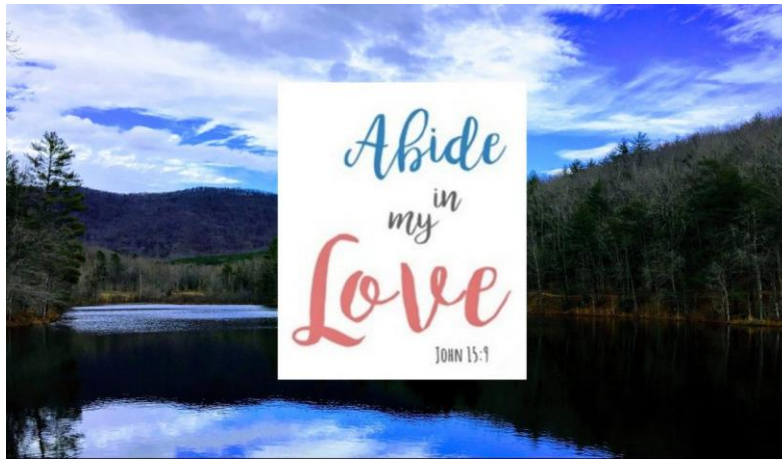


Algoma Clergy Conference 2022

Abide in my Love John 15.9



The Diocese of Algoma's bi-annual Clergy Conference takes place online on Thursday 19th May, 2022. The theme for this year's conference, "Abide in my love" is taken from Jesus' farewell discourse to his disciples and is found in Thursday's Gospel from John. There is such beautiful imagery in Jesus' parable of the Vine, a metaphor pointing to the communal and relational nature of our faith and to the living, growing community known as the church – that place of productivity and increase of which we are all a part.

In the eight verses prior to the one chosen for our conference theme, the word 'abide' appears eight times, suggesting that abiding in Christ, holding onto him, sticking with him, is a really important thing to do. In *The Message: The Bible in Contemporary Language*, Eugene H. Peterson uses the words, "Live in me. Make your home in me just as I do in you." In these tumultuous times the notion of finding the heart's true home in Jesus brings about a settled peace and calm.

I think that Jesus is saying much more to us than simply to rest or abide in his love, but is also calling us to bear fruit worthy of that love by keeping the commandments of Jesus and loving one another as he has loved us. The Christian life begins in love (vs. 9) and is carried out in love (vs. 12). The love command of Jesus is what keeps the church from being totally inward looking to being *for others* with God on our hearts.

During the last two years of the Covid-19 pandemic, we were called to love our neighbours by following all the protocols that were put in place to keep us safe. What does commanded love look like for us now as we emerge from covid time, reconnect as faith communities and begin the work of rebuilding our faith communities? All diocesan clergy and lay incumbents are invited to attend the clergy conference which will be a full day's program with prayer and worship, ongoing learning and formation, community building, and small group conversations as we seek to be faithful to our calling in Christ's church.

We are delighted to be welcoming our Primate Linda Nicholls who will preach at Morning Prayer and keynote speakers Fr. Michael Lapsley (Reconciliation) and Dean Peter Elliott (Stewardship). Scott Brubacher and Will Postma from the Anglican Foundation of Canada and PWRDF will be updating us on new developments in their respective organizations.

Here's a little bit about our keynote speakers. Fr. Michael Lapsley is a South African Anglican priest and social justice advocate. He was born in New Zealand but moved to South Africa as a student in 1973. Because of his political views he was exiled to Zimbabwe by the South African government in 1976 where he joined the African National Congress, serving as its chaplain for many years. In 1990, just three months after Nelson Mandela was released from prison, Fr. Michael received a letter bomb that was hidden inside the pages of a religious magazine. The force of the blast destroyed both his hands and blinded him in one eye. His injuries left him as helpless as an infant for months but, throughout this ordeal, he experienced the presence of God in a tangible way. Through the messages of love and support from around the world, Fr. Michael began to see the bombing as having a redemptive effect in his life – that good could come out of evil and that life would overcome death.

Out of his own experience, Fr. Michael started *The Forgiveness Project* which grew into The Institute for the Healing of Memories, an organization that works with individuals who have gone through a traumatic experience to find dignity, hope and purpose in their lives. Fr. Michael is also the author of *Redeeming the Past: My Journey from Freedom Fighter to Healer*.

Fr. Michael notes how we often reduce forgiveness to saying sorry without committing ourselves to the work of reparation and restitution. he will address questions about forgiveness, justice-seeking, healing, and reconciliation in the contexts of our personal relationships, the life of the church, and that of the wider society and world.



The Very Rev. Peter Elliott is a retired Anglican priest and the former Rector of Christ Church Cathedral, Vancouver and Dean of New Westminster (Vancouver), a ministry position he held for 24 years. Dean Peter believes that a Christian community is not about “building shrines” but about assembling people to do what they believe God is calling them to do in the world. While the people of God at Christ Church were figuring this out they also managed to raise over \$20 million to improve the building where they assembled for worship.

In his presentation on Thursday Dean Peter Elliott will engage the clergy in hopeful conversations about Stewardship in the post covid church. In a reflection on the Spirituality of Stewardship Dean Peter writes: “A stewardship spirituality reminds you daily that as we grow in our capacity to share we grow closer to the God who gives us each opportunities to be part of God’s creative work in the world.” (Contact Magazine 2016)



We give thanks for the willingness of all our guests to be with us this week and look forward to welcoming them and the diocesan clergy and lay incumbents to our conference day. May the richness of the presentations be the soil for us to grow and bear much fruit through our work in the coming months.

May the love of Christ be with you all,

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