

The Epistle

The Cathedral Church of St. James • Diocese of Athabasca

JUNE 2015
Peace River, AB.



~The Dean's Corner—The Very Rev. Dr. Iain Luke~

As we turn the corner from spring into summer, it is wonderful to see the valley full of green, the trees brilliant with blossoms, and all the other signs of new growth. As so often happens, the natural world reflects what is going on in our lives - this season holds many opportunities for new stages of growth in our parish, our community and our diocese. The celebration of Pentecost on May 24 reminds us that the growth we see in the world, and in ourselves, is all the work of God's creative Spirit. The promise of new life we welcomed at Easter is coming true - it's not over, it's just beginning!

Several events are coming up in June that we want everyone to be aware of. Please come and support our Confirmation candidates Irene Goddard, Finn Marceau, Sasha Marceau and Izzy Shewchuk on June 7 at our 10:30 service. They have been preparing for this day for several months, and are ready to welcome the new paths of service and ministry which God is opening up for them, as they live out their faith. On the same day, we are also going to recognize two high school grads, Allyson Shewchuk and Rebecca Connellan, who are part of our parish family and will now be going on to a new phase of life and learning. The next Sunday, June 14, will be our Sunday School wind-up and parish picnic. Each year, the Sunday School students are the most visible signs in our midst of how we grow, not just in stature but in the knowledge and love of God. Our faith family is a vital part of that growing, for young and old alike. Please come to enjoy the time together, and celebrate what God is doing.

In the life of our parish, an important moment of new growth will be the re-dedication of the lower hall after all the flood repairs and renovations. We are waiting on the last few finishing touches before we announce a date for an official opening, but our user

groups are already moving back into the space and we were able to host the diocesan ACW conference there at the end of April. Keep an eye out for an announcement for a dedication celebration - and put on your thinking caps, because the new space will give us new opportunities to serve God's mission. The new kitchen, in particular, has already made it possible to bring groups in to prepare food together.

Beyond our own parish, we are a part of new growth unfolding in a couple of specific ways this month. See elsewhere in this newsletter for information on "22 Days", an Anglican initiative to move ahead with reconciliation and a new future with aboriginal people in our communities and our country. Even further afield, Bishop Fraser has spent the last couple of weeks in our partner diocese of Ibba, South Sudan. His visit there will open up new possibilities for our parish, and perhaps smaller groups and individuals, to establish connections with the diocese of Ibba and its members. A relationship like this can be a great opportunity for us to grow in faith, as we discover what our faith looks like when seen through the eyes of others, and lived out in very different circumstances.

I am sure that in your own life, and your own faith journey, God is opening the door to new growth. I encourage you to look for those opportunities and to embrace them - and also, to find ways to share them with your friends and fellow disciples in St James'. We grow together by encouraging one another. May your summer, at work and at play, in fun and in faith, be filled with God's promises of new life in Christ, and growth in the Holy Spirit.

Blessings

Iain +

#22Days

WHAT IS #22Days?

Over the last five years, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission has been working to share the truth about the Indian Residential Schools system, by holding events where former students, staff, and sponsors (churches and government) can gather in a public forum. The emphasis has been on hearing the stories of survivors - people who lived through the system, who want to tell what they experienced. The commission is one element of the IRS Settlement Agreement - a key element which allows the truth to become part of Canada's history.

One Anglican bishop says that the process has helped him to see that the schools were not "a good system with some bad people in it", but "a bad system with some good people in it". Much harm was done in taking children from their parents, their homes, their languages and cultures - even while some students received a good education, and some staff dedicated their lives to their students. Many students were abused in specific ways which were encouraged, or at least not prevented, by the IRS system.

Making the truth public, has helped survivors move on, and helped Canadian society (including our church) to take responsibility for the wrongs that were done. But the work of reconciliation is not over, and there is still a future to be built together.

As the TRC concludes its mandate with a final event in Ottawa May 31st, our church is asking what the next steps will be. The "22 Days" from May 31st to June 21st - the national aboriginal Day of Prayer - are being designated as a time to reflect on and pray about what the future holds.

Please sign up at 22days.ca to receive daily emails during this period. Use the time to think and pray about what you can do, to build better relationships between First Nations and other cultures in our community.

In solidarity with other Anglican cathedrals across Canada, St James' will be ringing the church bell daily during this period. The bell-ringing is dedicated to the 1122 missing and murdered aboriginal women who have been identified - gone, but not forgotten by their families and friends. This is one significant aspect of the work that still needs to be done. **Volunteers are welcome** to ring the bell 51 times, at 12:30pm each day from May 31 to June 21. Contact the church office, or add your name to the list at the back of the church, if you wish to participate.

We are also hoping to start new conversations in and around Peace River, to identify how far we have come in recognizing our history and addressing its problems, as well as the challenges we still face in letting God's justice, and love of neighbour, govern our relationships with each other, right here where we live. If you see something that the church could do, or that you could do with the church's support, please share it with a member of vestry!



Financial & Renovation Update



The lower hall flood renovations, coming hard on the heels of 2013's roof project, have tested our congregation in many ways. As the hall goes back into operation this month, we celebrate the contribution of parish leaders who managed the project, contractors who did much of the work, volunteers who gave a lot of time and energy, and financial supporters in our parish and the wider community.

The major payment of funds from our insurance settlement only arrived in the past week. So we particularly want to thank our treasurer, Stacie Cambridge, for keeping a watchful eye on the parish accounts, during a time when a lot more money was going out than was coming in! The insurance payout leaves us in the position of being able to pay all the contractors, with a

small cushion left over, in keeping with the plan approved by our 2015 annual meeting.

As of May 18, we received over \$20,000 in new contributions to the building fund during 2015. We thank God for this gift of ongoing generosity, and persistence in giving, and we appreciate the way in which people are responding to the challenge. We would not have been able to achieve all that we have done without your participation. We have been able to protect and enhance the heritage passed on to us, and to expand the part the cathedral buildings can play in communicating the Good News in our community.

Because we have also invested funds accumulated from previous years in these projects, we are now in the position of making a "fresh start" financially. In particular during the summer months, we want to make sure money is available to cover the completion of our building plans, as well as regular operating costs.

If you are not already using PAR

(Pre-Authorized Remittance) for your regular giving, please consider this method, which can make giving simpler both for you and for the parish. Forms are available from the parish office, which will enable your monthly contribution to be sent automatically from your bank account. Some PAR donors use a card, available at the greeters table, to place in the offering plate on Sunday, as away to express their dedication of their gift to God's service in our parish life.

You are also welcome to continue using the envelope system for giving. In that case, please consider using post-dated cheques to keep up your regular contributions to St James' during any extended absence, especially over the summer holidays.

Thank you to all our members for your commitment to the parish through your presence, prayers, leadership, service, giving and participation.

Yours faithfully—
Iain, Sue & Dale
(Dean & Wardens)

2015 ACW Conference

32 ladies from across the Diocese met on the last weekend of April for the annual ACW (Anglican Church Women) conference. Sister Louise from Peace River spoke on "Seasons of Our Spiritual Life". She guided us through wonderful Bible passages and provided time for reflection and prayer on our own personal seasons. This was the first major event to be held back in the hall at St. James since the flood last year. *A big thank you* needs to go out to the Wardens, the Building Committee and many, many volunteers who worked tirelessly to get the place in shape for this gathering. We are truly blessed to have such a wonderful family of support!

The Cathedral Church of St. James Diocese of Athabasca

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Office hours: Tues-Thurs; 1:30-4:30pm

We are proud that our mission is to welcome, accept, and encourage all people in the name of Christ.

Fundraiser

St. James' will be cooking burgers as a fundraiser on Saturday, June 6. Swing by Co-op during lunch and support our fundraising!



Opportunity to serve!

St. James collects items for the food bank throughout the month to be delivered after the third Sunday of the month.

***The food bank is in need of:**

- beans/baked beans
- peanut butter
- canned fruit/apple sauce
- canned meat
- cereal
- pasta/rice
- cookies



Looking for volunteers to help out with **The Medieval Fair** on Saturday, June 13 at St. James', as a fundraiser to help raise money for the Lower-Hall. If you have any questions, please speak to Wanda Laurin or the Cathedral Arts Council (CAC).



Confirmation service

Please come and support our Confirmation candidates **Irene Goddard, Finn & Sasha Marceau, and Izzy Shewchuk** on June 7th, 10:30 a.m. service!



Graduation recognition

We will also recognize two high school grads, **Allyson Shewchuk** and **Rebecca Connellan** as they embark on a new chapter of their lives.



Sunday School wind-up & Parish picnic will be on Sunday, June 14.



***SUMMER CLOSURE**—The St. James office will be closed for the summer starting Friday, June 26, and will open on Tuesday, August 25.