

## *Algoma Anglican: February 2019*

Dear Algoma friends,

### **A Prayer for the Mission of the Church**

*Draw your Church together, O Lord, into one great company of disciples, together following our Lord Jesus Christ into every walk of life, together serving him in his mission to the world, and together witnessing to his love on every continent and island. We ask this in his name and for his sake. Amen (BAS. Pg. 676)*

### **Prayer before a meeting**

*God our Creator, when you speak there is light and life; when you act there is justice and love. Grant that your love may be present in our meeting so that what we do and what we say may be filled with your Holy Spirit. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

We are entering the season in the church year called 'Annual Vestry Meetings'. Many of them may begin with these or similar words of prayer, as those gathered attend to the business of the church and recommit to serving Jesus through the church's mission in the world. Having served in a parish for many years I know that hundreds of labour intensive hours are spent by clerical and lay leadership to prepare for these meetings. There are numerous reports to be written and collated, numbers to be crunched for budgets, offerings and statistics, and one on one visits with parishioners inviting them to accept the nomination for a position of leadership. The Annual Vestry Booklet, once completed, provides a wonderful record of the year just passed, an opportunity to give thanks for how God has been at work in your midst, and it also enables you to cast a vision for the coming year as you consider new avenues of mission and ministry.

It can be pretty discouraging when more than half the congregation slips away quickly after the service on the day of the Annual Vestry Meeting, hoping that no one will notice their absence from the meeting. I suspect that many people are of the opinion that the business of the church isn't for them or that they have nothing worthwhile to contribute, or simply aren't interested in another lengthy argument about a matter which seems relatively unimportant in the big scheme of things.

If you've never attended an Annual Vestry Meeting before, I want to encourage you accept the invitation to attend this year. There are a number of reasons why it's important for you to be there to participate in the councils of the church, and help make important decisions which ultimately affect all of us. We Anglicans do things in a particular way, and attending the Annual Vestry Meeting will help you understand why and how we do them. Don't be afraid to ask questions – there are no silly ones. We need your voice and your vote in matters that affect our lives in Christ.

Your input at an Annual Meeting could be something as simple as offering a vote of thanks for the missional way in which the congregation went about its ministry in the previous year, or encouraging the person next to you to give their views. It could be as challenging as weighing in on budget discussions and asking difficult questions about stewardship, or ensuring there is a budget line for youth ministry or outreach. It could be

as risky as calling someone out in a meeting for belittling another's views, or allowing your name to stand for a position that has been held by someone else for decades. Perhaps it is time for you to step aside from a position of leadership and trust that God will bring the right person for this time in the life of your congregation to serve in that role. Never question your right to be present at annual meetings and to offer your perspective and thoughts.

If you're wondering about whether you are eligible to vote at an Annual Meeting, here are the rules concerning that.

All persons shall be entitled to a seat and a vote when they:

*Are Baptized*

*Are full 16 years of age.*

*Are habitual attendees at divine worship (Christmas and Easter are the bare the minimum – we hope to see you every week!)*

*Have contributed in the year immediately prior to the working expenses of the church.*

As 2019 is a Synod year (8<sup>th</sup> -11<sup>th</sup> May 2019) and parishes will be electing Lay Delegates to Synod. Here are the qualifications:

1. (a) A Lay delegate shall be a person elected at the annual meeting or at any vestry meeting called for that purpose in the same year as a regularly scheduled synod, and who:

(i) has had the status of communicant at the time of the election; and

(ii) is at least 16 years old; (Amended 2011) and

(iii) does not hold the Bishop's licence as a deacon or priest. (Amended 1997) [formerly Article 3].

(b) All lay nominees, at the time of their nomination, shall signify their willingness to attend the Synod, if elected. No nomination shall be received without such signification. [formerly Article 6].

And remember that while we don't always agree on difficult matters in a church debate, there is a way to have a good conversation about it and even end it in good disagreement. The desired outcome of any tough conversation is that the congregation will not become polarised by it, but remain united in their love for Christ and for one another.

There is a wonderful little book by Abp. Rowan Williams and Joan Chittister, entitled, "Uncommon Gratitude: Alleluia for All there Is". Not only is there a chapter in it on 'Saints, Faith, and Peace' but also things we don't usually say *thanks or Alleluia* for like 'Conflict, Division, Differences and Sinners'. In the chapter on unity Williams defines it as a 'commitment to becoming one people who speak in a thousand different voices' He says that, 'enabling people to speak without fear and hesitation must become the cornerstone of discussion.' (pg. 103 - 104)

Wouldn't it be a beautiful thing if there was this degree of security in a church that everyone felt safe enough to speak their truth in love, and that it would be received by those listening. In his letter to the Ephesians, Paul writes about this kind of unity in the body of Christ. He calls the community to 'bear with *one another* in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.' (Eph. 4.1-3)

In his book, ONE: Unfolding God's Eternal Purpose from House to House, Henry Hon writes: "*There are about 56 incidences of the phrase 'one another' in the New Testament in relation to the members being in the body...This is the mutual giving and receiving in the body...Without every member of the body functioning, the body will be crippled or handicapped.*"

Your presence and participation are both needed at the Annual Vestry Meeting in your congregation – and that's the truth! Know that you will be in my prayers as you prepare for them, and know that the Synod office staff will be awaiting the returns by the end of February, 2019, unless you have called Jane Mesich, Marjorie Ingram or Liz Hamel to explain why this is not possible. We need the returns sent back in a timely manner as there is much work for us to do with the information in them, particularly as this is a synod year.

## **Lenten Resources for 2019**

A number of people have been emailing/calling the Synod office to enquire about Lenten Resources for 2019.

Ash Wednesday is on March 6<sup>th</sup>

Sunday of the Passion is on April 14<sup>th</sup>

Holy Thursday is on April 18<sup>th</sup>

Good Friday is on April 19<sup>th</sup>

Holy Saturday is on April 20<sup>th</sup>

Easter Day is on April 21<sup>st</sup>

1. ***Becoming The Story We Tell*** resources and links are on the diocesan website.
2. The Archbishop of Canterbury's Lenten book for 2019: "***Reconciliation***" by **Muthuraj Swamy**.

At present this book is only available in the United Kingdom in print through SPCK Publishing (Takes 1-2 months to come to Canada) but it can be downloaded electronically.

## **ABOUT:**

*Global in scope, but focusing right down on the role of ordinary people in conflict and violence, Reconciliation explores both the positives of multiculturalism and the challenges of accepting difference. This book issues a vibrant call to the church to maintain and strengthen relationships locally, amongst members, clergy and laity; to cross borders to build relationships between different denominations, and to maintain open attitudes towards our neighbors from other religions and ideologies.*

*Forty biblically-based meditations, with questions for reflection, are offered for use at weekly gatherings or for everyday devotion during Lent, on topics including impediments to reconciliation, risking the self, humility, and radical openness to the other.*

3. ***Dangerous Passions, Deadly Sins*** by: Dennis Okholm: Publisher: Brazos Press  
Print ISBN: 9781587433535, 1587433532 (Available at Amazon.ca)

## **ABOUT**

*This volume unpacks the psychological insights found in the writings of three early monks--Evagrius Ponticus (fourth century), John Cassian (fifth century), and Gregory the Great (sixth century)--to help us appreciate the relevance of these monastic writers and apply their wisdom to our own spiritual and psychological well-being. The book addresses each of the seven deadly sins, offering practical guidance from the early monastic tradition for overcoming these dangerous passions.*

*As Dennis Okholm introduces key monastic figures, literature, and thought of the early church, he relates early Christian writings to modern studies in psychology. He shows how ancient monks often anticipated the insights of contemporary psychology and sociology, exploring, for example, how their discussions of gluttony compare with current discussions regarding eating disorders. This book will appeal to readers interested in spirituality, early monastic resources, and ancient wisdom for human flourishing, as well as students of spirituality and spiritual formation.*

### *Contents*

1. *Getting Oriented*
2. *Gluttony*
3. *Lust*
4. *Greed*
5. *Anger*
6. *Envy*
7. *Sloth*
8. *Vainglory*

4. ***Liturgy Of The Ordinary*** by **Tish Harrison Warren** Paperback – Dec 1 2016  
(Available from Amazon.ca in paper and Kindle)  
This book won the Christian Books award for 2018 and came highly recommended to Archbishop Anne by Fawna Andrews.

## ABOUT:

*In the overlooked moments and routines of our day, we can become aware of God's presence in surprising ways. How do we embrace the sacred in the ordinary and the ordinary in the sacred? Framed around one ordinary day, this book explores daily life through the lens of liturgy, small practices, and habits that form us. Each chapter looks at something—making the bed, brushing her teeth, losing her keys—that the author does every day. Drawing from the diversity of her life as a campus minister, Anglican priest, friend, wife, and mother, Tish Harrison Warren opens up a practical theology of the everyday. Each activity is related to a spiritual practice as well as an aspect of our Sunday worship. Come and discover the holiness of your every day.*

5. **SSJE** – In 2018 many dioceses around the world used the resource “*Meeting Jesus in the Gospel of John*” which was created by SSJE and very well received. Their website offers a few suggestions for small groups to use over the Lenten period.



## **It's time to...**

### ***Stop, Pray, Work, Play & Love***

*So much of our stress and anxiety derives from our pollution of Time. God has given us the gift of time, and called it holy, yet we often experience time as a curse. Recapture time as a gift and discover how to experience the joy of the present moment.*

## **Monastic Wisdom**

### **for everyday living**

This six-week journey of reflection on time is now available as an anytime series for individuals and groups. Subscribe to receive the series' video meditations from the SSJE Brothers directly in your inbox, or scroll down and view the videos below. This video offering is accompanied by a helpful workbook, as well as facilitation guidance for small groups from the **Center for the Ministry of Teaching at Virginia Theological Seminary**.

**If you are planning on using *It's Time To...* in Lent 2019, we recommend starting on Sunday, March 3.**

To receive this offering in your inbox, as a daily email for six weeks, add the date you would like to begin. (We recommend that you start on a Sunday to maintain the weekly sequence). If you are going to follow this series as a group, we suggest that everyone coordinate the same start date to receive the videos in sync.

Whether you feel a sense of having too little time for all the demands of life, or whether you feel lonely amidst too much time, God is calling you to connection. God wants us to use our time not just wisely, but sacredly, in order to thrive. No matter what stage of life we are in, God's invitation is that we be intentional in how we use our time in order to discover the abundance of life God desires for each of us.

Over the next five weeks, we invite you to join us in reflecting on our use of time, focusing especially on how we might take time to stop, pray, work, play and love. Together we will ponder our use of time, asking God to help us weave together the various threads of our lives into a beautiful tapestry in which each part of our life informs and complements the others, and enlivens the whole.

Facilitator's Guides and other additional supporting materials are available online.

## **Theological Reflection**

### **Time**

#### *Redeeming the Gift*

*Br. Geoffrey Tristram proposes that much of our stress and anxiety derives from our pollution of Time. Ordering our relationship to Time can help us to experience the joy of the present moment.*

[Read more >](#)

### **Workbook**

A 16 page easily printable workbook with reflections and space for daily questions.

[Download here >](#)

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## **Facilitator Guidance**

In partnership with SSJE, the **Center for the Ministry of Teaching** at Virginia Theological Seminary has created resources to help your community get small groups going.

[See full support resources here >](#)

### **Sermons on Time:**

[Time to Stop – Br. David Vryhof](#)

[Time to Pray – Br. Mark Brown](#)

[Time to Work – Br. Geoffrey Tristram](#)

[Time to Play – Br. Curtis Almquist](#)

[Time to Love – Br. Luke Ditewig](#)

Resources for Facilitators