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The Mustard Seed.

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A SENSE OF GOD'S CALLING

By the Very Rev'd Chris Evetts
Dean of St. Matthew's Cathedral

Restoring Hope

A reflection of the past, present and future of St. Matthew's Cathedral

Part One – Where we came from

St. Paul, while addressing the Romans on baptism, wrote, "For if we have been united with Christ in a death like his, we will certainly be united with Christ in a resurrection like his." (Romans 6.5 NRSV) This passage has been the motivator and foundation upon which a new vision arose surrounding the life and necessary changes of St. Matthew's Cathedral. Today, I want to share some thoughts on "Restoring Hope," to do that, we must reflect on our recent experiences.

Back in spring 2023, St. Matthew's Cathedral faced significant financial challenges, prompting a group to come together and seek solutions. We reached out to various organizations in the city of Brandon, looking for new partnerships while exploring ways to enhance our financial standing and human resources. It's vital to recognize that St. Matthew's is a historic building that demands considerable maintenance and care. Like many others across Canada, we felt the profound impact of the pandemic, which only intensified our struggles.

This situation isn't isolated to St. Matthew's or prairie churches; large urban churches nationwide have been on a journey of soul-searching in the wake of the pandemic. We've faced numerous challenges, including the secularization of public spaces, shifting interpretations of community, declining membership, and rising infrastructure costs. These realities have led us to seek partners, and we are grateful to have found one in Westman Immigrant Services

(WIS) under the leadership of our former Dean, Don Bernhardt.

Our partnership with WIS feels like a perfect match, as their mission aligns closely with our Church's values despite being a non-religious not-for-profit organization. They plan to undertake significant renovations to the basement hall to create a licensed daycare specifically for new Canadian parents, helping them settle into their new lives and navigate their paths to sustainable employment. We're genuinely grateful for this collaboration, but it's important to note that, due to ecclesiastical concerns, good governance, and safeguarding initiatives, we may still be about two years away from seeing any substantial income from the long-term lease we are currently negotiating to ensure protections for both WIS, the Cathedral, and the Diocese of Brandon.

So, how does this all relate to "Restoring Hope"? The connection is profound. As mentioned earlier, we're grappling with significant financial, structural, and congregational challenges. Combined with the trials our diocese faced from spring 2023 until Bishop Rachael's consecration, these have sown seeds of doubt and despair, which is completely understandable. Hope, while always present, seemed to take a back seat to the demands of the day. When Dean Don announced his upcoming retirement, it sparked important conversations about how we can reimagine what a sustained Christian presence and renewed purpose in a large cathedral church can look like. This conversation has led us to the concept of "Restoring Hope."

Part Two - What is Restoring Hope?

Restoring Hope is more than a plan; it's a heartfelt vision

for how a Christian presence can flourish, especially within an Anglican Cathedral, in today's increasingly secular world. This initiative unfolds in three thoughtful phases—Restoring Hope, Cultivating Hope, and Sharing Hope—each designed to serve as a short-term, medium-term, and long-term approach to nurturing a spirit of stewardship and discipleship within our community. We recognize the importance of renewing and restoring our cherished buildings and existing ministries while acknowledging the need for a welcoming space where meaningful work can unfold.

We've understood that attracting new members to our congregation is just one facet of our journey. While the worship of Jesus Christ, the celebration of the sacraments, and the preaching of the Word remain central to our mission, we feel deeply that we must also embrace change and seek new opportunities for resurrection within our church community. The Parish of Epiphany has experienced this transformation firsthand through a shared revelation among our leadership and many heartfelt prayers. The vision to integrate the cathedral into a multi-point parish emerged from our desire to move forward in faith, knowing that the Holy Spirit is guiding us into something new and truly exciting.

Imagine a transformed cathedral—not filled with fixed pews, but open and adaptable with chairs arranged into rows or set around tables. Picture those tables being used for black-tie events, pop-up restaurants, and gatherings where business leaders meet with stakeholders. Envision a safe and quiet space where students find comfort while studying. Visualize a music studio offering the gift of learning to children who might

not otherwise have that chance. Consider a space where meals are served to vulnerable neighbours, complementing our existing programs that provide support. What if we could create a sacred environment where the Province of Northern Lights could gather for worship and hold its tri-annual synod? These possibilities are just a glimpse of what we hope to explore together.

We understand this vision has sparked concerns within our parish and diocese, and we genuinely appreciate the shared thoughts and feelings. Questions about the Cathedral's existing challenges often arise, such as why we should invest in a building that seems to be struggling financially and why our focus is so centred on the building itself. These are valid concerns; the answer lies in our call for resurrection. As a community, we have a unique opportunity to live out our baptismal promises in new and engaging ways, welcoming those in our community's secular and non-Christian parts with the radical hospitality of Jesus Christ. We are committed to being good stewards of the resources entrusted to us and reaching out to individuals who might not typically enter a church, creating a safe and inviting space.

Another concern expressed is rooted in scripture: "Stop making my Father's house a marketplace" (John 2:16 NRSV). Recognizing this perspective is important, and we want you to know that Restoring Hope embraces this concern. Our vision aims to establish a ministry ecosystem, meaning that for every dollar spent on updating and maintaining our physical space, we are equally dedicated to developing meaningful new ministries.

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A Word from the Bishop

This month of May is often a sacred season in the life of the Church. It brings us the opportunity to celebrate the season of Easter. It also brings us the opportunity to consider ordinations – new deacons, new priests, and new bishops. Easter season is indeed an opportunity to think, pray, and live into new life.

While our diocese does not have any ordinations upcoming, we are living in the world of the Anglican Church of Canada, in which we are celebrating the new ministries of several new bishops. At the end of the month, the Diocese of Rupert's Land will be electing their next Bishop. In the middle of May, the Diocese of the Arctic will be gathering in Edmonton to elect three new bishops. Our own diocese is currently holding Father Chad McCharles in our prayers as he prepares for his new ministry as the Bishop of the Diocese of Saskatoon. He will be consecrated on 14 June. At General Synod in late June, the Anglican Church of Canada will be electing our new primate. He or she will be responsible for representing the Anglican Church of Canada on the world stage, as well as acting as a partner in ministry among the provinces and dioceses of our Anglican Church. This season of spring in the church is indeed an opportunity for God to begin new things, and we pray that all of these new things will indeed be blessed by God as opportunities for the Church body to move forward in hope, in joy, in peace, and in love.

As I have been working as the "consulting bishop" on the Rupert's Land Episcopal Search Committee, and as the Canadian Bishops created the slate of Primatial Nominees for the election of the Primate at General Synod, I have been considering the work and role of the Bishop quite a lot lately. What does it mean to be a bishop? What should we be looking for in a new Primate? What truly is "our" role in electing someone to an episcopal ministry? And, of course, the big question: what if we get it wrong? After all, the bishops are chosen through an election. All good questions worth our consideration.

What does it mean to be a bishop? There is information floating around out there that includes a loose "episcopal job description" as stating that the bishop is the spiritual leader of the church and the CEO of the Corporation that makes up the Diocese. While this is accurate, it is also misleading. Emphasis can be misplaced on the CEO aspect, allowing people (and bishops) to assume that the most important part of their work is to "run the business and balance the books" of the diocese. Yes, these are aspects of a bishop's ministry but they are only one part of the whole. The Church simply is not comparable



to a secular business. Good stewardship of resources is essential, but it must always be balanced with the spiritual, pastoral, discernment needs of the Church as well.

The greatest role of the Bishop - the foundation of all that a bishop can and should do - is that of faithful prayer and discernment. If the bishop is not spending time with their "boss", receiving their marching orders from God, and then communicating the vision of God to their people, then that bishop is not living up to their job description. (This can be found in the Rite of Ordination of a Bishop in the Book of Alternative Services.) Only when the bishop returns daily, and consistently, to God will they be able to adequately serve in the role the Holy Spirit has chosen for them.

When we consider who God may be calling to be our next Primate, we need to consider all the same things we do for the election of our own Diocesan bishop. However, there are charisms, competencies, and support systems that a Primate will need that are unique to that particular vocation. The Primate will need to be able to listen and pray with the greater Church, and then represent us on an international stage. They must have a reserve of energy that can only be divinely filled, as they spend so much time traveling, listening, learning, and praying. They must have the patience of Job to wrangle all the bishops at General Synods and House of Bishops gatherings. (We are an unwieldy lot, us bishops!). They must have the ability to switch gears and change direction on the fly as they live in that balance of "spiritual leader Vs CEO" that is an ever-moving target. Being bilingual would help, as they work and pray with Canadians. Knowing other languages would also be great, as the reality of our country and the contexts of our congregations is becoming more and more beautifully diverse. They don't need to be able to fly faster than a speeding bullet, but it would cut down on the cost of travel. And the greatest "ask" of all - they must be ready, willing, and able to live in Toronto! Oh gasp, oh sigh, oh my! The role and scope of serving as the Primate of the Anglican

Church of Canada is one for which few are called and even fewer are chosen, but when they are they will need our full prayer and support.

When we move to General Synod and enter into the election of the Primate, we do so in a way that is different than other episcopal elections. The House of Bishops, which established the slate of nominees, is sequestered for the election, and does not have opportunity to vote. The Laity and Clergy elected in each Diocese are the people through whom the Holy Spirit will move, and who will vote in successive ballots, until such time as a Primate has been chosen by God. We do indeed believe that our elections are moments in which the Holy Spirit speaks to the hearts of our delegates, and through successive ballots, begun and ended in prayer, the bishop in whom God will place God's gifts of wisdom and leadership will be named. This is not a competition. It is not a political race. Nor should there be "campaigning" by or on behalf of any specific bishop. It is an exercise in faith, hope, and listening for the voice of God as spoken through God's people.

The big question in the end is: "what happens if we make a mistake?" What happens when we make any mistake as God's children? We repent and we ask forgiveness. God forgives and we begin again in a better way. The thing about an episcopal election is this: the Holy Spirit does not choose the wrong person! Will the "winner" be perfect? Nope. Not a chance. Will they make mistakes? Absolutely, and often. The key is that they were chosen by the Holy Spirit with and through the prayers of the people voting for them There is no such creature as a perfect bishop or Primate. No matter who we vote for we will still elect a human being. That being said, they will enter their new role as bishop or Primate with those words on their tongues: "with God's help." And coming from our lips should be the words, "and with our prayers, as well." In the end, we know we need leaders in the Church. We also know that they will be human and fallible. As are we. And as we lean on God and each other for assistance, so will they. We all have to be willing to say, "here I am, lean on me, as we lean on God together." As a final thought, isn't that exactly what a bishop's job description should read: "Come to me, people of my Diocese, and lean on me, as we lean on God together."

+ Rachael

The Mustard Seed

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The Mustard Seed is circulated ten times a year (from September to June), as a section of the Anglican Journal, to all supporting households in the Diocese of Brandon.

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 day of the month preceding publication.

2025 PUBLICATION DEADLINES

Issue	Deadline
May 2025	April 1, 2025
June 2025	May 1, 2025
Sept 2025	Aug 1, 2025
Oct 2025	Sept 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 Around the Diocese

A Call for Pillows!

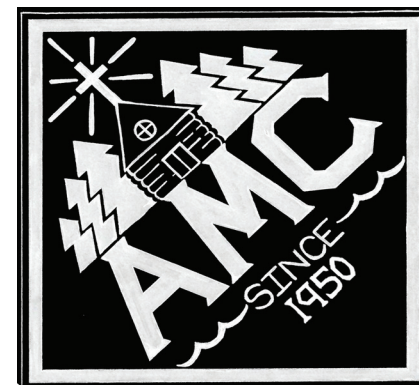
At the Thanksgiving Weekend Gathering of our Youth at the Camp this past October, the Bishop was caught off guard when the young people answered her question: what do you want for your Church. She was hoping to get answers about how the Church might be shaped in the years to come. However, these precocious teenagers answered quite literally. They want to be comfortable in Church! The Camp Chapel that is.

So, this is a call for all those who love

to sew; those who have left over materials – the weirder and funkier the better. For the start of Camp in July we need from 75-100 pillows. We're not talking about the ones on your bed you're going to throw out. We're not asking for fancy throw cushions that are too pretty to be sat upon. We are looking for good teenage-bum-sized pil-lows that will make Pierre Berton's "Comfortable Pew" roll over in its literary grave. We need pil-lows that can be knelt upon for prayer, held like a hug, dragged around like Linus' blanket from Charlie Brown's "Peanuts" and just

generally loved.

Your donations of pillows will give the gift of love to homesick hearts. They will be shared and tossed around. They will bring laughter. They will absorb tears. And every time the pillows you donate do any of these things ... you will have given that very gift to a young person who will know that they are loved!



Fair Share Update

On behalf of the Diocesan Executive Committee, the Bishop would like to offer her deep and sincere gratitude to all the Congregations who committed themselves to contributing their portion of Fair Share in the 2024 fiscal year. Our Diocesan Financial Officer, Mr Greig Scott, informed the Executive that the Congregations had contributed their 2024 Fair Share amounts in excess of 92%!

You may not be aware, but your Fair Share contributions are not a "tax" that congregations pay to the Diocese. They are more like your church envelope which contributes to the well-being of the Diocese much as individual congregants' envelopes contribute to the well-being of churches. Envelopes received in your churches help pay for your clergy salary and housing, paying the heat and hydro, insurance, and bread and wine for the everyday working of your church. Those same envelopes also contribute to your local outreach and mission endeavours. Much the same happens with your Church's Fair Share to the Diocese.

Your Fair Share pays the salaries of the three and a half Diocesan staff: the Bishop, the Executive Archdeacon, the Diocesan Financial Officer, and part of our receptionist's wages. Fair Share also pays the rent for the Diocesan staff offices, pays insurance on buildings without congregations, travel for the Bishop and staff, and much, much more. An example of your Fair Share dollars at work is each visit the Bishop makes to

celebrate Communion, baptisms, confirmations during which the Bishop comes to you rather than expecting everyone to travel to the Cathedral for these wonderful Life Events and Sacraments.

Just as you are asked to commit Fair Share contributions to the Diocese, so the Diocese also offers Fair Share commitments to the Province of Northern Lights (a relatively small yearly amount) and to the National Church. The greatest benefit our Diocese receives from our National Fair Share contribution is that of receiving funding for being part of The Council of the North. Each year a significant portion of our Diocesan Budget consists of the Council of the North Grant, which is specifically intended to fund Clergy and Ministry to our remote and Indigenous communities. Without this funding from the National Church, the Diocese of Brandon would not be able to function. Our diocesan Fair Share contributions, along with those of all the 29 other dioceses across Canada, allow for the Council of the North fund to continue.

Many, indeed most, of our Congregations take their Fair Share requests from the Diocese seriously and commit to sending their contributions in to the Diocese on a monthly basis. Like your local churches, you can imagine that receiving these funds regularly, rather than as an "end of the year" offering, allows the Diocese to move forward in paying bills, your clergy's salaries, etc. in a timely and fiscally responsible manner. We thank you so very much for your

diligence and faithfulness in taking this responsibility seriously

Some congregations reach out to Diocesan Executive from time to time asking for a decrease in Fair Share request or requiring a period of grace before they send in their Fair Share. While it is appreciated that communications are offered, the Bishop would ask that clergy and congregations take time for deep thought and conversation, great prayer and creative imagining, before those requests are made. Are there other areas from which Fair Share could be paid, or could some gentle fundraisers assist your church in living up to your Fair Share requests? Keeping healthy sums of money in "rainy day accounts" rather than committing to your Fair Share is not a faithful and God-trusting way of living the Gospel. Jesus didn't tell his disciples to go and bury their treasures in the ground for "just in case" moments! We need to live the faith we have which tells us that God will provide ... when we need it!

There are some churches within any Diocese who make the conscious decision to withhold their Fair Share as a statement of their feelings regarding the Diocese or the Bishop, or from a sense that they need not participate. This is not a faithful way of being in relationship with the greater Church. It is one thing for a struggling congregation to have a conversation with the Bishop about how to work with what they have during difficult times. It is quite another to simply deny the sharing of Fair Share dollars to the diocese

on grounds of disagreement. There is not one congregation in our Diocese which does not benefit from Fair Share. Each and every congregation participates in the life of the Diocese and benefits from that life. While withholding Fair Share for principled reasons may seem to benefit an individual congregation, that decision then puts undue strains on every other congregation as they are required to pick up the slack. The Diocesan budget must be met regardless of how many congregations send in their Fair Share. If even one congregation neglects to do so, the budget costs are then shared among all the congregations and ministries of the Diocese. The Bishop would ask that each congregation which chooses to have a conversation about whether or not to send in their Fair Share, please contact her so that open and honest communications can be shared.

As we move toward the mid-year, and hence mid-budget, season of the Diocese, please keep in mind that your envelopes to your churches, and your church "envelopes" to the Diocese, need to be maintained through the summer months as well. Everyone is encouraged - from individual parishioner to church to diocese - to consider moving to automatic giving to ensure that we are being good stewards of our communities all year round.

And by the way, WELL DONE, GOOD AND FAITHFUL SERVANTS! Over 92% is an excellent beginning with Fair Share commitments. Let's work on aiming for 100%!

The May AFP ZOOM Prayer Broadcast will take place at 12:00 noon Manitoba Time on Monday the 26th (deferred one week because of the May Long Weekend). Bishop William will lead us in Prayer in the Midst of Crisis.
ZOOM Link: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/89192823143>

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While we work on necessary upgrades, like the chimney liner for our boiler, we're simultaneously committed to answering God's call to discipleship, enhancing our existing ministries, and fostering relationships with community groups. We're also mindful of making our space physically accessible to meet diverse mobility needs.

As we navigate this journey together, we are devoted to safeguarding the sacredness of

our space. Our vision includes protecting the most cherished areas of our sanctuary, such as preserving historical monuments and implementing measures to respectfully limit access to the altar, font, organ, pulpit, and lectern.

In every step of our journey with Restoring Hope, the cornerstone is communication. We need to reach out and connect with all parish members, the diocese, and the wider community, which is why I'm sharing this message. I understand that some may

perceive us as relying solely on the collection plate, but I want to emphasize that we are genuinely committed to restoring hope.

I sincerely hope that St. Matthew's Cathedral continues its proud tradition as the mother church of our diocese, serving as a beacon of hope and worship for both the diocese and the city of Brandon. Each of you has a unique place in this community—whether you are part of the neighbourhood, have deep roots in this congregation, or belong to the

Diocese of Brandon. Remember, this church is yours too! If nothing else, I hope this message resonates as a reflection of the lessons we've learned together, the strength we find in prayer, and the hope we embrace in the resurrection of our Lord. We appreciate your support and engagement as we move forward together in faith and love.

PEACE I LEAVE WITH YOU; MY PEACE I GIVE TO YOU. I DO NOT GIVE TO YOU AS THE WORLD GIVES. DO NOT LET YOUR HEARTS BE TROUBLED, AND DO NOT LET THEM BE AFRAID. JOHN 14:27

DO NOT WORRY ABOUT ANYTHING, BUT IN EVERYTHING BY PRAYER AND SUPPLICATION WITH THANKSGIVING LET YOUR REQUESTS BE MADE KNOWN TO GOD. PHILIPPIANS 4:6

Pastoral Progressions

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.

Summer Camp Weeks:

Teen Camp:

July 4 to 10, 2025

Ages 13 - 18

Intermediate Camp:

July 12 to 18, 2025

Ages 10 - 12

Junior Camp:

July 20 to 26, 2025

Ages 8 - 10

AMC Camp contact is: Mackenzie Kukurudz, Camp Coordinator:

Camp@brandon.anglican.ca

204-730-7600

Important Camp Dates:

May 16, 2025

Early Bird Deadline

May 17, 2025:

Camp Clean Up Day

May 24, 2025:

Staff and Volunteer Orientation

May 29, 2025:

Blessing of the Wheels (Fundraiser)

The AMC Raffle is happening.

Contact Mackenzie Kukurudz



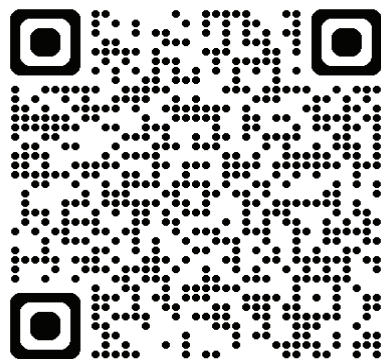
Anglican Memorial Camp Opportunities

Do you know a child, young person or teenager that might enjoy a week of making friends, swimming, and hanging out with nature? Then The Brandon Anglican Memorial Camp may be just for them.

Simply scan the QR code of the right and fill out the registration form and send it along with the registration fee to the Camp Coordinator, Mackenzie Kukurudz.

If you are interested in being Camp Volunteer, please contact the Camp Coordinator.

2025 Camp Registration QR Code:



Scan the above QR Code to register for the 2025 camp season.

