



## A Word from the Bishop

As I write this Message, I am once again looking into the future and wondering what the world will look like by the time you will be reading it. I have just resisted making those pesky new year's resolutions. The ratification of the electoral college in the US has yet to happen and the inauguration, which will still hold the flag at half-staff in memory of Jimmy Carter, is still a long way off – as I write. And yet, when you read this, all these things will be history. The preparation of my Message each month often feels like an exercise in prophecy, all the while knowing that prophecy is not about predicting the future but rather much more about reading and interpreting the signs of our own times.

You already know that I spent time in Canterbury, England with some of my episcopal brothers from the African continent and areas near by. Those two weeks have opened my eyes to the world in ways I could never have imagined, and in many ways I would never have hoped for. I discovered the way the Canadian Anglican Church is considered by some other Members of the Communion. I learned that many – indeed most – of the concerns we spend a lot of our time labouring over, defending, jousting against in our own contexts are not of great concern for the rest of the world. At times, while we are getting our knickers in a knot about pronouns or social justice inequities within the Church structures, we have Anglican siblings around the world concerned more about bringing Christ to peoples who still consider female genital mutilation an appropriate custom, bishops who aren't as concerned about what level of priestly education is required because they are faced with the changing tides for Christians in countries like Syria, and the very real possibility that many people in their own backyards are waiting to hear about Jesus Christ for the very first time. My time in Canterbury opened my eyes to an even greater world in which we are called to be prophetic; called to read and interpret the signs of our own times. It brought to my attention the truth that none of us is an island. We are all interrelated and have responsibilities all for each other.

Another eye-opening, and heart-opening event which happened while I was in Canterbury was the announcement that the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, was resigning. We had the opportunity to meet him while we were at Bishops' School and that



opportunity was for me a privilege. Archbishop Welby brought home for me, and for some of the others, the weight that comes with our roles as bishops, and indeed, as Christians.

During our time with him, Archbishop Justin reflected on the fact that our Ordinal, or vows of consecration as bishops, does not include the word "suffering." In some parts of the Anglican Communion, the ordinal includes the truthful recognition that a bishop may indeed be called in their ministry to endure and lead their diocese through times of great suffering. How true this can be. Does not leadership in the Church call upon our leaders – lay and ordained – to walk through times of trial, moments and seasons of difficult decisions, ramifications, and unforeseen consequences? Has there ever been a prolonged period in the Church during which the leadership was not called upon to stand in authority despite their desire to bend under pressure?

If we were to sit down with all our different vows – Baptismal, Marriage, Diaconal, Priestly, and Episcopal – and reflect upon them with open and honest hearts, would we not recognize the absence of the harsher realities of those vows? Every one of us has taken on vows at some time in our lives, be they ordination, marriage, baptismal. In the joy of the moment, celebrating these life events with loved ones and supporters, we bind ourselves to God through these vows in a heartfelt and joyous sense that we are doing something powerful and blessed. We are. However, if we were to look deeper at those vows we may just see the shadows dancing on the edges. Shadows of heartbreak and pain. The darkness of reality skirting the light and goodness.

It is easy to cry tears of joy as an infant is welcomed into the Church and we pray for the wee life the priest holds in their hands. We offer up our commitment to raise them while recognizing the dignity of every human being, safeguarding

God's creation, and seeking Christ in all whom we meet. As we say these words with smiles on our lips, do we consider why these promises are necessary? Do we consider the truth that as the child grows and matures they will be faced with those who do not respect their dignity? That there will be others who will refuse to seek Christ in them? No, we probably don't, and in those moments, that is okay.

Our call to Christian maturity comes when we are old enough and mature enough to recognize the larger world. We all have our own "Canterbury Moment" when we realize that we are being called to read and interpret the times for those we love and serve, in times that are difficult and filled with suffering. We all come to those moments, or even seasons, when we begin to question, wonder, even get frustrated or angry that the Church, our communities, even our priests and bishops are not seeing the world as it is, and they need to! When we come to those moments, it becomes our call to prophesy. It becomes our responsibility to look at the realities of the space we inhabit and speak the truth of what the world is saying to us, and it will be our time to interpret to our society, and our Church, the truth which needs to be spoken.

We are living in interesting and confusing times. The church in the North American context is losing ground. The world is shifting beneath our feet. However, our true foundation is Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour, and he is not shifting. We all need to have our own Canterbury moments when we are called to face the world to whom and about whom God is inviting us to prophesy. It is filled with shadows, and struggles, and difficulties. That is how the Christian life is lived: faithfulness in the face of shadows; perseverance in the face of struggles; truth in the face of difficulties. When we embrace the edges of our vows, whichever ones they may be, only then will we realize the prophetic powers the Holy Spirit has instilled within us. May we have the trust to rely on Jesus, as we step out in faith to prophesy to God's people, wherever God calls us to speak.

+ Rachael

### The Mustard Seed

Publisher:

The Rt. Rev'd Rachael Parker

*Eighth Bishop of Brandon*

Editor: The Rev'd Canon Robert Parker, CD

Email:

mustardseed@brandon.anglican.ca

Mail:

Diocese of Brandon

403 13th Street

Brandon, MB R7A 4P9

Phone: 902-476-9833

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Deadline for submissions:

The first day of the month preceding publication.

#### 2025 PUBLICATION DEADLINES

| Issue      | Deadline         |
|------------|------------------|
| March 2025 | February 1, 2025 |
| April 2025 | March 1, 2025    |
| May 2025   | April 1, 2025    |
| June 2025  | May 1, 2025      |

*Please note:* All submissions are subject to editing for clarity, timeliness, appropriateness, or length. Submit writing to the Editor in Microsoft Word file format or in the body of an email. Photographs must be large, high resolution jpg files. Please ensure you have permission from parents or guardians of all minors who have their photos or names published in The Mustard Seed. If including a photo, please send a name of who took the photo along with it, so the Editor can give proper credit!



# News From the Pews



The Ven Kara Mandryck conducts Holy Baptism at St. Andrew's Anglican Church, Wabowden MB.  
Photo by Freda Lepine



On December 15, 2024 Bishop Rachael celebrates Holy Baptism at Christ Church Anglican, The Pas MB.  
Photo by Shirley Dickens



Celebrating Lessons and Carols at St. John the Divine Anglican Church, Kerwood MB with local musicians.  
Photo by Joan Nadolny



The Ven Cheryl Kukurudz talks with the kids on Christmas Eve at Redeemer/St. George's Brandon MB  
Photo by Carole McCurry



Ready to celebrate Christmas Eve service at St. James Anglican Church, Rivers MB  
Photo by Jean Ryall



The Annual Christmas Pageant at St. Mary's Anglican Church Virden MB. Made even more special by the fact that everyone participated.  
Photo by Marjorie Andrew



Christmas Eve candle light service celebrated at St. Paul's Anglican Church, Dauphin MB.  
Photo by Joan Nadolny

## A “Resourceful” Opportunity

The Diocese has maintained a Ministry Resource Room in the Cathedral. For many years this has been the centralized space for books and learnings about Bible Studies, group dynamics, Church doctrine and dogma, sermon preparation, Children’s ministry aids, and so much more. The Resource Room has become under-utilized, and indeed, some resources have become outdated.

The Bishop has asked that an Ad Hoc Committee put their heads together to study and discern what kinds of resources are appropriate and needed today. Archdeacons Kara Mandryk (The Henry Budd College for Ministry) and Jonathan Hoskin have volunteered to spearhead this working group. If you have an interest in assisting them, or if you share gifts in seeking out resources in many forms and might have some imagination to lend to the discernment process of “The Future of Ministry Resources Within the Diocese,” please let us know at the Diocese and we will ensure that you get connected.

### **The Cathedral Cloister** By The Rt Rev’d Rachael Parker Eighth Bishop of Brandon

This monthly column is intended to keep the Diocese connected to the Parishes through the hub that is the central point of the Diocese. The Cathedral in any Diocese exists with two *raison d’être*. First, it is the home congregation for the worshipping community which has traditionally lived within the Parish geography of the Cathedral building itself. (As mobility has become so accessible, many churches no longer simply serve the Parish boundaries as people can easily get to church. Many people drive past other Anglican churches to attend their own “home” church.) And so, a Cathedral is the local church for its parishioners, and it will have all the similar groups and responsibilities that any church has: Vestry, ACW, Altar Guild, Outreach, Property and Finance Committees and so on.

Second, a Cathedral is also the “Mother Church” of a Diocese. In some Dioceses there is a tradition that people will join in Diocesan worship on Mothering Sunday when everyone comes “home” to the Mother Church.

This tradition derives from the early practices in the Church of England. In essence, the Cathedral is the center of what is happening for all the people within a Diocese, and it is given a sense of honour in that it metaphorically calls us all together; calls us all home. The Bishop’s chair, called the *cathedra*, resides in the Diocesan Cathedral and that is where the Bishop will sit for any worship for which she may be present.

This dual nature of the building that is the Cathedral Church of St. Matthew can become a matter of confusion when distinct groups of people consider what it is and for whom. For St. Matthew’s parishioners, it is their place of worship and the spiritual touchpoint for their own rites of passage. Like congregation members in other churches, they have traditions and practices which have grown through the years which reflect the spiritual history and maturity of the very people who sit in the pews every Sunday. The challenge for the Cathedral regulars is contained in the role they play as “family hosts” at all times. On any given Sunday there may be, and should be, Anglican family members who join them from other parts of the Diocese or Communion, as they look to the Diocesan Cathedral as a home away from home. The Cathedral, and hence, its parishioners, are always in welcome mode as they live into their call to be keepers of the family hearth, ensuring that the fire is always stoked, the kettle is always ready, and hospitality is their gift to share in Jesus’ name.

On the other hand, those family members from afar – away from the Cathedral itself – are not simply guests who drop by occasionally. They are indeed loved and valued members of the Diocesan, and Cathedral family, Like our own children who grow up and move out into the world to share their gifts and talents elsewhere, so too are the Anglicans in pews from Churchill to Killarney and everywhere in between. They are still beloved members of our Diocese of Brandon Family, and the Cathedral, whether they visit home or not, is indeed their spiritual home as well, and they should always feel welcomed.

A Diocesan Cathedral is like the hub of a wheel from which every spoke leads to one of our Diocesan churches. All our congregations, regardless of

size, tradition, churchmanship, or anything else, is only one step away from the Diocesan community that is considered to be fully at home in the Cathedral. This is why Synod services, ordinations, Easter Vigils, and other significant liturgies are usually celebrated within the Cathedral itself. The Mother Church reminds us that we can come home, and that we should come home, often. It is a place of gathering, celebrating, worshiping, loving, and sending. It is a reminder that we all come from the same family, and it is important that we celebrate that family with reunions from time to time.

As you may know, our own St. Matthew’s Cathedral – our Mother Church – is having its own challenging times. Like many of our churches, the Cathedral struggles to pay the bills, especially the insurance! It is an old and beautiful building which needs to become accessible for all the generations to come. It faces challenges with which we can all relate. It is also in a time of great transition with the people who make up the Cathedral leadership.

In September, longtime Parish Administration Assistant, Cheryl Kukurudz took on a new role as Executive Archdeacon for the Diocese, which removed her from the day-to-day workings of the Cathedral building and the congregation. Dean Don Bernhardt has just entered his retirement and the new Rector for the Cathedral and soon to be made Dean of the Diocese, The Reverend Chris Evetts is just coming on board and beginning the work of weaving the three families of St. Mary’s, Brandon, St. Paul’s, Wawanesa, and the Cathedral itself into a new Parish Grouping. We also said thank you and farewell to Teresa Levich who has served for many years as the Cathedral receptionist and bookkeeper and Diocesan Archivist. These changes have called the Cathedral community and the Diocesan community to recognize the need to regroup, to pray and discern, and to intentionally pull together as we listen for the Holy Spirit’s prompting and guidance as we re-vision who and what the Cathedral is called to be, both for the congregation of St. Matthew’s, and as the centre of the Diocese.

As we support one another in these times of transition, may we all recognize the many ways

we are called to interact as siblings in Christ and as family within the Diocese. No church, however great or small, is more important than any other. We must realize and work toward the truth that it is in community and in prayer that God calls us to be united and to seek the best for the other, just as they seek the best for us.

**Editor’s note: “The Cathedral Cloister” column is intended to highlight thoughts, ideas, and perspectives of clergy from the Cathedral, and the Diocese, parishioners and stakeholders of the Cathedral Church. Submissions or article ideas are always welcome.**

### **Pastoral Progressions**

A service of Induction and New Ministry for the Rev’d Jen Morgan as Rector of Pelly Plains Parish Sunday, February 9th, at 2:30pm St. George’s, Birtle. Clergy are invited to vest, the colour being green.

The Rev’d Christopher Evetts will move into the role of Dean of the Diocese and Rector of the new Parish being formed consisting of St. Paul’s, Wawanesa; St. Mary’s, Brandon; and St. Matthew’s Cathedral. A service of Induction as Rector and Installation as Dean of the Cathedral will take place on the Feast of St. Joseph, March 19th, 2025 at 2 pm. Lay Readers and Clergy are invited to vest, the colour being white.

**Pastoral Progressions is a monthly feature of the Mustard Seed and will highlight the progression and moves for the clergy and parishes of the Diocese.**

### **From the Editor for the Mustard Seed**

Canon Rob is looking for parish submission as well as for those who wish to share their talents for poetry, writing, artwork, or interesting photos from around our Diocese.

**Submissions can be sent to Canon Rob at [mustardseed@brandon.anglican.ca](mailto:mustardseed@brandon.anglican.ca)**

**The due date for the March 2025 Issue is February 1st, 2025.**

TRULY I TELL YOU, IF YOU HAVE FAITH AS SMALL AS A MUSTARD SEED, YOU CAN SAY TO THIS MOUNTAIN, ‘MOVE FROM HERE TO THERE,’ AND IT WILL MOVE. NOTHING WILL BE IMPOSSIBLE FOR YOU.

MATTHEW 17:20