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# The Mustard Seed.

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## Canterbury Calling

By The Rt Rev'd Rachael Parker  
8th Bishop of Brandon

A world-traveller your Bishop is not. However, I did spend a couple of weeks at Canterbury Cathedral in England in early November. As a new bishop, I was welcomed to go to "New Bishops' School" with twenty-three other new bishops from around the Anglican Communion. As one of only two women bishops, both Canadian, we were granted the privilege of discovering how vast and beautiful our Anglican Communion really is, while also recognizing that the Kingdom of God is truly a village in which all of Jesus' followers are called to share in more similarities than differences.

Over the next few months, I will be sharing articles about

*An Archdeacon Does What...?*

By The Ven Jonathan Hoskin - Archdeacon of Brandon

Greetings, friends!

Bishop Rachael has asked me to share a little of what it means for me to be an archdeacon in the diocese. What is involved? What do I do? It is a bit of a tricky question, because the terms I think in place most of what I do in categories aligned with being a priest in the diocese, or with simply being me (and so, the specific skill set that I bring to the table). What is a part of my life that wouldn't be, if I wasn't an archdeacon?

For me, being an archdeacon begins with grace. When I was baptized, began receiving communion, was confirmed, married my wife, was ordained deacon and then priest, God granted me grace. In each of these things, God's grace has expanded my mind, expanded my view, expanded my understanding. And beyond my capacity. Everytime. God's grace has been something that I've had to lean into as I've lived into it. I used to pray for God to have mercy upon me; when I became a priest, God put it into my heart to pray that He would have mercy

Safeguarding, Bible Studies on Leadership, and Queen Bertha who is the real "bringer" of Christianity to southern England! You will most likely be reading something about Human Dignity, Canon Law, Mission and Evangelism. Realistically speaking, you will be reading and hearing about Bishops' School for a long while to come. This was a profound and transformative experience for me as well as the other new bishops and one which I am only beginning to realize as I live into what it is to be a Christian in such a wide and wonderful world.

The truth is that the lessons shared with the bishops from Canada, England, the Solomon Islands, the Philippines, Korea,

upon us, even when praying alone. Because there were a lot of people within the sphere of my spiritual care and influence, and God expanded me beyond my individual scope. By His grace.

Similarly, when I was appointed archdeacon God granted me a fresh dose of grace – expanding my view and understanding beyond my capacity, yet again. This time, not just to the spiritual care of the members of the parish I serve, but to the vitality of the parishes within the archdeaconry. As I have conceived the archdeacon's role, this has meant looking to the health and well-being of clergy. Our parishes are better served by clergy when the clergy themselves are being taken care of. In support of this, I have tried to encourage clericus meetings – the peer support that clergy are able to give one another is invaluable; just having others who are trusted, who may be facing similar pressures, is one of the keys to clergy health. I also make attempts to remain in contact with clergy regarding their parish

and several countries in Africa, are all lessons that need to be shared and lived out in each of our dioceses, beginning right here in Brandon. Foundational to each of these lessons is The Five Marks of Mission. These are not new. You already know what they are but like our Baptismal Promises, we can't go back to them too often. We are going to learn about them again and hopefully we will allow ourselves and our congregations to recognize that as we live into them, we will be living into them with siblings in Christ all around the world.

In case you need a refresher, here they are. Get ready to make your "mark" on God's world!

situations, their hopes, and skills that they may wish to develop in future (particularly with an eye to watching for opportunities that may arise). While clergy-care is really a responsibility that we recognize as a part of the episcopal oversight of our bishops (shared with the individual clerics, themselves), it is one that is shared – by God's grace – with the archdeacons.

There is also an administrative side to the archdeacon's role. Both clergy-care and this administrative role I lump together as ways that the archdeacon contributes to the good governance and well-ordered nature of the Church. Administratively, archdeacons have seats at the table with the bishop and dean – the chief clergy of the diocese – and so are able to provide another voice in the decision-making of the diocese. By this contact, also, remaining apprised of various goings-on in the diocese, archdeacons are prepared to step into leadership roles when required. When we were between bishops last year,

**The Five Marks of Mission**

**TELL:** to proclaim the good news of the kingdom

**TEACH:** to teach, baptise and nurture new believers

**TEND:** to respond to human need by loving service

**TRANSFORM:** to seek to transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and to pursue peace and reconciliation

**TREASURE:** to strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and renew the life of the earth

when Dean Don was diocesan administrator, there were certain parts of the administration that he shared with Kara and I – as archdeacons – that we were able to step into without too much hassle, because we had been prepared for such. More recently, I was able to spend a day at one of the Anglican seminaries in Toronto establishing good relations on behalf of the diocese – which could, over time, bear the fruit of new clergy for our diocese.

So, to sum up: God is good, and grants grace that stretches us beyond ourselves. For an archdeacon, as it has played out in my ministry thus far, this has meant contributing to the good governance and well-ordering of the Church in our diocese with an eye to clergy-care and administration. I am still new to the role, however, and I cannot say what the Lord will move in me as time progresses – I am still growing into an archdeacon. God bless!

## A Word from the Bishop

The nature of creating The Mustard Seed calls for all the columns and contributions to be written a full month or more before you will ever see them. We are always looking into the future while trying to be conscious of the present, and also honouring the past. It is indeed an interesting way to work. It is a way of thinking that comes close to home at New Year's! And so, this is – a new year.

As this column is being written, it is just the beginning of Advent - the start of our liturgical year. Most people in the secular world assume that it is simply a season of preparation for Christmas. It is indeed a season of preparation but not for the coming of baby Jesus. Rather it is for the coming of the Reign of Christ, the culmination of those times when God's Kingdom on earth will be as it is in heaven. By now, our Advent season (2024) has come and gone, and we are in the Christmas/Epiphany season. We are also in the New Year's season, which being the one the world acknowledges with countdowns, champagne, and Auld Lang Syne. I find this pairing of the two different "new year's celebrations" to be fascinating in the possibilities they hold for us as Church and Society. Within one short month we are invited to celebrate the new year and new dreams that coexist with who we are as Christians in the Church community and who we are as citizens in secular society. We are challenged to begin a new thing in a new way, in every aspect



of our lives.

As a diocese, we are midway through our 100th year. In many ways, our anniversary year is like a new year's celebration. We have time to look back and remember. We have opportunities to give thanks for what is in the here and now. We are encouraged to think ahead and consider, pray about, and wonder what God has in store for the future. These seasons of new beginnings are powerful and exciting.

As we look into the future as a Diocese, I believe that God is calling us to great adventures in faith. We will have many opportunities to step out in faith, wondering where on earth the Spirit may be leading. There will be many moments of exhilaration as we marvel at the power of Jesus' presence in our midst, and there will be even more discoveries of how much courage we have as individuals, congregations, deaneries, and as a diocese to do the hard work God is calling us to

do in Jesus' name.

There are plenty of changes that have happened in our Diocese and churches in the past year. There are inevitably more in store. In all this change, we are called to be brave, strong, and focussed on Christ. Our focus should be on the Promised Land God is calling us to venture toward. Our new year is beckoning us on to discover treasures God has in store that can only be experienced if we are willing to move forward in faith.

Our new year brings with it innovative ideas, new ways of doing things, even new ways of naming things. We are called to embrace the new with a faithfulness that honours what God has done in the past and recognizes where we are starting from in the present. Next year, next month, even next week, we will no longer be where we are today. Thanks be to God! For in this moment – in every moment – God is calling us onward in Jesus' name, to do a new thing. To become a new people. To serve alongside the Spirit in new and wonderful ways. In this new year, I invite you to come alongside me as we discover what God is calling our Diocese, our congregations, and each of us to do in new ways. If we do this together, with Christ, it will be absolutely worth it!

+ *Rachael*

"GOD NEVER GIVES SOMEONE A GIFT THEY ARE NOT CAPABLE OF RECEIVING. IF HE GIVES US THE GIFT OF CHRISTMAS IT IS BECAUSE WE ALL HAVE THE ABILITY TO UNDERSTAND AND RECEIVE IT."

POPE FRANCIS

"THE SIMPLE SHEPHERDS HEARD THE VOICE OF AN ANGEL AND FOUND THEIR LAMB; THE WISE MEN SAW THE LIGHT OF A STAR AND FOUND THEIR WISDOM."

FULTON J. SHEEN

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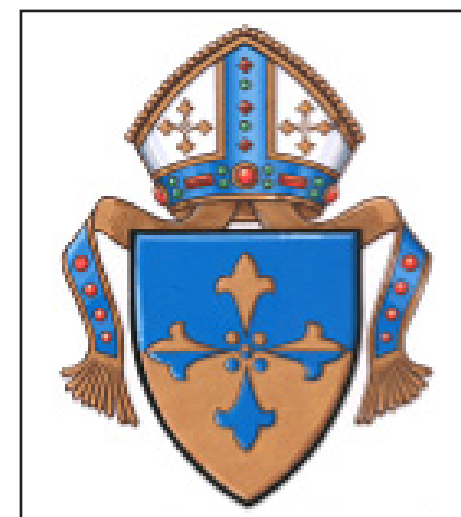
Contributions to the expense of the paper are normally requested each March but donations are accepted anytime. Changes of address can be made directly with the Anglican Journal. Opinions expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of the Bishop or of the editor.

Deadline for submissions: the first Sunday of the month preceding publication.

#### 2024 PUBLICATION DEADLINES

Issue	Deadline
September 2024	August 4, 2024
October 2024	September 8, 2024
November 2024	October 6, 2024
December 2024	November 3, 2024

*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



**St. James', Rivers held a family dinner on Nov. 3rd.  
Photo by Jean Ryall**



**Also from St. Paul's Dauphin  
Every first weekend in November for number of years now, we have welcomed 10,000 Villages from Brandon to come to our church with their beautiful merchandise from all over the world. Photo by Joan Nadolny**



**On November 3 we were honoured to welcome Bishop Rachael here at St. Paul's Dauphin to confirm 2 youth and 3 adults. In addition to the confirmation service, Bishop Rachael also commissioned 2 lay-readers and presented a certificate of recognition to our crucifer for his contributions to our church. It was a beautiful service and an enjoyable lunch prepared and served by our ACW. We shared a wonderful time of fellowship as well as the delicious meal. Photo by Joan Nadolny.**



**The folks at St Mark's in Minnedosa have been very blessed with the completion of our upgraded kitchen. We are grateful for the monetary donations; all the help with fundraising events and the volunteer builders & shoppers who have made it possible to complete our vision. Photo by Lynne Tolton.**



**As a Christmas outreach project the ACW of St. Mary's Brandon spearheaded the collection of socks to be given to the Brandon Westman Christmas Cheer and the Bear Clan for distribution to those in need. In all the congregation donated 150 pairs of Men's, Women's, and Children's socks. Pictured are a few of St. Mary's parishioners with the collected socks. Each Sunday the children of the parish would count the number of pairs that had been donated and announce the total to the congregation. Photo by Bishop Jin Njegovan.**

## 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 Very Rev’d Don Bernhardt  
Dean of St Matthew’s Cathedral

Bishop Rachael Parker asked me to prepare a piece for “The Cathedral Cloister” section in the January edition of the Mustard Seed, I’m grateful to her for this opportunity. As you may know, at the end of the Sunday service on January 26, 2025, I’m retiring from full-time ministry. This is my opportunity to say farewell and reflect on my years of service within the Diocese of Brandon, but being that I’m writing this in November, I’m finding it hard to put myself in that mindset, so bear with me.

I started my ministry in 2004 when I was ordained a deacon by Bishop Jim Njegovan. Eight months later, I was ordained a priest and served as an assistant at the Cathedral. In 2006, I was privileged to be

named rector of what is now the Tri-Valley parish centred in Virden. Heather and I saw our kids, Josh and Jenny, move through school and graduate as we embraced our lives in that community and I treasured every day we spent there.

However, in 2016, God and our former Bishop William Cliff had other plans, and I was asked to take on the position of Dean back at St. Matthews. I did so with some reservations because I am not a Dean in the grand tradition of cathedrals, however, if this is where I was needed I’d trust that things would work out. Whether they did or not is really for me to say.

As we all know, since the pandemic times, the world is a much different place. The Cathedral, like so many other churches, was severely impacted in its finances and continues to struggle. Having said that, it is clear that God is not quite done with us yet! There is much more ministry to be done and I’m confident that your new Dean, Chris Evetts is just the right servant shepherd to lead you into whatever the future holds.

One thing is clear to me though, the cathedral family that exists today is a vastly different one, compared to 1994 when my family first came to St. Matthews. We are much more pluralistic now and that’s a great thing because it opens up all sorts of new opportunities and communities and my hope and prayer is that you will continue to be that loving and welcoming space that has made me so proud of being a part of. We are not just a parish, we are a family and everyone who walks through our doors becomes a part of it.

I would like to take a moment and thank so many people who have walked alongside me and helped me become a better priest and person. Firstly, to my family who were prepared to share me at all times of the day and night, week in and week out. I could not have had a better partner than my dear wife Heather, who was always willing to do whatever she could

to support me. To Josh and Jenny, who continue to uphold me and remind me to stay grounded.

I also want to thank my three bishops for allowing me the true privilege to serve. I have been blessed more than I can say. Thank you to my parishes for being the great people you are and for supporting me and teaching me what it is to be a servant of Christ. You were always ministering to me as I ministered to you and you did it well. I also thank you for your patience with me when I hit the odd bump in the road.

My sisters and brothers throughout the diocese, thank you for allowing me the honour of being your Dean. It was more than I deserved and I will always be grateful that, as unworthy as I am, you upheld me as we walked the good road together.

Lastly and most importantly, I thank God for showing me what I was called to do and then for walking alongside me as I did my best to serve Christ by serving others.

It is my hope that, as I move into retirement, God will allow me to continue to serve in this Diocese, helping out where I can. So hopefully, you may still see me around from time to time!

With deepest thanks.

Dean Don Bernhardt

**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

God willing and the people consenting, the Rev’d Deacon Tim Moore will be ordained to the Sacred Order of Priests on the Feast of the Baptism of Our

Lord; Saturday, January 11th at 2 p.m. The service will take place at St. Paul’s Anglican Church, MacGregor. Clergy are invited to vest, the colour being white.

On December 1st, The Reverend Jen Morgan began her ministry as the Priest-in-Charge of the Pelly Plains Parish Grouping. A service of Institution and Induction will be held in the near future.

The Dean of the Diocese and Rector of St. Matthew’s Cathedral, The Very Reverend Don Bernhardt has shared with the Diocese and his Parish that he will be retiring in early 2025. His last Sunday in the Cathedral will be 26 January. At the time of his retirement, The Reverend 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.

**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 February 2025 Issue is January 1st, 2025.**



**Left: Canterbury Cathedral, site of the 2024 Bishop School.**

**Right: The Class of 2024 at the Anglican Communion Offices in London England.**

