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RLN exists to explore issues at the intersections of faith and life. In doing so we solicit and publish a range of opinions, not all of which reflect the official positions of the Diocese. We acknowledge that we meet and work in Treaty 1, 2, and 3 Land, the traditional land of the Anishinaabe, Cree, and Dakota people and the homeland of the Metis Nation. We are grateful for their stewardship of this land and their hospitality which allows us to live, work, and serve God the Creator here.

RLN welcomes story ideas, news items, and other input. If you want to be involved in this media ministry, please [email the editor](#).

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Where is the Wisdom?

Photo: [JR Korpa](#)

Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, when it is in your power to do it.

Do not say to your neighbour, "Go, and come again; tomorrow I will give it"—when you have it with you.

Do not plan harm against your neighbour who lives trustingly beside you.

Do not quarrel with anyone without cause, when no harm has been done to you.

Do not envy the violent

and do not choose any of their ways;

for the perverse are an abomination to the Lord, but the upright are in his confidence.

—Proverbs 3:27–32, NRSV

In October 2019, U.S. President Trump made a comment about his “great and unmatched wisdom” in a tweet about obliterating Turkey’s economy if they did anything he didn’t approve of. The sheer arrogance of this statement baffled many. Even now, I don’t see how there is any wisdom in bullying another country.

In this issue, we’re exploring different facets of Wisdom. John Stafford explains how we can approach and interpret Proverbs and Ecclesiastes, and Beth Downey offers insights into how to seek wisdom. This issue also has some important information regarding Diocesan Synod, which will take place in October 2020. And, in via media, PhD candidate Izzeddin Hawamda shares his own wisdom about the legacy of displacement in Palestine and Canada.

Both John and Beth’s articles emphasize the importance of the good life that can be gained by pursuing wisdom. In John’s article, he says,

“How we embrace life will always matter because it’s lived before the One who gave it...” God is the giver of wisdom, and it is through wisdom that we can find reconciliation with Jesus Christ.

Beth’s piece touches on the importance of curiosity, humility, and discernment in seeking wisdom. Curiosity compels us to search for answers, and humility teaches us that we can learn from anyone; discernment helps us find good influences. In the end, we can gain wisdom with the help of these three attributes: “Wisdom is a positive feedback loop. Get a little, and little begets more.... All of us work our way deeper into wisdom like the thread of a screw, moving forward in circles.”

Neither of these pieces advocate for building up our own wisdom. Through their emphasis on seeking God’s wisdom first, they teach that those who brag about their own wisdom never really have it.

Where is the wisdom in Rupert’s Land? In our leaders and canons, certainly. But I think we can find it in others as well: in our elders and deacons; in our elderly parishioners as well as our young; and in our common prayers. But, most of all, I believe we can find it at the table to which we are all invited. It is there that we can meet God and share in God’s wisdom.



Kyla Neufeld is the editor of Rupert's Land News.

What a Fool I've Been

GEOFFREY WOODCROFT

Photo: [Dimitri Tyan](#)

In 1988, while in a Clinical Pastoral Education course, I was expected to complete a couple of verbatim reports each week. The purpose of the reporting was to discern my ability to really hear and understand other people, and then theologially reflect on how I had found God in these conversations. Struggling to ensure I could get away early for a long weekend, I approached a client of my placement for an easy verbatim, a piece I would really not have to work at. I met my friend at a park bench and began:

GW: So, what are you doing this weekend?

CI: I'm going on a picnic.

GW: Sounds fun. What do you take to eat for your picnic?

CI: I like sandwiches and bananas.

GW: You like bananas?

CI: Yeah! Sometimes I eat two.

GW: You eat two bananas at once?

CI: No, stupid! I can only fit one in my mouth at a time!

I had not been wise, and I behaved selfishly and foolishly.

God's wisdom, in the voice of the client, cut through my yearning for knowledge and control in such a profound and humbling way. When the client called me stupid, I laughed out loud and the client laughed as well, but in my gut I felt horrible for my behaviour. I had done a great disservice to the one to whom I had been speaking. I sensed that something far greater had just happened, that somehow I was being challenged to transform, grow, and learn. I assumed that the client was not worthy of a genuine conversation and that I was superior to them. Looking back, I am sure that the client

knew that I was a fraud, that I was dominating the conversation and not listening. The verbatim, which was not supposed to be about me, was only about me. This episode in my life was a reminder that God is dragging me from foolishness toward wisdom.

Precious treasure remains in the house of the wise, but the fool devours it (Proverbs 21:20, NRSV). These are words of wisdom that fit my story, and I think they are applicable for the Church that is struggling to get that verbatim in. Meeting issues head-on from only a knowledge and control perspective will cause us to miss the mark of why we are the Church in the first place. I hope we are held accountable by God's wisdom, illustrating that overcoming our short-comings may be the only solution to present realities.

When I find myself in times of trouble, / Mother Mary comes to me / speaking words of wisdom, let it be, wrote Paul McCartney, words that sum-up how we must listen for God's wisdom, to pause in the steady stream, feel the problem and the solution deep in our guts, and then listen. Wisdom does not try to elude us. Rather, it is you and I, flush with knowledge and control, who elude wisdom, unknowingly. We must make the opportunity and time to listen to wise Creator God, One who wants only the best for us.



Geoffrey Woodcroft,
Bishop of Rupert's Land

On Seeking Wisdom

BETH DOWNEY

Photo: [Sharon McCutcheon](#)

In every season, I have deeply valued those times when people I respected were willing to share their wisdom with me: their perspectives, insights, or hard-won knowledge. In just 26 years, I've been blessed with so many excellent teachers: parents, educators, supervisors, artists late and living, clergy, friends, a brilliant spouse, even strangers. What follows is my best effort to pay forward some of that abundance.

The Bible exhorts us to seek wisdom, promising that this work is among the best things we can devote our energies to (see 1 Kings 3 and Proverbs 1 through 9, just for a start). Taking that encouragement on faith and *running* with it feels now like the single smartest choice I made growing up. Though I wonder sometimes whether it was choice or grace, some kind of divine wink in my personality. From day one, I was voracious about learning how things *really are*. And the Lord is faithful! In seeking His wisdom, I really have become more like Jesus, more useful and compassionate to others than I might have been.

This is the good news I feel most able to share with others, if wisdom is what we're talking about: the thrill, the worth, the rewards of the chase. Many things are valuable on this journey, but in my experience, only three are really essential: curiosity, humility, and discernment.

Curiosity helps us ponder whether we are even asking the right questions as we seek wisdom in this life. It reminds us to look closely, to explore, to consider the unexpected, to hold

ourselves open to Divine presence and especially Divine surprise.

As Christians, we can sometimes fear curiosity, but we must fight this fear with all our hearts, trusting God to guide us as we learn. Curiosity may have killed the cat, but that's no reason to wave the poor creature's fate around in the fear-mongering way we do. I am convinced, particularly as a woman, that there is no surer way to outright endanger a person than to smother or slander her curiosity. If she is naturally inquisitive, you will incite her to rashness, and we're back to the cat. If she is naturally passive, you risk consigning her to ignorance, and woe betide you then.

Thank God for curiosity, the hunger of the mind that reaches toward its Maker in all things! It may be our earliest, most instinctive act of worship. As such it should be prized, encouraged, and *tithed* through the pursuit of wisdom.

Humility is what makes a quest for wisdom sustainable. Allied with curiosity, it reminds us never to assume we *cannot* learn something from any particular person or experience. Teachers are everywhere. Similarly, humility helps us keep God in God's place and ourselves in ours. It protects us from getting inflated or unbalanced when we learn new things, keeping us aware of how much still exceeds us.

Humility also saves us from despair when we finally confront the never-ending tunnel of what we don't know, our imperfections, and all the brokenness of the world, as Ecclesiastes

1:18 says: "With much wisdom comes much sorrow; the more knowledge, the more grief" (NIV). If curiosity is what drives us to scour the Earth looking for truth, humility helps us sort through our discoveries and their implications, so that we never have to be afraid of what we may learn.

Discernment is both the product and the engine of wisdom. The Bible tells us that bad friends, false teachers, and fools are pitfalls we all must learn to avoid. Picture an inexperienced, perhaps young, person, just beginning their search for wisdom: how are they to avoid these things?

Here at the beginning, God teaches us how to select good influences. We are taught to seek the fruits of the Spirit (Galatians 5), both in ourselves and in others. We are taught that no matter how shrewd or appealing some insights may sound, cynicism is never truly wise (James 3: 17–18), and that we must listen to our hearts, which know deep down what is admirable, pure, and lovely (Philippians 4:8).

But this "beginners' advice" is itself *advice*. We as learners must be willing to test God, and scripture, on merit (1 Thessalonians 5:21). There is a way in which experience is all we have. We either trust our own experiences, or those of others whom we have experienced as trustworthy, when they advise us.

What do we do after this initial testing phase, after we've tried a method that seems good, taking God's advice at face value and

(ideally) finding that it works? Let curiosity loose! Ask questions of anyone and everyone. Gather up heaps of different answers and apply the good tools we've identified. We sift our findings through the sieve of God's teaching and test our takeaways with advisors we have reason to trust: "As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another" (Proverbs 27:17, NIV).

The more we do this, the more discernment grows. We learn to tell the difference between good and poor advisors, sense and foolishness, wisdom and false wisdom. We get better at discerning where to look, more effective in gathering up people, art, experiences – even as curiosity and humility protect us from getting closed-minded.

Wisdom is a positive feedback loop. Get a little, and little begets more. But we needn't worry if it sometimes feels just the opposite – as though the more we learn, the less we know. This too is normal, and nothing to fear. All of us work our way deeper into wisdom like the thread of a screw, moving forward in circles. We go over and over the same ground, refining and re-learning the fundamentals of truth. My father often says that life is not about learning many things: it's about learning a few things many times. Godspeed, my friends.



Beth Downey is a graduate student and emerging writer of poetry and fiction, currently dividing her time between Winnipeg, Manitoba, and St. John's, Newfoundland. Her work has appeared or is forthcoming in *The New Quarterly*, *New Hibernia Review*, and others. She also moonlights as a childbirth doula. Locally, Beth and her husband Scott are blessed to call saint benedict's table home.



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The Lord created me at the beginning of his work,
the first of his acts of long ago.

Ages ago I was set up,

at the first, before the beginning of the earth.

When there were no depths I was brought forth,
when there were no springs abounding with water.

Before the mountains had been shaped,
before the hills, I was brought forth—

when he had not yet made earth and fields,
or the world's first bits of soil.

When he established the heavens, I was there,
when he drew a circle on the face of the deep,
when he made firm the skies above,

when he established the fountains of the deep,
when he assigned to the sea its limit,
so that the waters might not transgress his command,
when he marked out the foundations of the earth,
then I was beside him, like a master worker;

and I was daily his delight,
rejoicing before him always,
rejoicing in his inhabited world
and delighting in the human race.

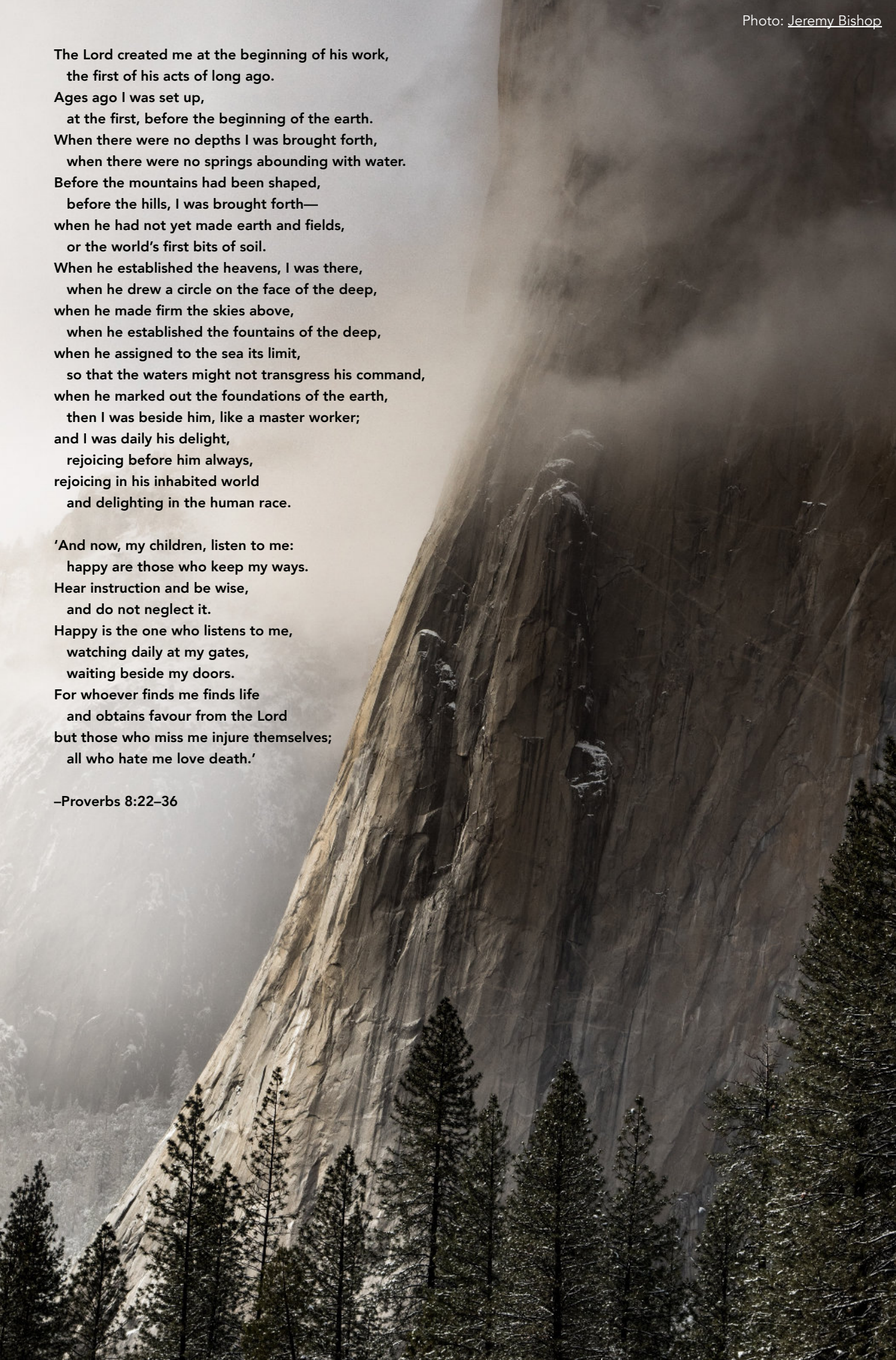
'And now, my children, listen to me:
happy are those who keep my ways.

Hear instruction and be wise,
and do not neglect it.

Happy is the one who listens to me,
watching daily at my gates,
waiting beside my doors.

For whoever finds me finds life
and obtains favour from the Lord
but those who miss me injure themselves;
all who hate me love death.'

—Proverbs 8:22–36



Wisdom Literature – Why it Matters

JOHN STAFFORD

Photo: [Stanislav Kondratiev](#)

All cultures have wisdom traditions, safeguarded by sages and prophets as well as common sense, household wisdom, and the wisdom of the royal court. We could call this *conventional wisdom*, which seeks understanding for prudent living in various life situations. Wisdom also offers instruction for avoiding unnecessary anxiety, living with shrewdness, and understanding amidst the realities of life. There are two main aspects of conventional wisdom: practical and theological. In the Bible, wisdom themes are found extensively, but uniquely, in the books of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes (which we know from its Hebrew name as *Qoheleth* – one who gathers wisdom). Sometimes readers are unsure why these books are even in the Bible. They are each very practical, but also very different. Proverbs is full of sayings and riddles – short pithy statements in crafted collections that are ancient and frequently amusing. But they are memorable, which is the point; wisdom you can't remember isn't much use. Qoheleth appears pessimistic about many things – why?

Underlying the Hebrew wisdom of Proverbs and Qoheleth, is a theological vision: *The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom* (Proverbs 1:7). This trumps simple pragmatism and sets Israel apart. The expression *fear of the Lord* does not mean the feeling of actual fear –

it means to keep the covenant (of Moses). To do this, one must understand and practice Torah. To live prudently means to keep the faith of Israel. The challenge is to assess how this plays out in real life because the commandments paint with a broad brush, but human life is filled with innumerable details. Thus, the conventional wisdom in Proverbs offers those seeking understanding assured, tested knowledge that stimulates a positive embrace of life and guards the wise person from folly and harm. These are the two imaginary persons in Proverbs – the wise man and the fool (Proverbs 13:20 and many more).

What is the theology of conventional wisdom? The book of Proverbs assumes people know the narratives of the Pentateuch, particularly Genesis and Deuteronomy. Proverbs relies on the creation accounts of Genesis – a material world with interlocking relationships brought into being by God. Though a good place, it is a world whose borders touch on chaos and dislocation, not theoretically but in actual human experience. However, God is not a God of chaos but of order, and so proverbial wisdom seeks an ordered reality and the pursuit of wisdom is the way to do it. Deuteronomy positions this reality between life and death, order and disorder, cause and effect, blessing and curse. In basic

terms, if we think properly we will act toward the experience of order, life will unfold as (we think) it should, and we will hold at bay the forces that tend toward death and disorder. Make the right decisions and positive, effective outcomes will follow. Life will come to resemble its intended purposes projected by the first chapters of Genesis. It's a simple equation – cause and effect, which mirrors so much of life.

Are there deep origins for wisdom? Is it only about the acquisition of practical knowledge? Proverbs thinks such origins are fundamental. Consider Proverbs 3:19–22 and Proverbs 8:22–36 in which wisdom is personified and resides within the Godhead, a theologically crucial idea for wisdom's appreciation of reality. Wisdom is alive and embodied in divine identity and action. To ignore it places us in an ambiguous relation to ourselves and the created order; even to the extent that we cannot think, act or apprehend beauty. The alert reader of Proverbs 8:22–36 will note the astounding resonance with the beginning of the Gospel of John and perhaps other passages.

Yet there remains a key problem. Conventional wisdom works most of the time, but definitely not all of the time; if it did we would not have Psalms of lament. So, this wisdom is reliable, but not absolutely so. It is ill-suited to advise on life's core ambiguity: death. On this it is silent; we die, no matter how wise

we may have become. For life, as we experience it, is inherently ambiguous. Qoheleth says that all *is vanity and a chasing after wind* (Ecclesiastes 1:14, 2:11). What he means is that life is ironic and challenges conventional wisdom. He does not reject it, but points to creation's circularity into which we, even as bearers of God's image, are caught up; we cannot escape it. No matter what we do, how far we succeed, we die. Not only that, but wise men and fools die the same way (Ecclesiastes 2:15), and what we leave behind is just as likely to be inherited by a fool (Ecclesiastes 2:18–21). Qoheleth observes that all such outcomes lie beyond our control.

What does Qoheleth advise? We should gladly rejoice in life itself, its work, its potential, its gifts, and yet with adjusted horizons for *eternity has been placed in our hearts* (Ecclesiastes 3:10–15). How we embrace life will always matter because it's lived before the One who gave it so a neutral commitment is denied us even if a sort of agnosticism may seem reasonable to our temperament. After his ode to old age (Ecclesiastes 12), Qoheleth takes us as far as he can. His resolution for irony is to live in God's sight according to Torah, for we must return our "breath" to God who gave it. Yet there is a deeper irony – for Christ came in the greater image of God (Colossians 1:15–20) and in his obedience, even to the irony of death, God has brought resurrection and satisfied our deeper longing for reconciliation, satisfaction, and eternity. Although Qoheleth didn't know it when he wrote, he certainly understood the problem – we may imagine his joy and wonder at the wisdom of heaven (1 Corinthians 1:18–25) and join with him in worship.



John Stafford is an ordained Anglican clergyman who has served in various parishes in Manitoba. He also served as the Dean of Theology and Chaplain at St. John's College for 16 years and as an Associate Professor of Biblical Studies at Providence University College, Otterburne, Manitoba.

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Parish News Roundup

Missional Leadership in Rupert's Land

Clergy and lay leaders of parish communities know that the times in which we are living are calling for new ways of leading. We know that we are invited to live into God's mission in the world around us. For many of us, maybe most of us, these are challenges for which we have not been trained or prepared in the past.

Bishop Geoff reminds us all regularly that the purpose of leaders in the Church is *To nurture the health and wellness of the Body of Christ sent into the world.*

Therefore, he invites all clergy and lay leaders in the Diocese to participate in these education events to take place over the next four months. Each day will be a stand-alone event, but those who attend all three will gain great benefit as they are able to make connections between the themes.

Registration fee:

\$10 per person for teams of two or three people;

\$5 each for teams of four or more;

\$15 for individuals

Nurturing: Leading Communities in Following Christ

Postponed until further notice

This first event will focus on how clergy and lay leaders are called to nurture faith communities. Through the lens of the baptismal covenant, we will hear stories of how leaders have nurtured their communities to liberate their gifts. This will include leading spiritual practices, Christian education, stewardship, and reaching into the community.

Taking the Church to the Gym: The Health and Wellness of the Body of Christ

March 7 – St. Francis Mission Centre (730 McPhillips Street)

The second event will explore what parish health means and how leaders can encourage communities to deepen the health of their communities. We'll learn about available resources, practices, and understandings and how we can introduce them in parish life.

Sent into the World: What are We Doing for Christ's Sake?

April 25 – Christ Church, Selkirk

What is this word "missional" we keep hearing about? Is it just the latest trend in churchland, or is there something more to it? We will learn about the ancient and eternal call of God to the Body of Christ to be present in the world with the gospel, and the not-surprising news that God is already at work there.

[You can find a registration form here.](#)

St. Saviour's Anglican

St. Saviour's is once again holding Threads of Hope events, with the purpose of providing hope, love, and assistance to children, adults, and animals within our community and globally with handmade clothing and bedding. Everyone is welcome to drop by and help – no sewing skills necessary!

The next one will take place on Saturday, February 22 at St. Saviour's (690 Munroe Avenue), from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

They will also take material donations of cotton and poly cottons, fleece, heavy material for dog beds, gently used clothing, and pillows. Contact Cindy Bell at 204-668-7166 or cindybell@shaw.ca for more information.



This page of the Parish News Round Up is sponsored by Richard Rosin. For more information, see his ad on page 6.

St. John's Cathedral Anthem Contest

The Cathedral Church of St. John the Evangelist is pleased to announce the 200th Anniversary Anthem Composition Competition. Using our theme "Celebrating God's Faithfulness," entrants are invited to submit unpublished anthems on or before February 29, 2020. Three monetary prizes (\$2200 for first, \$1200 for second, \$800 for third) will be awarded by a panel of judges. The three pieces will be premiered in Winnipeg on May 31, 2020, as part of a choral festival at St. John's Cathedral. The composer must bear in mind the desire for a broadly accessible anthem for use in many places other than St. John's Cathedral.

The three winning compositions become the property of the Corporation, Cathedral Church of St. John the Evangelist, Winnipeg, Manitoba. Please send completed scores to: st.johns2020events@gmail.com.

ReNew: Resourcing Pastors for Ministry Conference

Each year, Canadian Mennonite University sponsors ReNew: a Resourcing Pastors for Ministry conference. This year it takes place February 11–12, 2020. Its focus will be congregational Faith Formation, with some concentrated attention on youth ministry. The keynote speaker is Andy Root of Luther Seminary in St. Paul, along with Tom Yoder Neufeld, of Conrad Grebel University College in Waterloo, contributing Bible studies on Ephesians.

This year's conference centres on the theme, "Christians are Made, Not Born: Transforming Faith Formation."

[You can find registration information here.](#)

CLAY: EnRoute 2020

It has been announced that the Keynote speaker for CLAY: EnRoute 2020 is Melanie Delva, the Reconciliation Animator for the Anglican Church of Canada. She'll be speaking about what it means to be on a journey – with ourselves, with one another, with the Creator and our Saviour.

Registration for CLAY: EnRoute 2020 is now open. [Click here](#) for more information.



Diocesan Synod 2020

Important information regarding the Diocese of Rupert's Land Synod 2020 from Bob Wedlake, Secretary of Synod. This will be helpful for electing Synod 2020 delegates.

The times, dates, and locations have been set:

Friday, October 16, 2020 at St. John's Cathedral:

Registration and a pre-synod reception will start at 4:00 p.m. The Opening Eucharist will begin at 6:30 p.m. and will include the Bishop's Charge, procedural motions, and resolutions arising from the Bishop's Charge. The evening will conclude by 9:15 p.m.

Saturday, October 17, 2020 at Canad Inn Polo Park:

Registration will re-open at 8:00 a.m. The morning sitting will begin at 9:00 a.m. and will include a financial update, resolutions from the Convening circular, balloting, and lunch. The afternoon sitting will begin at 1:00 p.m. and include resolutions received after the distribution of the Circular. The afternoon sitting will conclude with our closing procedures. The Saturday sitting will conclude by 4:00 p.m.

The cost of the Synod is \$85 per delegate, as in past Synod years. This has been approved by Diocesan Council. Parishes will be billed according to the number of elected lay delegates and eligible clergy. As you prepare for your Annual Meeting, please ensure this information is well known so that those who may be interested in letting their name stand for a Synod Delegate are aware of the changes.

Special Synod Events

On Saturday, October 17, a Gala Dinner will be held to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the Anglican Church in Western Canada. This will also take place at Canad Inn Polo Park. Tickets will be required for the dinner – more information to follow. Synod Delegates are encouraged to purchase tickets for this gala banquet.

The following morning, on Sunday, October 18, a commemorative Eucharist Service will be held at Canad Inn Polo Park. Parishes in the City of Winnipeg, and neighbouring communities are asked to cancel their morning services, and all members attend this diocesan-wide anniversary service. More information on these events will follow. For parishes whose proximity to Winnipeg makes it difficult for members to attend this ceremony, we are hoping to offer live-streaming of this ceremony and will provide more information when available.



Worship and Gospel-based Discipleship at Diocesan Synod 2018.

Changes to Diocesan Synod

Over the past number of Synods, there has been a growing concern relating to a number of topics, expressed through the Synod evaluation forms. We have heard the concerns and are taking action, which will impact Synod 2020.

Concerns:

Those who work during the weekday cannot attend, which limits who can attend and whose voices are being heard

Purpose and format

- Synod should be doing “the business of the diocese” and Faith Horizons is for education and presentations

Too many presentations at Synod

- Written reports do not need to be spoken to at Synod

Need an opportunity to put faces to names of people we are voting for

- Need to know some information about late nominees
- Balloting is confusing

Changes for Synod 2020:

The dates for Synod 2020 are October 16 (Friday evening) and October 17 (Saturday during the day)

Synod will include:

- Opening Eucharist Service with Bishop’s Charge
- Resolutions resulting from the Bishop’s Charge
- Procedural resolutions
- Short financial update and resulting resolutions
- Resolutions printed in the Convening Circular (CC)
- Resolutions received after the printing of the CC

CC will contain written reports and/or links to video reports/presentations

- Reports will not be spoken to at Synod

Nominations will close at least one week prior to Synod

- Nomination forms will be revamped and have a spot to indicate why the person would like to be part of that which they are being nominated for
- Nomination forms *must* include a picture
- All nominations received after the printing of the CC will be emailed out to delegates prior to Synod
- There will be brief “roll call” (introduction) of nominees prior to balloting

The Synod Agenda Committee has begun the work on Synod 2020, and we are excited to move forward with these changes to help us be good stewards of our time, energy, space, governance, and change.

The Legacy of Displacement

IZZEDDIN HAWAMDA

Photo: [Travel 2 Palestine](#)

I moved to Canada with my family in the early 2000s as a refugee from Palestine. I was 16 years old, the eldest of my four siblings that had joined me on the journey from our home to the cold, unfamiliar land. At the time, I was not aware of the similarities between the history and experiences of my ancestors, the Indigenous people of Palestine, and the Indigenous people of Canada. Over the past decade, my life in Canada has led me down a path in search of more and more information about the history of Indigenous peoples in Canada, and I am always deeply impacted by the many connections to the stories of my own people in the Middle East. There are, of course, many differences, and it is important to recognize the uniqueness of all stories. It is the ability share stories and draw connections, though, that offers opportunities to empathize with and humanize each other. These stories point to the continued impact of the legacies of colonialism and oppression beyond Canada and the Middle East. A few years ago, I did a research project on the displacement of Indigenous peoples in Manitoba and found that there were many similarities to my own story.

My story starts with my father. My father's side of the family lived in Palestine for many generations. I was born in 1986 in the West Bank, Palestine, which is where my mother,

father, and the paternal side of my family lived. My father was born in 1964 and was the first child out of 10. He was just 3 years old, when the war began in 1967. When my father was born, my grandparents lived on a farm in a rural area not far outside of the city of Nablus, where they raised animals, such as goats and cows, and grew and harvested olives. This is also the place where I was raised and learned the importance of the land to my identity as a Palestinian.

By the time the 1980s came around, Israel had maintained occupation over the Palestinian territories for nearly 20 years, and the level of oppressive and punitive measures had only increased over time. The war in 1967 resulted in the displacement of many people from within the borders of Israel, and, while many Palestinian refugees left to neighbouring countries, many of these refugees moved into the Palestinian territories. As a result of the increase in the population, there were persistently growing tensions among Palestinians. The war and resulting displacement caused by the creation of Israel in 1948 had put a strain on those living in the West Bank prior to the war, as their land and limited resources were to be shared with an influx of refugees. But in 1967, refugee camps were built within the borders of the West Bank and Gaza

to house the new wave of Palestinian refugees from within Israeli borders. While the refugees entering the West Bank were being displaced, the refugee camps themselves displaced farmers from their land. Additionally, the camps served to ensure the new refugees did not integrate into the existing communities, leading to resentment with each other rather than toward the oppressive policies responsible for the loss of land and agency.

different families in the village. A man had been accused of a crime against an Israeli soldier and, because they were unable to find him, Israel ordered the demolition of three homes belonging to people close to him. To this day, I am haunted not only by the visible destruction of the homes, but by the faces of the people that lived in them. Loss of objects, people, land, and privileges are common in the West Bank. In a place full of instability, loss is a constant.

Growing up, I was taught to view loss not as something to be feared or mourned, but rather as an opportunity to build strength and determination to stand up for my rights. Every loss was to be used to fuel endurance despite the oppression enforced by the occupation. But, on the day I saw the homes of these three families demolished, I saw helplessness and hopelessness I was not used to seeing in my community. It was as if an inner light inside of them had been extinguished.

My family was displaced once again in the early 2000s,

when we left the West Bank for Canada as refugees. Through my post-secondary education in Canada, I came to understand the connection between the experiences of Palestinians and the Indigenous peoples in Canada. I discovered that, in the same way the Israeli Government made decisions and policies that resulted in the confiscation of my grandmother's ancestral land, the demolition of homes for the development of settlements or as a form of punishment, and the redefinition of borders, the Manitoba Government has made policy decisions with the knowledge of, and at times the intent toward, harmful consequences for Indigenous communities.

In 2011, the people of Lake St. Martin were forced to evacuate their community after a flood, which was caused by a government



The Israeli West Bank barrier with the inscription, "Not another wailing wall," 2006.

In 1987, the Intifada was driven by the pressure from the continuous occupation and the idea that Israel was implementing policies designed to lead to the extinction of the Palestinian people. It was during this time that my grandmother's farm land was confiscated by the Israeli army, and she could no longer even step onto the land she had cared for most of her adult life. What remained was a small garden plot, no bigger than a typical backyard garden, where she was able to grow enough fruits and vegetables to sustain herself. She could no longer sell the surplus products to her neighbours to make money for the family while my grandfather and father looked for work in neighbouring countries.

In my youth, I personally witnessed the destruction of three homes belonging to

policy that sacrificed the community to save farmland in the south. As Myrle Ballard and Shirley Thompson note in their article, "Flooding Hope and Livelihoods: Lake St. Martin First Nation" in *The Canadian Journal of Nonprofit and Social Economy Research*, the flood wiped out the land, destroyed homes, and devastated the community while the Manitoba Government referred to the project as a success.

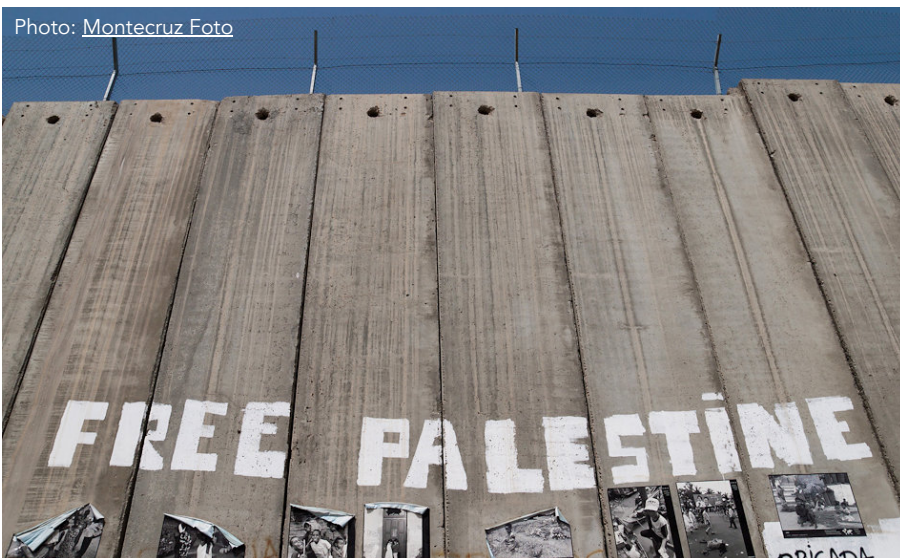
In the 1950s, the Sayisi Dene people were forcefully removed from their land after Manitoba Wildlife blamed their hunting practices for the decrease in caribou population, despite having been a sustainable practice for centuries. In their book, *Night Spirits: The Story of the Relocation of the Sayisi Dene*, Ila Bussidor and Üstün Bilgen-Reinart note that, without investigating, the Manitoba Government forcefully displaced the Sayisi Dene, resulting in the loss of their traditional way of life.

In the early 20th century, the Manitoba Government claimed that the Keeseekoowenin were responsible for the decreasing elk population in the area and forced their displacement from their land as well. But, as John Sandlos says in his article, "Not Wanted in the Boundary: The Expulsion of the Keeseekoowenin Ojibway Band from Riding

Mountain National Park" in *The Canadian Historical Review*, it is most likely, however, that the Manitoba Government forced the displacement of the Keeseekoowenin in favour of developing Riding Mountain National Park in hopes of increasing tourism in Manitoba. The Keeseekoowenin were told to pack what they could and, as they left, the houses and any remaining belongings, including those of people who were away from their houses at the time, were burned.

The legacy of displacement is not isolated to the experiences of Indigenous peoples in Canada and Palestine. The processes of colonialism and imperialism are built on a foundation of superiority and privilege. The ways of being and knowing that exist in Indigenous communities around the world are too often diminished, disregarded, discarded, and, like the people, displaced in favour of Western systems, policies, and educational practices. After discovering the connections between the Indigenous people of my homeland and the Indigenous people of Canada, my passion for sharing my story has grown. As an educator, I believe we have the responsibility to challenge what is accepted as knowledge and wisdom and to encourage our young people to do the same.

Photo: [Montecruz Foto](#)



The Israeli West Bank barrier at Bethlehem, West Bank, 2011.



Izzeddin Hawamda is a high school teacher and is currently working toward a PhD in Peace and Conflict Studies at the University of Manitoba. He is passionate about respecting the agency of locals in the peace-building process and about examining the role of education in the development of conflict transformation strategies.