ST. AUGUSTINE'S ANGLICAN CHURCH



The Hippo Herald

WINTER 2021

LETHBRIDGE, ALBERTA

Advent points out our need for a saviour

BY TIM POPE

Advent is not just about an event, extraordinary as that event might be. It is also a story - about Paradise lost and Paradise regained. It begins with a glimpse of that which was lost, goes on with a chronicle of the devastating effects of that loss, before beginning the much longer story of a redemption that culminates in the events of Bethlehem. As Brother lason in his course on Revelation has pointed out over the past weeks, both the loss and the redemption have a cosmic dimension that we need to know of to fully understand the story. But most of the Bible tells the story from the vantage point of earth, anchoring the story in a world we know and recognize as our own.

Advent brings us Christ-



mas carols – songs that say worshipful and comforting things about the coming of Jesus that are no less true for being comforting. It is right to pray to God to "fit us for heaven, to be with thee there;" and to celebrate our hope of eternal life as we sing: "And He leads his children on, To the place where he has

gone." From other seasons of the liturgical year, however, we know that our faith is about much more than going to heaven when we die. "Hark the herald angels sing" explores the birth of Jesus in terms of his death and touches on theological themes that we ponder in Lent and at Easter: "Born that man no more may die, Born to raise the sons of earth, Born to give them second birth." But this is typically as far as carols go. They don't peer into the depths of human mortality and estrangement from God, nor do they explore redemption in any detail. It is left to the traditional Christmas

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"The ordination of not one, but two priests from our own parish is both unusual and beautiful.

One parishioner described it as 'an embarrassment of riches.""

From the Rector's Desk

I love a good ordination service! At the time of writing, we are just days away from the ordination of Dr. Gillian Breckenridge and Br. Jason Carroll to the Priesthood.

There is much anticipation for this joyful occasion which has been years in the making. The process of discernment in the Anglican Church of Canada is both thorough and rigorous but it is also supportive and prayerful. I

am grateful that these two wonderful candidates will be (or, by the time this is read, have been) presented to the bishop for the office of priest in the Church of God.

At an ordination service, solemn vows are made. Vows to make the love of Christ known in word and sacrament, to diligently study the scriptures, to build up the family of God through good pastoral practice, to live in a manner consistent with the teachings of Christ, and to pray regularly, both privately and publicly. Of course, we keep these vows only by the strength of the Holy Spirit, all of them being beyond our natural ability.

The ordination of not one, but two priests from our own parish is both unusual and beautiful. One parishioner described it as "an embarrassment of riches." We are grateful for both Gillian and Jason, their substantial gifts, and their commitment to use them for God.

As joyful and meaningful as ordination is, there is a danger that some may see ministry as the exclusive responsibility of the clergy. This problem has cropped up on numerous occasions throughout the long history of the Christian Church. Nothing

could be further from the truth!

Back on September 12 of this year we had another special service, this one a service of

baptism. At that service solemn vows were also made. Vows to continue in the apostle's teaching, fellowship and prayer, vows to proclaim by word and example the good news of Christ, to serve Christ by serving others, to strive

for peace and justice and safeguard the integrity of God's creation. These are also vows of ministry! Every baptized Christian is a minister by virtue of their baptismal vows.

God has ordained that clergy and laity working together, hand in hand, will bring about the good fruit of the kingdom of God. Ephesians 4:11-13 says: "It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be build up until we all reach unity in the faith ... and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ."

I so appreciate the strong foundation of shared ministry that has been laid at St. Augustine's. It is my hope and earnest prayer that we will all be found using our gifts and leaning into our baptismal calling. Hopefully, in the New Year, restrictions can be safely eased allowing us all, laity and clergy, to further join hands and hearts in ministry together.

Thanks be to God!

Your Rector,
Steve

Caring Ministry reveals resilience and faith

BY PAM MUNDELL AND SHARON DUECK

Recently, the Reverend Gillian eloquently reminded us of the rich heritage we have in the saints past and present as we honored All Saints Day in November. She encouraged us to remember those who had been great examples and modeled our faith and those people within our church family who have loved, supported and prayed for us.

A component of the Caring Ministry has provided rich opportunity to stay in contact with many of those "faith warriors" who have moved into assisted living environments. Historically, St. Augustine's has had a strong core of committed "visitors" who made time for personal connection through visits, telephone or mail contact. Our priests held scheduled monthly services including the Eucharist at many of the care facilities. The impacts of Covid restrictions were felt by all but perhaps most keenly by those in care as their world became so isolated. Our opportunity became finding those who had no access to online services and

parish updates and providing them with awareness they were remembered through regular communication. Monthly letters of encouragement, copies of the Hippo Herald, and seasonal tokens were dropped off at care facilities and on the doorsteps if we were able. Through an orchestrated telephone line of volunteers we were able to regularly maintain contact and we

heard voices that carried fear and loneliness, but rarely despair. Instead of feeling we were being supportive, we came away feeling blessed as we heard the stories of resilience and faith. Many echoed the words of J. R. Tolkien, "I wish it need not have happened in my time", said Frodo, "so do I" said Gandalf, "and so do all who live to see such times. But that is not for them to decide. All we have to decide is what to do

with the time that is given".

We also heard stories of the strong silent network of parish members who routinely called to chat, provide updates and offer prayer support.

As we move into more hopeful times of fewer restrictions, the plan is to resume monthly facility services and visits with adherence to AHS and facility guidelines.

We are very thankful for our small core of visitors who have maintained contact over the past year. However, we have realized this past year there are many who have been missed and would cherish a personal contact or visitor. If you feel this is an area of interest please leave your

name with the church office and we will be in contact with you. We provide training and scheduled support meetings throughout the year. We encourage family members of those moving to assisted living environments or hospitalization, to keep the church office informed of changes so contact may be maintained. Looking forward to hearing from you. Ω



Financial Update

BY CATHY GILLESPIE, TREASURER

Stewardship 2022

As you will have read in the stewardship letter recently sent to parishioners, using our treasures by giving to the church is an important aspect of stewardship, "a way of saying thanks to God for all His gifts to us". If you have not already done so, please consider how much of your financial resources

overall position so far this year. However, if total parishioner givings continues to decline and the amount is less than budget in future years, there will be challenges in maintaining church operations at the level they were prior to the pandemic. $\boldsymbol{\Omega}$

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1	Year to-date (October 31 2021)		Last year to-date (October 31 2020)		2021 Budget	
Parishioner givings Other income Federal wage subsidy Total income	\$	324,049 6,804 <u>18,481</u> <u>349,334</u>	\$	329,006 6,704 <u>32,314</u> <u>368,024</u>	\$	459,100 34,000 0 493,100
Staffing expenses Administration & apportionment Facility expenses Christian education & outreach Total expenses	\$	239,721 87,756 44,171 10,458 382,106	\$	247,962 88,219 44,296 8,600 389,077	\$	308,300 114,400 65,000 20,400 508,100
Net deficit	\$	(32,772)	\$	(21,053)	\$	(15,000)

you intend to give in the year 2022, and complete and return the Stewardship 2022 form at your earliest convenience. The annual stewardship campaign, in addition to prompting us as parishioners to consider and plan for our annual giving, benefits us collectively by providing key information for preparing the next year's operating budget. Thank you for participating in this process!

Operating Fund Update

As we approach the end of the accounting year, income and expenses trends within the operating fund remain consistent with how they have been since early this year. The total of parishioner givings (offerings) up to the end of October is slightly less than it was at the same time last year, and significantly less than the budget target for these ten months. On the plus side, we have received additional funds from the federal wage subsidy (CEWS) program which has helped reduce the income shortfall. Operating expenses remain under budget but are trending toward budgeted levels as the church continues to move toward normal operations.

Considering that income and expenses are both under budget, the operating fund remains in a relatively good



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"God created and called our children for this exact moment they're in. Their strengths and temperaments are there by design, not by

Children's ministry is back

BY WENDY DOHERTY,
CHILDREN & FAMILY MINISTRIES

I have been hearing a lot of chatter lately on social media and in conversation, about adults feeling so sorry for the world our children are returning to post quarantine. I have to say, my perspective is quite different. I see the amazing children in our church family and the wider community rising to the challenges raised by Covid, with patience, resilience, and determination - exactly as God created them to. The current state of our world is no surprise to God. Covid didn't catch Him unaware, as it did us. Every person in all of history has been placed in the time that they were in because of God's sovereign plan and "Covid Times" are no exception.

God created and called our children for this exact moment they're in. Their strengths and temperaments are there by design, not by accident. Let us remind them that they walk in power, as children of God. Let us teach them to walk in faith, knowing that God is in control and has equipped them well. Let us empower them to know that they can change the world.

God knew Noah was equipped to deal with the flood. He knew Daniel could tackle the lion's den. He knew Esther could deal with Haman and He knew David could overcome Goliath. God knew what our children would be facing today

Finn O is back and excited to learn about Jesus with his Sunday School friends.

and placed them right here, right now, to be the Noahs, Daniels, Esthers and Davids of our time. What a powerful mes-

> sage for us to impart to them! They are all part of God's army and play an important role in being the light in what feels like such darkness.

> What an honour it is to be our children's minister in this time. I

look forward to welcoming the children of St. Augustine's back to Sunday School, as people feel comfortable. We are taking precautions and being mindful to ensure everyone stays safe. However, that is not dampening our excitement as we reunite and move forward, together, in faith and love. Ω





covid wars The Return of the CHOIR

BY JOANNE COLLIER, MUSIC DIRECTOR

It was a joyous moment when I hit the "send" button conveying a message to our senior choir members that we could final-

ly resume after such a long absence. There were lots of smiles on Thursday, November 4 when we assembled at the church for our first practice in over 19 months. It was almost

strange to be in the same room with each other yet all the same, it fit like a comfortable glove. After some maneuvering, we got ourselves settled into our physically distanced places and soon were singing through our masks and up to the rafters. It was glorious!

The significance of this can't be ignored, especially for those of us who have sung in choirs most of our lives and for whom singing is an expression of our love for God and each other. I was compelled to ask the choir two questions: "How does it feel to be back singing with the choir and what does it mean to you to be a choir member at St. Augustine's?" and "What did you miss most about not singing with the choir during the pandemic?" This is what some had to say:

How does it feel to be back...?

"It's wonderful! It never ceases to amaze me how powerful one voice can feel when ioined with others!"

"It's great to be back singing in the choir

"Being together again is a joy. Love making harmony."

again. I love being part of the worship service with some wonderful people."

"To be singing in church again feels right and makes me feel whole as we raise our voices to God in Unity. Singing is my way to praise and express my feelings and love for God, I missed as a choir the opportunity to raise our voices to Glorify God and

to be with my church family." - Greg Young

"Nice to be able to get back to choir (even though we have to wear a mask). When the church service went on "livestream" I cried every time the first hymn and the last hymns were sung. I imaged the choir walking this far first verse, then so-on until we go to our choir places. Words can't express the many thanks for the Sundays that you, Karen, Mary Lee and the other musicians that came out so that there was music on Sundays. That's dedication. God Bless you and your team for all the fine work you did." – Mary Insley

"It was isolating being away from choir although I did enjoy the music by the 'talented singers.' When normal times resume it will be great to be part of choir in the pews! I have been part of St. Augustine's Church since 1955 and for the most part, a choir member (junior and senior choir) — apart from going away to university and being a Sunday School teacher when my kids were small. Understanding the government regulations regarding the pandemic — no church! Watching services online — we should be there! I know

Glorious!

missed most was...

The thing I

"Hanging out and making music with some truly wonderful people."

"The people."

"I missed my choir family and working corporately with friends to create music that helps people worship and find God."

that hymn or we've sung that anthem! When the 'music people' initially wore choir gowns – we should be there! It made me feel sad. As time went on, I adjusted. I could watch online and have a cup of coffee! The 'music people' wearing black with the colorful stoles – I felt better. I would sing along. Because I didn't have to go out at night



Return to choir practice on November 4

(activities being on hold), to return to practice — things were different. Wearing masks while speaking made hearing difficult. I thought maybe I should have waited longer before returning. Wondering about how the Sunday service would be, I was a bit hesitant. The service went better than I expected. Friends in the choir and church community are important. Music has always been a part of my life. Singing familiar pieces and learning ones is what I enjoy." — Phyllis Cameron

"Our Church choir has been a blessing in my life for over 40 years. Singing with my choral sisters brothers and sisters on Thursdays and Sundays again has restored an important element of worship to me. It's great to be back." – Len Robinson



"For me these past 20 months have been a real sense of loss. Although I attended assisted in services and watched the livestreams worship wasn't the same as before Covid. Thanks be to God the choir has returned. The sense of one massive voice united in worship. The camaraderie of the members and sound resonating throughout the church. All this bringing on a feeling of normal. Thank you to you all." – Michael Larsen

"It is, indeed, wonderful to be back singing with the choir. I have sung in church choirs since I was six years old and have been deeply blessed over the years by the camaraderie and shared creativity of choral singing. I have particularly loved singing with the St. Augustine's choir. In our beloved parish choir there is a deep understanding that our music is offered to the glory of God and the building up of the faith of the worshipping community. Singing in our parish choir is also a wonderful way of entering into the church's year as the music we sing has been carefully chosen to reflect the seasons, festivals and appointed scriptures. We are also very blessed by the skilled and deeply committed leadership of Joanne and Mary Lee. During the pandemic I have very much missed singing in the choir. One of the things I have missed the most is having beautiful, God honouring music running through my head much of the time! I am excited to be back in the choir. Any tenors out there - come and join me and the rest of the choir on Thursday evenings and Sunday mornings! You'll be glad you did. – The Rev. James Robinson. Ω



On the road with Brother Jason

It's been two months since Brother Jason Carroll left the staff of St. Augustine's. He is dearly missed but has by no means disappeared. In fact, he is popping up everywhere.

"I want to be where the people are," says Jason, full-time Ministry Develop-

er with the Anglican Diocese of Calgary. "But these days, most of my interactions with parishes around the Diocese has been by Zoom."



That will change as our society learns to live with Covid and restrictions on gatherings begin to relax. And when it does, Jason will be putting the miles on his wheels. He says the Diocese is huge geographically, from Calgary to Lethbridge, Banff to Oyen, with dozens of communities in between.

"It would take me five hours plus to drive from one side to the other."

Recently ordained as a Priest, Jason says his new vocation comes at the right time. Many smaller pastoral charges don't have clergy, so now when he visits, he is able to fulfill all sacramental duties.

"The way I build relationships with them is that when I come, I say 'Can I offer you communion because you haven't had it in two months, or you haven't had the opportunity to have reserve sacrament consecrated? Can I do that for you while I'm here?"

But he is quick to point out that the model of the priest doing everything is changing, and it must change because of evolving demographic patterns. This is the focus of his work; to help parishes develop their own ministry and leadership capacity.

"With the right training almost anybody can preach or lead reserve sacrament," says Jason. "There are all kinds of ways we can engage the world without looking at the old model of a parish with a priest."

Jason says a "culture shift has been floating around our churches" for many years, in part dealing with the reality that church attendance is declining. On the other hand, there are exciting opportunities for a more lay-led church.

"It's not that clergy aren't important, but the biblical model sees everyone

"The culture shift
we want to see is
that we are not
passive in the pews,
and we should be
thinking how can
we share with
everyone."



granted gifts by the Holy Spirit," he says. "The culture shift we want to see is that we are not passive in the pews, and we should be thinking how can we share with everyone."

This is good news for clergy who might struggle to do all that is required to lead a parish singlehandedly. Even more good news lies in the fact that examples of effective lay-led ministry abound throughout the Diocese, including St. Augustine's Caring Ministry and Steven Ministry.

For now, Lethbridge remains headquarters for Jason, who shares his home with his daughter Kian and their dog Koda. And fortunately for St. Augustine's he keeps popping up – like he did via Zoom for the Revelation of St. John course this fall – or popping in to be inducted as a Priest on November 21. God willing, Brother Jason will remain close to our parish. Ω

Up on the rooftop

BY GREG YOUNG

Recently footsteps were heard on the roof of the Church. To everyone's amazement, Michael Larsen, Len Robinson and I were caught putting up lights preparing for Advent and Christmas. Christmas is the story of the light coming into the world as Jesus said "I am the light of the world."

May these lights be a reminder to all who see them of God's light coming to all people.

Jesus's light reveals the way to salvation. His light is to bring us out of sin and death into his kingdom of light. We his people need to point to the true light

not just at Christmas but throughout the year to give light in the dark world and guide our feet on the path of peace.

Advent began on November 28 when the lights came on. Each candle has a meaning. Week one the candle represents Hope, as it is called the **Prophet's Candle** reminding us of Isaiah waiting in hope for the Messiah's arrival. The second candle rep-

resents Faith and is called the **Bethlehem Candle**. Micah foretold the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem the same as King David. The third candle represents Joy and is called the **Shepherd's Candle**. Shepherds rejoiced when the angels announced that Jesus came from ordi-

nary people like them. The fourth candle represents Peace and is called the **Angels' Candle**. Angels announced that Jesus came to Jesus came to bring peace and people close to God. The fifth candle represents Light and Purity and is the **Christ Candle**. This candle is white to represent pure light and victory. May the lights remind not

only us but our community of the true light come into this world.

We are God's light in the world so let us reflect his love to those around us. In a world where people cope with

the stresses of the season and all the worries of the coronavirus, let us be Christ to others so that our light may shine so others may see God's love through us. Put on the fruit of the spirit and show your joy, kindness, gentleness, self control, patience, generosity, faithfulness and peace so this season the true light of Christ will shine in this dark world. Ω

Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you. Isaiah 60:1



Ordination a powerful experience

BY THE REV. DR. GILLIAN BRECKENRIDGE

About 30 minutes before the ordination service started on November 21,

Jason and I were downstairs with Archbishop Greg,

Archdeacon Pilar, Reverend Steve, and our sponsors and visiting clergy. We were going through the steps of the service, making sure we all

knew our cues and where we would be standing and speaking from at this socially distanced service. Looking

through the bulletin, we reached the litany, above which is written in small print, "all kneel or sit." And Archbishop Greg looked at Jason and I and said, "how do

you feel about prostrating?" In all the preparation that we had done for the service, this wasn't something that had crossed my mind. Jason and I looked at one another and then at Greg, and we both said, "yes, let's do it."

So, standing at the bottom of the steps to the chancel, after we had made our vows, we slowly lay down, face down on the floor, before the Archbishop, before the high altar, and in the presence of all those who presented us, all those who prayed for us, all those who supported us: in the

presence of our church family. We lay face down, putting ourselves and our calling; all our hopes and wishes for our or-

dination; and all our human imperfections and limitations at the mercy of God. And there we stayed, for the litany, and for the singing of the hymn, "Come, Holy Ghost."

The service of ordination is full of beautiful and important words, music, and prayer, but I have found that it is this part of the service that has remained with me throughout the days that have followed the ordination. I think of it every time I drive into my parking spot behind the church, every time I walk into my office in the morning, and every time I walk into the sanctuary.

I find myself in a calling, and in daily work, which allows me to spend my time serving God and serving this parish. What an honour and what a joy. This is not easy work and I have much to learn. It's going to take time, and I am grateful to all of you for all the kindness and grace that you have already extended to me as I learn the ropes of this new role in this beloved community. I am so grateful to everyone that put so much time and love into making the service so beautiful and such a precious memory for me. If I haven't found you to say thank you to you yet - thank you. And I also want to say thanks to all of you who have sent me cards or given me words of encouragement as I get settled in at St. Augustine's. Please know that I consider it my great

CONTINUED PAGE 12 >





Tim Pope, continued from page 1

readings from Scripture to take us back to the beginning and recount how humans, created in God's image to walk with God, caring for His creation as faithful stewards, fell from the bliss of that intimacy and exchanged worship of their Creator for idolatry of created things.

These Genesis readings focus strongly on the creat-

ed universe, on earth as a fit habitat for humans, and on the relationship of humans not only to God but also to each other and to the environment in which they are to flourish. It is in this context that a warning is given: If you eat of the forbidden fruit, you will surely die. I find it easy to miss the direness of that warning. Death,

hard as it is to deal with, seems built into the universe, from the death of stars down to the death and regeneration of all organic life. It is hard to imagine things being any different. We are familiar with our mortality and for many it is not so hard to take. Why, Genesis even portrays death for some humans as not coming until after almost 1000 years of life. And for us, the carols remind us that death has been overcome and heaven awaits.

So how should we understand God's warning that the wages of disobedience will surely be death? Perhaps the point is that when you become estranged from the One whose image you bear, when you leave God's side and hide from him as humans did in the Garden, then you will no longer enjoy His protective presence, and you will be exposed to forces that will eventually destroy you. These forces are everywhere in the universe God has created as a home for his creatures. Today our world anxiously monitors the possibility of disasters that would erase for ever all echoes of the Garden of Eden: not

just the deliberate or accidental use of doomsday weapons but natural disasters like pandemics, asteroid strikes, thermal runaway of the atmosphere with its attendant cyclones, flooding of coastlands, incineration of the forests, and decimation of the richness of animal species. There is so much to be protected from. In the first Narnia Chronicle, Lucy asks Mrs. Beaver if the lion, Aslan, is safe. Of course he's not, Mrs.

safe. Of course he's not, Mrs. Beaver replies. But he's good. Genesis celebrates the goodness of all that God creates. But it never pretends that creation is safe. The waters under the firmament and those above the firmament have the potential between them to wipe out large populations, as the Bible records and as the Boxing Day tsunami of 2004 demonstrated in



Expulsion from the Garden of Eden by Thomas Cole

our lifetime. Perhaps we are exposed to these forces because we removed ourselves from the protecting presence of God. On planet Earth our life is balanced delicately on a knife-edge of unbelievable richness and abundance — but on one side there is the vanishingly small probability of laws of physics that even allow us to be here at all, and on the other the mystery of our possessing enough knowledge to be able to destroy ourselves forever. So miraculous is our existence in this universe that it was surely always inconceivable without God's special and loving protection. Spurn that protection, however, by becoming idolatrous image-bearers and self-seeking stewards, and Death is the inevitable consequence — one that is applied by the very earth we inhabit.

When Advent asks us to pause and think about why our Saviour came in human form to save us, I believe doing so can, without taking away from the joy of this season, make us sadder and wiser, and able to sing those carols about following Jesus to heaven with a more humble, grateful and fervent heart. May it be so. Ω

Rev. Gillian, continued from page 10

honour to be serving you in this role and that I look forward to getting to know you all better over the months and years to come.

We are in interesting times. We are slowly emerging – one step at a time – from a time when we have had to be physically separated from one another. This was how we were called to love one another over the past year and a half – and we rose to this challenge – doing what we needed to do to keep the members of our beloved church family safe. This has been trying, and scary; it has been lonely and sad; and it has gone on for a really long time. It is going to take time to rebuild our community together again – to rebuild that sense of closeness and that joy in one another's presence. But I know us. And I know that if ever there was

a church ready to rise to the challenge to come together again – not rushed, and with the right measure of care and patience – it is this St. Augustine's family.

Robert and I joined this church four and a half years ago because of the incredibly warm and authentic welcome we received after church at coffee hour. As I think about my hopes for the coming year at St. Augustine's, this is the image I have in my mind: when we are ready and when it's safe, to be together again, sharing coffee, and tea bread, and finding joy once again in each other's company around a plastic fold-up table, surrounded by the noise of children playing and the low hum of talk about everything and nothing. These days are coming back to us, all in God's time, and I can't wait to spend them with you again. Ω





On page four of this newsletter you will see a picture of an angel. It is actually a bronze angel and it is located in plain sight somewhere in our church. If you attend St. Augustine's in person or watch the livestream services on a regular basis, it is possible that you see that angel every week. Do you know where it lives?

ANSWER CAN BE FOUND ON ONE OF THESE PAGES

St. Augustine's Church

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The Hippo Herald is published quarterly by St. Augustine's Anglican Church, Lethbridge.

St. Augustine's is a warm and growing Christian community. We are part of the worldwide Anglican Church, although many of us come from a variety of Christian backgrounds or none. We are located near the centre of Lethbridge, Alberta but our congregation is spread all over the city and region. Wherever you are on your spiritual journey, you are welcome to join our church family as we learn to follow Jesus.