volunteer group of farmers, women's organization members and Dai Mas distributed the equipment through UBINIG centres. "I take this opportunity to thank PWRDF on behalf of UBINIG and all the community members receiving the support of food, seeds and health protection items at the time of their need," writes UBINIG Executive Director Farida Akhter. "We know it is never enough but it is always very important to show our solidarity with them when they are in need."

Edmonton

The Diocese of Edmonton is supplementing its outreach programming to local Indigenous communities, specifically to ensure support and accompaniment to Indigenous women, many of whom are leaving abusive relationships and are trying to get off of the streets. Rev. Lori Inkster plans to continue the implementation of a birth and doula service, work that is critical at this time. Those in the Diocese have heard and witnessed many heart-rending stories from the front lines in recent weeks. A PWRDF grant of \$5,000, combined with funds from the Diocese of Edmonton, will address some of the identified needs. Says Bishop of Edmonton Jane Alexander, "There are some very desperate people here in need of help." Jane Alexander

South Sudan

PWRDF is also providing COVID-19 support for displaced people in Unity State, South Sudan. This project aims to support the 500 families who have been receiving monthly food distributions from SSUDRA (The Episcopal Church of South Sudan), PWRDF and the Canadian Foodgrains Bank. From June 1, 2020 until October 31, 2020, this project will increase access to WASH (Water, Sanitation and Hygiene) services as well as other disease preparedness and prevention for better health. The project will focus on 522 internally displaced households in Rubkona and Bentiu, South Sudan. Community health promoters will reach displaced community members with hygiene and sanitation awareness through radio, promotion materials and megaphones, and 522 households will receive soap each month, plus containers for water collection and storage, and a bucket with taps for hand washing. PWRDF is contributing \$15,000 to this \$40,000-project, with the remaining funds coming from the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Canada.

Read the whole story on our website at

<https://pwrdf.org/pwrdf-allocates-additional-111000-to-support-five-more-covid-19-responses/>

Scripture **Ephesians 2:10**

For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life.

Reflection Where can we start? The challenges of creation are so huge, we are created in Christ Jesus for good works but what can one person do? Today I offer you an answer from Canon Rachel Mash who leads the Anglican Communion's Environmental Network: "The place to start is here: follow your heartbreak. We cannot all be involved in all the environmental issues, so identify the one that breaks your heart.

"Perhaps it is climate change and the face of drought and famine. Educate yourself about the impact of climate change on a country or community where you have links. Commit yourself to doing an electricity and fuel audit of your home and your church. See how you can make small changes. Get others involved in bigger projects — solar panels for the church or school — and find out what your politician's stance is on renewable energy and challenge them in letters to the press. Get your Church denomination to divest from investments in fossil fuels. Look at where your pension money is invested, can it be taken out of fossil fuels? Remember the DOT principle: Do One Thing. Keep on doing it faithfully, inspire others, link up with others, and a movement may be started.

"Perhaps it is plastic which breaks your heart, clogging our oceans and lands. Commit yourself to stop using plastic bags for shopping. Reduce one-use plastic for your family. Start a campaign at church! Get the local churches in your community to put pressure on supermarkets to stop using plastic bags. Sign a petition to get the Minister of the Environment to ban plastic bags – as has been done in Kenya and Rwanda. For example, churches have started the "Bring your own bag" campaign: 1. Commit to bring your own bag when shopping; 2. invite unemployed church members to make bags; 3. Put pressure on your local store to stop using plastic bags; 4. Put pressure on the government to ban plastic shopping bags.

"Or perhaps it is the loss of biodiversity that breaks your heart, as animals and birds die out due to our neglect and greed. Commit yourself at home to stop using chemicals and products that kill insects. Promote them at church and school. Start an organic garden. Find a part of Creation near you that you can care for and encourage others to get involved in (river clean -up, local park or nature reserve). Get involved in an international campaign to protect an animal you care for.

"The needs are huge — but the principle is this: start with what breaks your heart. Find an action you and your family can take. Inspire others, join networks. Research tells us that transformation change come when networked individuals change. And have fun!! God is with you."

Prayer *By faith*

*I listen for your voice,
and know
the whisper that I hear
breathed a world into existence,
yet listens to the prayer within my soul.*

© John Birch, 2016



Foodgrains bank projects feed people in need

IT IS MID-NOVEMBER and Gary Weir is waiting for the right day to harvest his grain corn. It has been a particularly wet season and the crop needs to dry more before it can be harvested. He also has to wait for the combine that he hires to be available.

Squares of farmland spread across the Ottawa Valley like a quilt, including Fitzroy Harbour where Gary and his wife Pat live. The village sits on the Ottawa River about 41 km northwest of Parliament Hill as the crow flies. Here Gary farms 200 acres of corn, soybeans and hay.

Just 40 minutes east of Fitzroy Harbour is Bells Corners, a suburban community of the City of Ottawa. If you popped into Christ Church Bells Corners for a Sunday morning service, you'd see a bustling suburban church where annual offerings are tithed, yielding approximately \$30,000 for mission and outreach.

For the past three years, CCBC has allocated \$2,000 to the Weirs to farm 14 acres of their 200 acres. This money is used for fertilizer or other input costs. The Weirs in turn donate the earnings to the Primate's World Relief and Development Fund's account in the Canadian Foodgrains Bank. It is a circle of giving that grows the gift.

Weir and his brother, Ron, had always been dairy farmers, but in 2009, they decided to also plant soybeans as a cash crop. "We wanted to give a bit to the Canadian Foodgrains Bank so we just sent in a donation from our earnings." In 2012 the Weirs' own congregation, St. George's in West Carleton, got involved. The year after it became a parish outreach project when St. Thomas', Woodlawn began participating as well. Since then the Parish has helped with field cultivation, promotion and advocating for the Foodgrains Bank, fundraising and monetary donations.

By 2014, the project became the West Carleton Foodgrains Bank Growing Project and CCBC began sending their donation to help cover some of the field input costs.

"This project is very empowering for the Parish," says the Reverend Kathryn Otley, CCBC's incumbent. "It gives a way to get involved in addition to just giving money, as important as that is. CCBC's parishioners built a sign for the growing project and the project creates opportunities for the parish and also the Diocese of Ottawa's PWRDF committee to increase relationships and understanding between city and rural parishes."

"We're very pleased with the amount that CCBC gives us," says Weir. "The project wouldn't be possible without it." Weir notes costs are further contained through the donation of seeds from Bit-A-Luk Farms and weed control by SynAgri.

Weir plants the seeds and tends the crops over the growing season. Sometimes he pays for "custom work" for harvesting and/or planting. Sometimes he "works up" the soil for corn crops himself, and also subscribes to a no-till method of seeding for soybeans, which prevents soil erosion.

By late fall the crops are ready for harvest, corn is often sold for ethanol and soybeans for industrial use. That \$2,000 investment from CCBC, plus donations of about \$1,000 from St. George's and St. Thomas', will turn into a \$9,000 donation to PWRDF's Foodgrains Bank account.

**Read the whole story on our website at
<https://pwrdf.org/growing-projects-connect-farmers-and-churches-to-feed-people-in-need/>**

Scripture

John 1:1-4a

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life.

Reflection

From the beginning of time our origin and destiny is bound up with the earth itself. John's Gospel starts with a blast of the Genesis story. And then in a miraculous way Jesus was born as one of us, a living, breathing human being in a particular part of the world. A place you can visit, see the landscape he saw, eat the fruits of the land he ate, and see in the faces of the people of Nazareth a reflection of the features of his mother and family. Transcendent glory taking earthly visceral form.

Julian of Norwich in *Revelations of Divine Love* said: "And in this he showed me a little thing, the quantity of a hazelnut, lying in the palm of my hand, as it seemed. And it was as round as any ball. I looked upon it with the eye of my understanding, and thought, 'What may this be?' And it was answered generally thus, 'It is all that is made.' I marveled how it might last, for I thought it might suddenly have fallen to nothing for littleness. And I was answered in my understanding: It lasts and ever shall, for God loves it. And so have all things their beginning by the love of God. In this little thing I saw three properties. The first is that God made it. The second that God loves it. And the third, that God keeps it."

Prayer

In the beginning – creation.

The heavens, the earth, Jesus and us.

One story.

Light piercing darkness.

Order coming to chaos

New life came with Jesus

So life should be found wherever Jesus is to be found.

*When people ask you why Christians need to be committed to creation care,
to love the earth, the answer is God made it, God loves it, God keeps it.*

– Bishop Jane Alexander, Diocese of Edmonton

*O God of eternal light,
heaven and earth are the work of your hands, and all creation sings your praise and beauty.
As in the beginning, by your Spirit,
you gave life and order to all that is,
so by the same Spirit redeem us and all things,
through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

– Book of Occasional Celebrations



Neonatal clinic in Burundi saving babies

MUHIMPUNDU Eduige was suffering from a fever and malaria, not an ideal condition when you're in labour. She was rushed to the Kigutu Hospital in Burundi, which recently added a neonatal wing with support from PWRDF and its partner Village Health Works. As soon as her baby was born, he was whisked away by doctors.

"After the delivery, the doctors all ran, I was scared because I did not know why," Muhimpundu said. "After they explained to me that the baby is in a machine that he spent a few days there [to] help him breathe better."

Ndayishimiye Don Divin was born prematurely, weighing less than four pounds. His mother credits the Village Health Works Clinic for saving his life.

"I'm blessed to live close to VHW clinic, if I was in other health centre or surrounding hospitals, my child would be dead for sure."

After the birth of Don Divin, Muhimpundu told other pregnant women coming to the clinic that they were in good hands.

"I will never thank enough the doctors who helped and supported me, God bless them all. I say thank you to Kigutu Hospital. I seen many other pregnant women coming here, I can testify to them that they are in good hands," she said while smiling down at her son.

The neonatal service at the clinic was made possible with support of the All Mothers and Children Count program funded by PWRDF with a 6:1 match from Global Affairs Canada. The clinic will continue to work hard to save the lives of other children like Don Divin. "This is my first child and I was afraid of losing him. I say thank you to Kigutu Hospital."

**Read the whole story on our website at
<https://pwrdf.org/neonatal-clinic-in-burundi-saving-babies/>**

**A Personal Commitment
to Creation Discipleship**
Bishop Jane Alexander

HOLY WEEK TO EASTER

Maundy Thursday, April 1

Scripture John 13:34-35

I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.

Reflection Jesus tells those gathered with him to love one another and by this all will know that you are my disciples. As we reflect on this day so close to the sorrow of Good Friday and the glory yet to come of Easter these words are surely a commandment for us in our time. Around the world riches and poverty, comfort and homelessness, voices heard and those with no voice at all, busyness and loneliness are all part of our experience and sit uncomfortably side by side. In such a world can we show love as followers of Christ today? Around the world the impact of our carelessness with creation is making life near to impossible for our brothers and sisters. It is time to show that we believe with all our hearts that the salvation God promised in Christ is for all of creation.

Jesus knew at his very core that his purpose is to reconcile earth and heaven with God. He helped the disciples along this difficult road by reminding them to love one another — human to human. But this is only the beginning of a task that stretches out before us in 2021. To love the whole of creation. The anthropologist Margaret Mead said it was not until we saw the picture of the earth, from the moon, that we realized how small and how helpless this planet is — something that we must hold in our arms and care for. Is this how people will also know that we are Jesus' disciples, if we have love for all creation?

Prayer *You have called us to live and share a Jesus-shaped life
in a Jesus-shaped church
for a Jesus-shaped world.*

*Empower us with your Holy Spirit
to live as disciples who make disciples
of Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour.
Amen.*

– Jesus Shaped Life (Anglican Communion Intentional Discipleship initiative)



Four-year AMCC program comes to a close

In 2016, PWRDF received its largest grant to date from Global Affairs Canada. All Mothers and Children Count was launched to improve maternal, newborn and child health in Tanzania, Burundi, Rwanda and Mozambique. The budget for the program was \$20 million, with approximately \$3 million coming from PWRDF donors, and the rest from the Government of Canada marking our highest ever six to one funding match.

On March 31, 2020, AMCC will come to a close. Over the past four years the participating communities have achieved many milestones. Across all four countries, AMCC led to:

- People are food secure for more months of the year from 6.1 months to 8.4 months
- More pregnant women attended at least four antenatal care visits with a trained health care provider, from 45% to 70%
- More live births were attended by a skilled health professional, from 64% to 89%
- More moms and babies received post-natal care within two days of birth, from 24% to 92%
- More women are using modern contraceptive, from 38% to 53%

Our four partners worked tirelessly to bring change to their communities. Partners in Health (Rwanda), Village Health Works (Burundi), EHALE (Mozambique) and Tanzania (Diocese of Masasi) all have countless individual successes.

“PWRDF has been a really strong and transparent partner in the implementation of this project,” says Emily Royal, Development Officer in the Social Empowerment Unit, Partnerships for Development Innovation Branch at Global Affairs Canada. “We really appreciate the close monitoring that PWRDF does in the field, the local partnership model and also the adaptability of the program when required.” Royal noted specifically how, when it was discovered in year one that the program overlooked the vulnerable adolescent demographic, PWRDF was able to course correct. “PWRDF is very nimble as an organization,” she added.

Read the whole story on our website at

<https://pwrdf.org/four-year-amcc-program-comes-to-a-close/>

Good Friday, April 2

Scripture **John 12:24**
Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.

Reflection There have been and will continue to be unintended consequences for our environment due to our choices and behaviours, but study and prayer can help us to become more conscious of the human impact on our planet. Today Jesus experiences earthly death as will we all. Formed of the dust and to dust we shall return. But in those dark places of the earth life waits to be born, as was ordained from the very beginning. Therefore there is reason to hope for the renewing and reconciling of our relationship with all creation. God's work of creation continues in the death and resurrection of Jesus the Christ. This story carries on in us, in every action and every word.

Jesus pours himself out for us. On this Holy Friday we are challenged to see what we are prepared to pour out for him, emptying ourselves. Committing to live lives that honour all that has been given and done for us. The gospel of hope teaches that the world of God possesses unbelievable healing power and that change can take place within a single generation to the benefit of those who come after us. We stand on the threshold of resurrection not incarnation, so perhaps I am not being fanciful to say that on Easter Sunday 'the weary world rejoices' because all that is, or has been, or ever will be, is reunited through the sacrifice of Jesus.

I invite you to read "The World is still our host," a statement by Anglican bishops from throughout the Communion meeting at Volmoed Conference Centre, South Africa, February 23-27, 2015.

<https://acen.anglicancommunion.org/media/148818/The-World-is-our-Host-FINAL-TEXT.pdf>

Prayer
*Akin to every creature I will learn
From each and all the meaning of my birth
I love the dust to which I will return
The subtle substance of my mother earth.*
– Malcolm Guite, excerpt from "Out in the elements"

*The whole creation was changed by fear,
when it saw Thee, O Christ,
hanging on the Cross.
The sun was darkened
and the foundations of the earth were shaken;
all things suffered with the Creator of all.
Of Thine own will Thou hast endured this for our sakes:
O Lord, glory to Thee.*
– Orthodox prayer



Training for disaster preparedness

In MARCH, Anglicans from throughout the Caribbean have been taking part in a “Pastors and Disasters” workshop in Grenada. The workshop has been organised and hosted by the Church of the Province of the West Indies with the global Anglican Alliance, the US-based Episcopal Relief & Development, and The Primate’s World Relief and Development Fund. It was staged following a number of natural disasters and climate change-related events to hit the island nations.

Read the whole story at

<https://www.anglicannews.org/news/2019/03/anglicans-from-caribbean-dioceses-train-for-disaster-preparedness-and-resilience.aspx>

**A Personal Commitment
to Creation Discipleship**
Rev. Patrick Stephens

HOLY WEEK TO EASTER

Holy Saturday, April 3

Scripture **Mark 15:46-47**

Then Joseph bought a linen cloth, and taking down the body, wrapped it in the linen cloth, and laid it in a tomb that had been hewn out of the rock. He then rolled a stone against the door of the tomb. Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Jesus saw where the body was laid.

Reflection As we journey together with Jesus and his followers through the events of his suffering and death, I can only imagine the grief and despair that would accompany those who took on the solemn task of laying Jesus's body to rest in the tomb. Having just witnessed the violent, methodical, and public killing of their loved one, those closest to Jesus laid his body in a borrowed tomb, sealed the entrance and departed. I can only imagine the shock, the disappointment, the sadness and the pain of that Holy Saturday.

The grief of loss is real. Too often, we do not allow ourselves and each other the opportunity to grieve properly. Today, the church embraces the opportunity to feel and express our sorrow. Having known such hope and expectation, our dreams for the future can be dashed so suddenly. When we consider the many losses that creation has endured over the past century, it seems almost too much to bear. Today, we grieve for the earth. We grieve that the gift of God, so graciously entrusted to humanity's care has been violently, methodically, and publicly harmed.

Yes, there is work to do. But today we pause to weep. May God have mercy and save this creature, fashioned from clay.

Prayer

*God our companion,
You inhabit the silence of meaningless pain
You breathe our wordless lament
You swallow the bitterness of our shock
Stay with us, Lord, and pray*

*God our heartbeat through day and night,
You give us the imagination of hope,
The grammar of love,
And the courage of calm
Stay with us Lord, and heal*

*God our fearlessness
In your image you have made us whole,
To wait with the suffering
And to tend the wounded
To break cycles of abuse and violence
With the boldness of compassion
Stay with us, Lord, and hope*

*For yours is the power and the glory,
Before, within, and after our grief
Now and forever. Amen.*

– Archbishop Fred Hiltz, responding to the April 2018 violent van attack in North York, Ontario



Partners support agricultural recovery

PWRDF IS partnering with the Canadian Foodgrains Bank and TSURO Trust in Zimbabwe to make a world of difference in the lives of approximately 28,900 people in Zimbabwe still reeling from the affects of Cyclone Idai.

In four wards of Chimanimani district, one of the worst affected by Cyclone Idai, 4,910 families will receive a one-time package of 10 kg maize seed, 15 kg bean seed and 2 kg finger millet seed. The seeds will be distributed in time for planting in October to December 2019 to help re-establish agricultural livelihoods.

PWRDF is contributing \$26,000 from fund donated to Cyclone Idai relief, as well as \$59,000 from its Foodgrains Bank equity. A 4:1 match from Global Affairs Canada will make up the entire budget of \$404,471. "We are grateful for our partnership with CFG and with TSURO in Zimbabwe," says Executive Director Will Postma. "They have worked hard on the project. We are glad to be of support too to communities so tragically affected by Cyclone Idai, still today."

Given the current food insecurity in the district, affected households in these wards will also be receiving food assistance from other agencies in the form of cash or food transfers. Households participating in the seed distribution must:

- be food insecure
- have crops that were affected by the cyclone
- have sufficient land to utilize the full seed package
- have prior experience growing maize, beans and finger millet
- and are targeted to also receive food or cash assistance from other agencies

Cyclone Idai hit eastern Zimbabwe with heavy rains and strong winds on March 15, 2019. The storm caused rivers to rise and flash flooding and subsequent deaths, destruction of property and livelihoods. Across Chimanimani district, 52% of all seed stocks were lost and farmers need assistance to jump-start agricultural recovery, regain their productive capacity and to restore food and nutritional security.

The Civil Protection Unit-Chimanimani estimates the cyclone affected 270,000 people in the district. According to the Department of Agriculture and Extension, 18,244 out of 39,789 hectares of arable land in Chimanimani district were damaged by the cyclone. Chimanimani district is projected to be at Integrated Food Security Phase Classification level 3 for October to December 2019.

**Read the whole story on our website at
<https://pwrdf.org/pwrdf-foodgrains-bank-and-zimbabwe-partner-support-agricultural-recovery/>**

A Personal Commitment to Creation Discipleship

Rev. Patrick Stephens

HOLY WEEK TO EASTER

Easter Day, April 4

Scripture **Mark 16:2**

And very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb...

Reflection As the Earth turns on Easter morning, new light creeps around the curve of the planet and offers new hope for creation.

In some ways, Easter morning is exactly like every other morning. As dawn breaks upon the oceans, rivers, glaciers, lakes, and ponds, a sparkle of reflected light quickly becomes a flood of sunshine passing through a liquid prism, yielding shades of green and blue wherever it lands. The cold nocturnal darkness of forests, jungles, plains, deserts and tundra is transformed by the warm glow of a new day's sunlight. It is a pattern that has been repeated every morning, all over the world, since the very beginning. As light strikes the Earth, creation awakens to the rays of the sun.

For the followers of Jesus, this Easter light heralds the discovery of a new truth. As the women reach Jesus's tomb, they quickly learn that he is risen, and that even death is powerless in the face of God's unending love. In Christ's resurrection, we are promised new and eternal life. This is a comfort to those who live in despair, as much as it is a call to action for those of us who are willing take up the vocation of proclaiming Christ's resurrection.

New life is certainly a promise we can receive. It is also a promise we can be part of offering to our wounded and ailing planet. God's love, revealed to our world through the birth, life, ministry, suffering, death, and resurrection of Jesus is so abundant, it can change everything. Although the experience of darkness and despair is real, the new light of Easter reminds us that death is never the end of the story. There is hope, there is life, and there is light.

As the new light of Easter dawns upon us and our surroundings, may we be reaffirmed in the blessed hope of new life in Jesus Christ, working toward a truly just, healthy and peaceful world.

Prayer

*God of light and life,
You order creation and entrust its care to us.
As the Earth turns to greet the sun,
We pray that our creativity and energy
Would find new encouragement and hope.
Help us to heal the misery and grief
Of our planet's suffering.
Equip us with a new message of redemption,
That all of creation might know
the new life you promise.
We pray for ourselves,
Our communities,
The nations of the earth,
And for the earth itself.
By the resurrection of your Son Jesus Christ,
Raise us from the depths of despair,
And bring us new life. Amen.*

– Rev. Patrick Stephens, St. Barnabas Anglican, Deep River, Ontario



Meet the water keepers of Colombia

FOUR YEARS ago, community members in the small town of Tasco, Colombia occupied the road to the iron mine pit for a year. They were blocking trucks from moving iron from the mine to the plant. Edilma Chia, a mother of four grown children, says they were looking for reparations for personal and environmental damages and the end of mining activities. Iron exploitation pollutes the small water reservoirs nearby and weakens the soil causing the water to filter through, and not accumulate to feed the streams, creeks, lakes and rivers. Lack of water also destroys surrounding vegetation. Edilma's work also contributed to water access to the communal aqueduct built by piping the water from a small river for distribution to the 325 members. The community does most of the aqueduct work and administration. The plumber who takes care of the pipe system is the only person paid for this work.

As members of local women's groups supported by PWRDF partner ILSA (Instituto Latinoamericano para una Sociedad y un derecho Alternativos), Edilma is one of many women learning how to participate in municipal public affairs and policy development. Women want to have a say in the socioeconomic and environmental agendas of their local governments in Tasco, Pisba and Gameza.

It's crucial in Colombia. The country is home to half of the world's moorlands, which provide 70% of its potable water and feeds the subsidiary rivers that sustain the Amazon and Orinoco rivers as they meet the Atlantic Ocean.

Local and foreign multinationals are pressing communities to leave the land they have protected for generations in the Paramos region, where they live and farm, in their quest for minerals such as iron and coal. ILSA, a rights focused organization created in 1978, is helping women become stronger leaders, to protect the environment and to develop income alternatives. By supporting this work, PWRDF contributes to improving the lives of 75 rural women and 1,375 community members including families.

Group members recently organized and promoted community discussions with electoral candidates for the Municipal Council, something that has never been done before. Community members in various towns listened to the candidates' platforms and to the proposals that women

brought to the table. One of their principle requests was that elected candidates develop a public budget with a gender perspective. The Municipal Council is expected to present a budget report within six months and follow up with further discussions on gender. A "Good Will Agreement" containing two of the main commitments made was sealed with the prospective candidates' handprints.

Elizabeth Vargas is the head of her family and a rural leader. She works at a butchery and lives with her sons, a teenager and a six-year-old boy. At home, she raises rabbits, chickens and hens, and farms on communal land. She is also active in advocating for gender empowerment and the environment. Last year Elizabeth ran in the Municipal Council elections. Although she was not elected, she is passing along her experience with this process to other peasant women, for the future.

Karen Maldonado, 25, is from Pisba municipality. She started her own coffee production business in December 2019 on one hectare of land that her mother gave her. As a future leader, her goal is to learn leadership skills and to produce enough coffee to support herself and her toddler daughter. After training with ILSA, she became a key figure in the creation of the Allianza of Pisba entrepreneur and agroecologist women, ASOPISBA. She is also a water protector and therefore a protector of life in the Paramos.

Marta Rincon has tried many ways to generate income: cheese making, poultry raising and is currently producing yogurt, hoping that this will become a source of steady income for her family. While working and raising her three children, she dedicates whatever time she has left to supporting the campaign to protect the Paramos, despite a 45-minute walk to attend meetings where she always brings one of her children.

Edilma, Elizabeth, Karen and Marta are just some of the 75 women who are working together to defend and promote the protection of the Paramos, key water reservoirs and the most important ecosystem in the high mountains.

**Read the whole story on our website at
<https://pwrdf.org/meet-the-water-keepers-of-colombia/>**

