



Council
of the North

Northern Witness



A 5-Session Bible Study
from the
Council of the North

The Anglican Church of Canada



L'Église anglicane du Canada

A Note from the Chair of the Council of the North

My prayer is that your congregation will be blessed as you gather to study God's word. Across the Council of the North, faithful Christians gather in groups just like yours to worship, to study and to serve. The stories you will read in this study are of your sisters and brothers in the North who face some unique challenges in ministry, but who are united with you as partners in the Gospel. We hope that our stories will illuminate the Bible passages in this study, inspiring you to see your own ministry in a new and fresh light. And we hope our stories will also inspire you to pray for us with greater intensity and that, across the many miles, we will be drawn closer together in Christian love.

May God bless you,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

The Rt. Rev. Michael Hawkins, Chair, Council of the North

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ABOUT THE COUNCIL OF THE NORTH



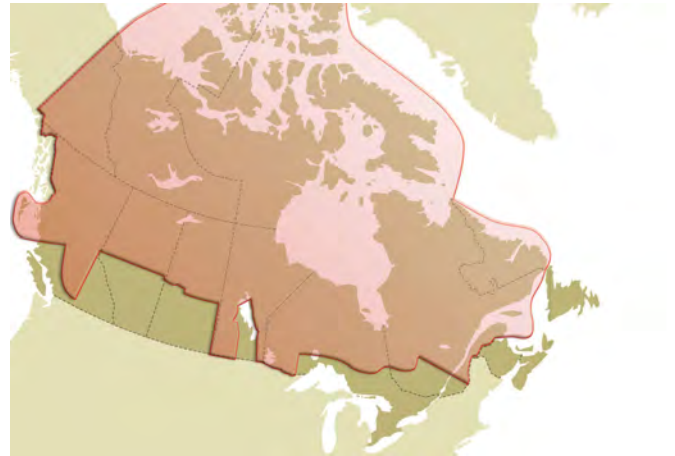
Council of the North: A Ministry of the Whole Church by the Whole Church

“Our purpose is to respond to God’s Call to mission and ministry in the northern regions of Canada.”
—*from the Council of the North Policy Handbook.*

The Council of the North is a grouping of financially assisted dioceses, which are supported through grants by General Synod. There are 9 dioceses, the Anglican Parishes of the Central Interior and the Archdeaconry of Labrador. They are in sparsely populated areas such as the Arctic, Yukon, Northern and Central Interior British Columbia, Alberta, northern Saskatchewan and Manitoba; northern Ontario, northern Quebec and Newfoundland and Labrador.

The Council of the North is comprised of all bishops of the assisted dioceses in the Anglican Church of Canada; the Council administers the General Synod’s grants for northern mission and meets twice a year to share information about the unique challenges faced by smaller ministries in the north. They work together to provide pastoral and sacramental ministry to all who are living in isolated communities in Canada’s North. The current chair of the Council is Bishop Michael Hawkins, Diocese of Saskatchewan.

The Council of the North began in 1970 when the National Executive Council of the General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada appointed a taskforce to consider the challenges and opportunities for ministry in the northern parts of Canada. The following year this taskforce was replaced with the Primate’s Taskforce on the Church in the North. In 1973 this taskforce became the Primate’s Council on the North and by 1976 this body had evolved into the present Council of the North.



Map of the geographic area of the Council of the North

Today, the Council continues the ministry of the Anglican Church of Canada in northern Canada. In the face of unique challenges, such as vast distances, isolation, harsh weather, the continuing effects of poverty and the legacy of the residential school system, the face of Anglican northern ministry is one of cooperation, innovation, mutual respect and self-determination for Indigenous Anglicans.

Through this Bible study, we invite you to learn about the Council of the North and through Biblical reflection to explore our common mission in Christ.

NOTES ON USAGE



When your group gathers to study, we recommend an arrangement of chairs and tables that allows participants to face each other. The leader will open with a welcome and prayer, and may then select a participant to read the Bible passage. Following this, we suggest that the Council of the North stories text be read in a circle, with participants who are comfortable reading aloud each taking a turn, perhaps by paragraph. Please provide pencils: there is a lot of material and some participants may like to write questions or reflections in the margins of the main text. This reading should be followed with the discussion questions and perhaps a time of fellowship. The study should take about 1 to 1.5 hours to complete.



Welcome & Introduction

(Study leader)

Opening Prayer

“Dear Jesus, as we begin this study, we ask you to open our minds to learn and our hearts to love. Thank-you for the brothers and sisters you have blessed us with in your Church; deepen our commitment to each other as we all draw closer to you. Amen.”

“You are those who have stayed with me in my trials...”

Scripture Reading: Luke 22:24-30

24 A dispute also arose among them, as to which of them was to be regarded as the greatest. 25 And he said to them, ‘The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and those in authority over them are called benefactors. 26 But not so with you. Rather, let the greatest among you become as the youngest, and the leader as one who serves. 27 For who is the greater, one who reclines at table or one who serves? Is it not the one who reclines at table? But I am among you as the one who serves. 28 You are those who have stayed with me in my trials, 29 and I assign to you, as my Father assigned to me, a kingdom, 30 that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.’

Stories of the Council

Jesus rebukes his disciples for their jealous ambition, but then gently draws them back to their true role as “those who have stayed with him.” They are reminded that while they may be tempted by what the world values, their true identity is not lost—and that a great reward awaits them, one much greater than the rewards that tempt them now. Jesus contrasts kingdom goals

and values with the goals and values we are tempted to embrace.

The Church in the North is focused on living this kingdom, being the presence of Christ, in northern communities. One of the great opportunities in northern ministry is that sense that the church is “with the people,” fully integrated into the small, isolated communities it serves. “The Anglican Church in the North has not been isolated...In one sense, we don’t have to deal with the type of isolation the Church experiences in the south. Oftentimes, 90 per cent [of our ministry] is not to the people who go to church... and we don’t just stick beside those who are Anglican,” says Diocese of the Arctic Bishop David Parsons.

“You are those who have stayed with me in my trials.” This sense of Christian solidarity is more than just empathy: it means being drawn together into community, because we have a larger vision that unites us, one that draws us out of ourselves and into the bigger story.

Four days a week, The Rev. Martin Carroll visits prisoners in Whitehorse Correctional Centre (in the Diocese of Yukon). For Carroll, the time he spends visiting with people in prison is likely not the only interaction he will have with them. “Some of them I know and have met on the street, so we maintain a relationship if they should happen to be charged and incarcerated.” And then, when they’re out, the relationship continues.

In Iqaluit, The Rev. Cyrus Blanchet, prison minister at Baffin Correctional Centre, describes a young woman that he had met at the prison: “She’s probably 22, 23—I saw her in church just last Sunday or the Sunday before. I was leaving church and she was sitting there and she looked familiar. She was there before the Inuktitut service started, so of course I said ‘hello’ to her; she was quite friendly—seemed glad to be recognized and

spoken to and I think she's trying to turn over a new leaf." Blanchet says, "I know I've met her a couple of times in the store, and on the street another time and she said she wanted to volunteer at the soup kitchen. So she wants to do well."

Blanchet also sees a lot of repeat offenders, but while the path may be slow and winding, some people do come out the other side: "Now other people, let's see, we've had people in the soup kitchen: you see them in jail, then they're out again, then you see them in jail, and they're out again, but there are probably lots who've managed to stay out." In fact, he says, "There's people in the church I know who have been in jail," and they have actually signed on to help Blanchet in his ministry. "They come out with me sometimes. They've been there and they don't like going out there very much, because they were in there at one point. But they go and help out. So that's a good sign, that's a success story." Those lay visitors are also able to help by reading and singing in Inuktitut, the language of many of the inmates—sharing more clearly that invitation into the Kingdom.

This close interaction between church and community brings special challenges, especially for lay ministers and priests who serve their home communities. The Rev. Paul Williams has been a priest in the Diocese of the Arctic for 35 years, and has ministered to many families, including those devastated by suicide. "In many cases the lay leaders are the members of the family. They are ministering to their own children, their own cousins, and their wife's family....Everybody is interconnected with everybody else. So the grief is spread across all community lines. And nobody is untouched," he says.

This is an example of the sacrificial nature of northern ministry. But what opens up is the chance to minister in a context where the needs are often raw, and there is a special kind of openness to the Gospel.

Williams describes this ministry as meeting "every person on the level of being a member of their family." He doesn't point to any specific program or strategy in terms of preventing suicide so much as just meeting



Baffin Correctional Centre. Photo-contributed.

people "where they are," being "open to them and encouraging, spreading the love of Christ and the love of God in their lives."

Reflecting on the cases of suicide he has seen, Williams says, "I think we're all aware there is no one root cause, but a lot of the fear that leads into a person completing suicide begins with a sense of hopelessness in their lives, a sense of not fitting in and never going to fit in....Now what does the church do about that? It goes back to being present. Being with people and encouraging them to see that there is a wider scope to the life that they're in and it's not just that one situation. Scolding them, or trying to remind them who they're going to hurt or of their other responsibilities—those things might be effective for a short term. But until we can deal with that overarching sense of hopelessness, nothing is going to be permanent. And we have to get back to that message—that in Christ is our hope. Whatever else is going on in this one situation or in this other situation, there's a broader expanse that we should be looking at and Christ should be the centre of that expanse."

"But I am among you as the one who serves." One of Williams' prayer requests involves finding more workers to share this vision—to be a presence with, to stand in solidarity with the suffering in his communities, drawing them into the fellowship of Christ and the Church. "I think the first thing I would ask for is for help to get more people here in the congregations, whether that be ordained clergy, whether that means Anglican nurse practitioners, or Anglican social work

staff, so that we can bring the presence of Christ more personally into each person's life."

And while sometimes the work is tiring and difficult, at other times the effects of the Gospel on an individual or community are so striking—in the midst of violence and grief, the Gospel shines, bringing glory to God. These are Kingdom rewards.

In Red Earth, SK, one Christian family's story was transformed because they saw it in light of God's reconciling story—the story of Jesus' mercy and forgiveness.

Duril McKay, from Red Earth First Nation, SK, died tragically on New Year's Eve, 2012. He and his wife, Christy, were expecting their third child when Duril attended a New Year's Eve party with his friends. Duril's life ended that night at the hands of some of the other people at the party.

In the midst of such terrible grief and tragedy, Duril's family and community showed amazing grace. In the time between his death and the funeral his family wrote a letter to the community expressing their grief and their invitation for all to support them in their intent to forgive and support the members of the accused's family—and to welcome them to the wake and funeral.

In the letter they also wrote: "...Any act of retaliation or retribution by anyone or on anyone or against anyone, or turning to alcohol for escape or comfort, will not bring Duril back or change the events of that evening. This is not how we wish to remember Duril. Our family does not wish Duril to be remembered as the cause for further hurting."

"And I assign to you, as my Father assigned to me, a kingdom..." In the midst of tragedy and grief, the light of the Gospel was still shining in the lives of these believers. Their faith, and their willingness to see their own story in the light of God's Kingdom, was transformative, bringing healing out of brokenness.

For all of its mistakes in the past, perhaps the Anglican

church has had one thing that it takes to navigate to a new relationship: the determination to stay—to be that presence, to hear hard things with humility, but to be there for the people, especially through their healing.

Living those principles, staying with the people, showing what Bp. Parsons calls "a strong sense of perseverance through hard times and good times," is keeping the Church in the North strong, and is a powerful witness to the Kingdom of God.

Discussion Questions:

1. In the story, Bishop David Parsons describes ministry to the whole community, not just to church attenders.
 - Are there ways that your parish ministers to the wider community?
 - If your parish is engaged in community ministry, how does this ministry reflect "kingdom values" of service and humility?
 - How should your ministry to the community be unique, if it's inspired by the Gospel?
2. In the story, the family of Duril McKay showed remarkable grace and forgiveness in their time of grief and tragedy.
 - When you are suffering, how does belonging to a Christian community change the way you handle your grief or pain?
 - How has knowing God's forgiveness changed the way you interact with others?
3. In the story, The Rev. Paul Williams suggests that more important than any program is simply "being there," being with people in their suffering.
 - Can you share an example of a time when your Church or another believer was this "presence of Christ" to you? What did this mean to you?
 - Williams also describes the isolation a northern minister can feel. Can you relate to this sense of isolation, or the feeling of

being “burnt out” or exhausted in your own Christian life or ministry?

- What would it mean to be the “presence of Christ” in your home, school or workplace?

Going Further

To learn more about the ministry of the Council of the North, watch our videos at <http://www.anglican.ca/cn/resources/>.

Closing Prayer

“We thank you, God, that through the community of your Church, we know we are never alone. We ask you to help us, whether in our place of worship, work or play, to remember that we are the presence of Christ in that place. Help us to follow your example of faithful service. Amen.”



Welcome & Introduction

(Study leader)

Opening Prayer

“Dear Jesus, you showed us that when we offer our struggles and weakness to you, you can work through us in amazing ways. We pray for those who minister in northern communities where the needs are overwhelming and where, by human standards, things may seem hopeless. We give you praise for the miraculous ways in which you are using their sacrificial work to bring light, hope and healing to the North.”

“The Council of the North is blessed by the ministry of hundreds of non-stipendiary clergy. In many cases they are unpaid; some of them have full-time secular vocations; some of them devote themselves full-time to their ministry without adequate compensation or support.” —Bishop Michael Hawkins (SK), Chair of the Council of the North.

Scripture Reading: II Cor. 4: 7-18

“7 But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us. 8 We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; 9 persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; 10 always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies. 11 For we who live are always being given over to death for Jesus’ sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. 12 So death is at work in us, but life in you. 13 Since we have the same spirit of faith according to what has been written, “I believed, and so I spoke,” we also believe, and so we also speak, 14 knowing that he who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus

and bring us with you into his presence. 15 For it is all for your sake, so that as grace extends to more and more people it may increase thanksgiving, to the glory of God. 16 So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. 17 For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, 18 as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.”

Stories of the Council

The Sagkeeng First Nation, on the mouth of the Winnipeg River, is the home of The Reverends Richard and Nancy Bruyere, a husband-and-wife team of non-stipendiary priests in the Indigenous Spiritual Ministry of Mishamikoweesh*. Richard Bruyere works as an engineer for the provincial government. He’s helping to build an all-weather road, one he will travel often—not just for the road authority, but for the sick and the dying and all those in need in his community. The telephone rings at all hours. Someone is in hospital, and is asking for a priest. A family is grieving a loss and wants a priest to pray with them. Richard says, “So we get called to Winnipeg and we go pray for people in the hospital and it is challenging... but it’s also very rewarding.” The roads are dark, the trips are long—sometimes Winnipeg, sometimes northwestern

*The Indigenous Spiritual Ministry of Mishamikoweesh (ISMM) is the Anglican Church of Canada’s newest diocese. Formed in 2014 in northwestern Ontario and northern MB, the new diocese is part of a move towards a self-determining, self-sustaining Indigenous church within the ACC. The new entity covers roughly the same geography as the former Diocese of Keewatin, while several parishes were realigned with the Dioceses of Brandon and Rupert’s Land.

Ontario. But no matter where the need is, the Bruyeres faithfully respond with pastoral care.

“But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us.” As Richard and Nancy travel, they carry with them a treasure—the message of God’s love and hope. And they know that God’s surpassing power is working through them.

The Church in the North has the same mission as the Church in the South, carrying the same treasure in clay jars as they provide pastoral care and the sacraments, officiate at funerals and weddings and lead worship. But northern ministry does have special challenges—vast distances, isolation, harsh weather and sometimes unreliable communications networks. The continuing effects of poverty and the legacy of the residential school system also contribute to a very high level of pastoral needs.

“One of the challenges that we face in the Council is we have fewer resources and greater needs than most of the rest of the country when it comes to the work and mission of the Church,” says Bishop Hawkins, Chair of the Council of the North. “That’s a challenge that is before us, and we have, in many places, developed non-stipendiary ministry as an imaginative, in many cases self-sacrificial, way of addressing the needs of those communities and congregations.” Ecumenical partnerships are also growing but, as Bp. Hawkins points out, “In many parts of the North, we are the only church in those communities. So there is no one else to partner with, and we’re there alone.” And so non-stipendiary ministers, who comprise nearly half of all northern Anglican clergy, are on the forefront, providing “places and opportunities for people to worship—to learn, and to serve, to grow, to be healed and to be equipped to reach out to the rest of the community.”

The Rev. Canon Marjorie Glanfield is a non-stipendiary priest in Ft. Chipewyan in the Diocese of Athabasca. Most of the year, “Ft. Chip” is a fly-in community and is home to St. Paul’s Anglican Church, the first



Students at Henry Budd College for Ministry, The Pas, Manitoba. Photo-contributed.

church established in the Diocese of Athabasca. A decision was made decades ago no longer to provide a resident Anglican priest to this community of 850 people. According to Bishop Fraser Lawton of the Diocese of Athabasca, when that decision was made, Glanfield “took on the responsibility for making sure that Morning Prayer was said, and the doors of the church were opened.” Eventually ordained deacon, then priest, she is now Rector of the parish. “Many in the community—not just Anglicans—call on her for pastoral care,” says Bp. Lawton.

When asked about her daily ministry Glanfield says, “Oh my dear, it’s on a daily basis: you never know who’s going to call and just need to talk or who’s going through grieving, or who needs to ask for prayer—and it doesn’t matter...if somebody needs food or if somebody needs whatever—I can do that for them. And that’s my ministry.”

What also shines through is the joy that she finds in this sacrificial work. Asked what one of her greatest joys in ministry might be, she responds, “One?! ...I guess opening the doors of the church and seeing who—well, it doesn’t matter who comes! If there’s one person, I still do the service. I love doing it. And when I come home or when I leave the church door, I always feel very uplifted—even when a month ago I was going to the church and I fell flat on my back on the

ice and in the snow!” Glanfield’s ministry is a picture of grace: as she recovered from this fall and was mostly “laid up,” her care for the community continued, “so that as grace extends to more and more people it may increase thanksgiving, to the glory of God.” In spite of the challenges, her ministry and the ministry of this tiny church continue.

“Since we have the same spirit of faith according to what has been written, ‘I believed, and so I spoke,’ we also believe, and so we also speak....” And when they speak, many of the Church’s non-stipendiary priests are preaching and teaching in Indigenous languages. Bishop Lydia Mamakwa (Indigenous Spiritual Ministry of Mishamikoweesh) has said, “Our people have undergone so much pain and despair and yet they still go on with their ministry and with their faith. Our desire is that we will continue to proclaim the Gospel to everyone, whether it be in our native language, or another language.”

The Rev. Sam Halkett, a non-stipendiary priest who serves 3 First Nations communities in the Diocese of Saskatchewan, is grateful for the training he received at James Settee College, a local training school: “It helped me to understand the Gospel more—and it helped me in my Syllabics and my Cree! When I deliver the message, I can do it in both languages.” In addition to his parish work, Halkett also now teaches syllabics through James Settee and leads a Cree language course at the Cathedral in Prince Albert. He is passionate about keeping alive the traditional knowledge of the elders: “There are still elders out there that have that syllabic reading, and I guess from them we kind of understand the message more deeply, because our language is unique, so specific and so deeply rooted,” he says.

One of the ways our Church is supporting non-stipendiary priests is through northern theological training schools like James Settee, the Dr. William Winter School for Ministry (Mishamikoweesh), the Henry Budd College for Ministry (Brandon) and the soon reopening Arthur Turner Training School (Arctic). Another vital source of encouragement and renewal are Regional Gatherings, which were recently

boosted through a generous grant from the Diocese of Toronto. In addition to these programs, gifts through the Gifts for Mission catalogue are used to provide support to individual priests—sometimes enough to refill a gas tank, or provide extra money for a priest’s family at Christmas.

But there is still a great need: Bp. Hawkins describes the challenge of burnout—a significant issue in remote communities in which clergy are sometimes overwhelmed by the needs for pastoral care. He says that the questions that lie before us, as a Church, involve addressing “both the need and the justice questions around non-stipendiary ministry” and “finding ways in which people can carry out their ministry and be adequately supported.”

The Council of the North is thankful for those who have chosen this path of humble service, those who carry out the mission of the Church in the north on behalf of the whole Church.

Discussion Questions:

1. In the story, the sacrificial ministry of non-stipendiary priests is described.
 - Can you think of examples in your own parish of humble and sacrificial ministry?
 - Canon Glanfield finds great joy in ministry. Looking back at her story, why do you think this is?
2. In the Bible passage, St. Paul says, “*So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day.*”
 - What are some ways your inner self can be renewed?
 - Can you think of a time in your own life when you were being “afflicted” or going through a difficult time, but yet found yourself being spiritually renewed during that experience?

Going Further:

Plan to include prayers for northern ministries and non-stipendiary priests in your parish's prayers of the people. A Council of the North prayer cycle can be found here: <http://www.anglican.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Prayer-Cycle.pdf>.

Closing Prayer:

“Jesus, you chose the path of humility and service, giving up your life for our sakes. We ask you to strengthen all who follow you in this path of humble service, especially our brothers and sisters who faithfully work and minister without pay and, so often, without the support and thanks they should have. We ask also that you would guide us, as a Church, to find ways to support them—ways that are just and gracious and honouring. Amen.”



Welcome & Introduction

(Study leader)

Opening Prayer

“Lord Jesus, as we begin this study, we ask you to open our minds and hearts to your wisdom. Help us to take this time to focus on your Word; help us to hear it and respond with courage to your call to us. In your Name, Amen.”

“Leadership belongs to everybody, mission belongs to everybody...and the parishes reflect that. In a way I think that’s something the rest of the Church can learn from.” –The Very Rev. Dr. Iain Luke, Diocese of Athabasca.

Scripture Reading: Luke 12:22-34

“22 And he said to his disciples, “Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat, nor about your body, what you will put on. 23 For life is more than food, and the body more than clothing. 24 Consider the ravens: they neither sow nor reap, they have neither storehouse nor barn, and yet God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds! 25 And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? 26 If then you are not able to do as small a thing as that, why are you anxious about the rest? 27 Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. 28 But if God so clothes the grass, which is alive in the field today, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much more will he clothe you, O you of little faith! 29 And do not seek what you are to eat and what you are to drink, nor be worried. 30 For all the nations of the world seek after these things, and your Father knows that you need

them. 31 Instead, seek his kingdom, and these things will be added to you. 32 “Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom. 33 Sell your possessions, and give to the needy. Provide yourselves with moneybags that do not grow old, with a treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches and no moth destroys. 34 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.”

Stories of the Council

Church can be an anxious place. There are so many challenges: declining budgets and an increasingly secular, consumerist and busy surrounding culture—one that no longer seems to value what “church” has to offer. And it is so easy to become anxious. But today we hear our Lord’s words to “Fear not,” and his promise that if we “seek the Kingdom” He will provide all that we need.

Churches in the North have felt these effects keenly, in addition to their usual challenges of vast distances, isolation, harsh weather, and sometimes unreliable communications networks. The continuing effects of poverty and the legacy of the residential school system also contribute to a very high level of pastoral needs. But Council ministry, in spite of—or perhaps because of—its particular challenges, is marked by a spirit of openness, innovation and self-sacrifice.

Diocese of Yukon Bishop Larry Robertson describes the situation in his diocese: “At its peak, about 15-20 years ago, the Diocese of Yukon had 15 stipendiary clergy....The mines were thriving and they required their employees to live on site.”

But the situation Bp. Robertson inherited when he took office in 2010 was a radically different one. “The mines had closed and the employees either moved or, in the

case of many, became unemployed.” In the past, many of the mines “saw the value of the Church and directly assisted them with supplying buildings and labour.” But today, “as new mines open up, they do not require their employees to live on site but fly them in and out again at the end of their shifts. There is little contact with the local community.”

The diocese, faced with reduced parish incomes, was unable to replace retiring and relocating ministers. Added to this bleak scenario were the ongoing effects of the residential school system.

According to Bp. Robertson, “Some parishes shut down. Others continued to function with a small number of dedicated lay ministers.”

“Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom....” Facing these challenges, Yukon’s bishop considered another source of wealth: the Anglican Church’s vast numbers of talented, compassionate and financially secure members, both lay and ordained—people with energy, skill and time on their hands. He says, “This is an opportunity and there are an awful lot of people who come to the end of their career and say ‘I’m not ready, I still have much to give to God.’...The reality is, especially in our cities, there are many trained people who are retired but are not ready to roll over. And it gives them an opportunity to minister in a different atmosphere, to a different culture.”

The diocese decided to try a “Ministry of Presence” model in which the Diocese of Yukon invites people, either lay or ordained, who have their own source of income, to commit to a year or more of providing pastoral care to a northern parish. Housing and a modest stipend are provided. Bp. Robertson says, “They fit themselves. We ask that they look after the Sunday service, then they fit their ministry with the needs of the parishes and their own skills.”

The Rev. Lynn De Brabandere, one of several Ministers of Presence in the Yukon, says, “When people ask what I do each day, I guess the need is whatever comes my



The Rev. Lynn De Brabandere’s ordination. Photo-contributed.

way...when I answer the phone or someone comes to the door, I’m present to that need.” De Brabandere has learned to be dependent on God for wisdom and guidance, and so is able to be a calm and gentle presence, ready to meet people at their point of need. *“And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? If then you are not able to do as small a thing as that, why are you anxious about the rest?”*

Bordering the Diocese of the Yukon to the south is the Diocese of Caledonia (in northern BC). Caledonia has faced similar challenges: attracting clergy to remote areas, and preventing burn-out amongst clergy that are serving larger and larger areas. In response to this, Caledonia’s Bishop William Anderson is focussing on the development of training programs to nurture new leaders in their own communities. The program, which began in the Nass Valley region, will now be spread across the diocese. Modules, taught by current clergy, the bishop and visiting instructors, are flexibly scheduled because most of the students will have other responsibilities—related to their other employment or ministry positions. The Ven. Ernest Buchanan, program administrator, has said that the schedule of the modules will “flow with community life” and Erin Green, writing for anglican.ca, describes the program as “characterized by the flexibility and resourcefulness that defines

ministry across the Council of the North.**

Bishop Michael Hawkins (SK), Chair of the Council of the North, has said, “We are no longer prepared to see our mission shaped or limited by structures but are committed to structures shaped by mission.”

In the Diocese of Athabasca, Bishop Fraser Lawton recalls that same idea, and says, “We are pretty thin in terms of structure,” due to “our financial situation, stemming out of the residential schools settlement.” At a recent synod, the Diocese asked, “What serves the mission we have, as opposed to filling offices?” They knew they needed “equipping in various areas, with regard to community, with regard to discipleship, and knowing the gospel better for ourselves and being poised to share that,” says Bp. Lawton.

Following that synod, he says, they “put a whole bunch of budget lines together in mission and training” and decided to transform the usual position of Executive Archdeacon into one focussed entirely on “training and building up parishes.” They also began “looking at the gifted clergy and lay people we already have—those that have something transportable to share with others. We want to make the boundaries between parishes more permeable.”

The Very Rev. Dr. Iain Luke, Dean of Athabasca, says, “I’ve been around the church nationally, and I’ve seen the hand-wringing: ‘We can’t afford to do things as we used to.’ I say to myself: ‘We haven’t been able to do things that way ever.’” Luke says, “Leadership belongs to everybody, mission belongs to everybody...and the parishes reflect that. In a way I think that’s something the rest of the Church can learn from.”

Indeed, sometimes it is when our plans have failed and the structures we rely upon have been stripped away that the Kingdom flourishes. “*Your Father knows what you need,*” our Lord says. And sometimes the Kingdom comes in simple, quiet and unassuming ways—like in a



Youth gather in The LivingRoom in Schumacher, Ontario.
Photo-contributed.

nondescript office building in Schumacher, Ontario in the Diocese of Moosonee.

Following the closure, years back, of the local Anglican Church, Moosonee’s leaders felt called to re-establish a ministry presence in this needy community. Much time was spent visiting local businesses and chatting in the post office or on the streets in order to build relationships and discern the community’s needs. The Ven. Deborah Lonergan-Freake, Administrator for Moosonee, explains that Schumacher residents expressed the need for a safe place to “hang out”; a place without the temptations of drugs and alcohol; a place “free of cold shoulders.”

And so, in a small commercial complex on a downtown street in Schumacher, in the front door, past the trophy shop and down the hall is Unit #5, a welcoming space with a couch, comfortable chairs and a coffee table—“The LivingRoom.” There are also long tables and chairs for board games, cards or crafts—“and there’s always coffee, tea and muffins,” says The Rev. Catherine Murkin, who came to the Diocese from Threshold Ministries.

The LivingRoom is building a devoted clientele, welcoming up to 50 people, many of them youth, on some days. “I’m so lonely. I’ve been here a year and I haven’t met any one,” said one mom who recently visited. Her young son now talks all week about going back on Wednesdays to The LivingRoom. Eventually,

*Read Erin Green’s full story at: <http://www.anglican.ca/news/ministry-training-that-flows-in-the-nass-river-valley/3006912/>.

Murkin may hold worship services, but for now, she's doing a lot of listening and says, "Where it goes from there is in God's hands.... My purpose is to represent Christ's loving presence in the community."

As The LivingRoom prepared to celebrate its first year in the community, participants requested a Christmas service be held. One Schumacher resident confirmed, "We're so glad you're coming back. We've missed the Church."

Anglicans in the Council of the North are so grateful for the ongoing and generous support they receive from the rest of the Church. And they continue to move forward in faith, hearing the call to discipleship—to lay aside their former plans and to seek the Kingdom.

Discussion Questions:

1. In the story, Yukon's Bishop Larry Robertson refers to the Anglican Church of Canada's "hidden wealth," which led him to step out in faith and develop the Ministry of Presence model.

- What are the hidden gifts in your parish community?
- How might your church engage in small but meaningful changes in order to use those gifts more effectively?

2. In the story, Athabasca Bishop Fraser Lawton talks about priorities and getting back to the core of being church—Christian community; discipleship; knowing the gospel and being ready to share it.

- Of the four priorities identified in the story where is your parish community strongest?
- Of the four priorities, which is the area you think needs the most growth in coming years?
- Bishop Lawton mentions the goal of the Archdeacon for Mission Development position to be, in part, making "parish boundaries more permeable" in order to increase inter-parish sharing of gifts and

resources. Identify 1 or 2 gifts your parish might be able to share with other congregations in your diocese or other groups in your community.

3. In the story, as a result of community consultation, the Diocese of Moosonee rebounded from the closure of the church in Schumacher by establishing the presence not of another church, but of a drop-in centre for people in need: out of death came new life.

- Is your parish in touch with the needs of the community that surrounds it?
- If not, how might you go about engaging in a community consultation?
- Are there changes or losses in your church community that have caused grief or pain?
- Can you identify a new initiative or ministry that might transform that loss into something life-giving?

Going Further:

This week, if you are active on social media, please take the time to visit our Council of the North Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/CounciloftheNorth> or our website: <http://www.anglican.ca/cn/>

Closing Prayer:

"Dear Jesus, in your Word, we hear you telling us not to be afraid, but to trust in what you have in store for us. We have heard stories of northern ministry in our Church and we have reflected on our own parish and how we might be more faithful to you. We ask that you challenge each of us to place our church and our lives into your loving care; give us the eyes of faith to see your Kingdom and remind us of where the richest treasures lie. Amen."



Welcome & Introduction

(Study leader)

Opening Prayer

“Lord Jesus, as we begin this study, we ask you to open our minds and hearts to your wisdom. Help us to take this time to focus on your Word; help us to know and to share its healing power. In your name, Amen.”

“And when they could not get near him because of the crowd, they removed the roof above him...”

Scripture Reading: Mark 2:1-12

1 And when he returned to Capernaum after some days, it was reported that he was at home. 2 And many were gathered together, so that there was no more room, not even at the door. And he was preaching the word to them. 3 And they came, bringing to him a paralytic carried by four men. 4 And when they could not get near him because of the crowd, they removed the roof above him, and when they had made an opening, they let down the bed on which the paralytic lay. 5 And when Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, “Son, your sins are forgiven.” 6 Now some of the scribes were sitting there, questioning in their hearts, 7 “Why does this man speak like that? He is blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?” 8 And immediately Jesus, perceiving in his spirit that they thus questioned within themselves, said to them, “Why do you question these things in your hearts? 9 Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Rise, take up your bed and walk?’ 10 But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins”—he said to the paralytic— 11 “I say to you, rise, pick up your bed, and go home.” 12 And he rose and immediately picked up his bed and went out before

them all, so that they were all amazed and glorified God, saying, “We never saw anything like this!”

Stories of the Council

Anglican ministers in Canada’s north experience special challenges but also great joy in ministry. Like the friends of the paralyzed man in the Bible story, they are breaking down barriers so that people can experience the forgiveness and healing power of Jesus.

In the Yukon community of Old Crow, Bishop Larry Robertson hears the snow crunch under his boots as he walks to the community hall. On this -43 C evening, there is a fog in the air that you can cut with a knife. Following several days of pastoral visitation, Bp. Robertson is on his way to another service, part of a triad of weekend events—a Saturday funeral, Holy Communion on Sunday morning and now this community healing service.

Old Crow has seen little of the sun on this day—sunrise was at 12:29 p.m. and sunset at 2:20. But when Bp. Robertson enters the community hall, the warmth and light dispel the cold and darkness outside.

This community has suffered greatly over the past year, with several untimely and tragic deaths. But it is also a community with a “strong spiritual past they can call upon” in times of death and grief, says Bishop Robertson.

The Rev. Laurie Munro, Rector of St. Luke’s, Old Crow, says that Old Crow residents do look to God and the church for support. She describes a recent funeral she officiated for a young man, after which “many house blessings were requested and many people asked for prayer in their homes and on the telephone.” She says, “People opened their hearts to God and asked for his

power to fill and heal them.”

“And when they could not get near him because of the crowd, they removed the roof...” This growing openness was nurtured by a service held on the Sunday before Old Crow hosted a Gwich’in gathering. Munro says, “Gary Simple from Alaska played guitar and led the singing. I officiated and prayed with the people. Both Gary and I spoke about God’s healing work.” Since then, the people of Old Crow have asked for more services like it and, in early January, “God’s timing brought things together,” says Munro.

The service began quietly with several gospel songs and a teaching time on forgiveness and the path to hope. Those gathered then shared Holy Communion and were invited forward for prayer and anointing with oil for healing. As many lingered for individual prayer with the clergy, the congregation sang gospel songs and traditional hymns in the Gwich’in language. Munro says, “It is hard to describe the wonderful feeling one gets when standing and praying and seeing God at work in a person’s life. Tears and laughter, pain and joy mingled as our Lord moved in people’s lives.”

“We never saw anything like this.” In a school gym in Eastmain, QC, on the eastern shores of James Bay, participants drag their chairs into a circle. In the facilitator’s hand is an eagle feather, which will be passed “sun-wise” as each person has a chance to speak. This circle’s topic is Forgiveness.

Eastmain is a Cree community of around 900 people, almost half of whom are under the age of 16. Tasked with organizing a healing gathering in the region, the Rev. Marilyn van Duffelen says, “I felt called to have our gathering as a Cree traditional gathering.” Past gatherings had been run more like workshops, but van Duffelen reflects, “I went to the TRC conference in Montreal. And there, I didn’t see healing happening in workshops. I saw healing happening in small circles formed in the retreat rooms.” This approach seemed to resonate with her own community as she shared with them her planning over the year. Nonetheless, van Duffelen says it was “an enormous struggle” to carry



Participants at the healing gathering receive the Eucharist.
Photo-Contributed

through. “Because the Church itself always had in mind to repeat what they had done in the past. And this is completely different.”

In the end, the gathering received wonderful support from the community—a community that includes many who have pulled away from Christian faith, in reaction to the residential schools experience.

This divide, between practicing Christians and some who wish exclusively to follow traditional practices concerns van Duffelen. “I worry that people feel threatened by the idea that if you’re a Christian, then you’re not a properly culturally integrated Indigenous person,” she says.

This division is painful to van Duffelen, but also to many in the community she serves. And she knows that to heal it requires an understanding of its origins. “We have to remember the Indigenous people here around James Bay, which is all that I can really speak of, were Christian Cree people for many years before the residential school experience. So they had no difficulties being Christian Cree people. But then the Church tried to strip away their Cree-ness...we’re now in the fallout of that act. So they no longer want to identify with the church, as a consequence.”

But with an attitude of openness and humility, the Anglican Church in this region is helping to rebuild that relationship: community leaders in Eastmain are coming to see the Church as an agent of healing. The

support shown by the Chief and band leaders—they provided a vehicle and driver to help with rides, and the wife of the Chief attended the circle on “Healing our Communities”—was a great encouragement to van Duffelen. “And at least one of the band councillors were present every time the [large] group gathered,” she says. “We gathered in the school gym for meals, we gathered at the beginning of the day before we split off into our circles, gathered for our Gospel singing, things like that....So that’s an enormous level of support.”

In an interview with the CBC*, Anglican Indigenous Bishop Mark MacDonald has said, “The relationship with institutional Christianity is tentative—and maybe tentative at best, as far as we can see. But the ideas, the principles about Jesus, about the Gospels, are very well received, still well received by people. So our task, really, is to focus on those principles and to hold the institutional aspect of it very lightly....I try to be as honest and open about the failures of the church as I am about the possibilities of good that I see from faith.”

Thinking back on the gathering in Eastmain, van Duffelen says it was “really, really fantastic...A lot of people took those big steps, began their healing journey. At the Eucharist itself, we practically doubled our showing, and they all came [up]. And then every single one of them lined up to receive anointing oil. Every single one. So it made an enormous difference that the people were comfortable enough in a Christian setting, in the Eucharist, to own that.”

The use of Gwich’in in Old Crow and Cree in Eastmain, to name just two of the many northern languages and dialects, is one of the keys to the integration of the Gospel with Indigenous culture—allowing the Gospel to shine more brightly, while also helping to preserve these languages and cultures.

Bishop Michael Hawkins (SK), Chair of the Council of the North, has said, “Part of our history as Anglican Christians in this country is the sad legacy of the



College Elder and part-time instructor at HBCM, The Ven. (emeritus) Lydia Constant. Photo-Marion Jenkins

residential schools, and the suppression of Indigenous languages. There’s also a happy and proud part of our history, which is the translation of the Scriptures and the Prayer Book and of the hymnbook into a variety of Indigenous languages by the early missionaries in this country. The continued use of those Indigenous languages and dialects across the Anglican Church of Canada is a gift, and it’s something I’m proud of and that we continue to attempt to preserve and to promote throughout the Council of the North.”

This healing work continues—from the work on Inuktitut, Cree and now Oji-Cree Bible translations to encouraging Indigenous languages in worship and the use of healing circles.

But it can also be clearly seen in the stories of individuals, like The Ven. Lydia Constant in the Diocese of Brandon. Constant’s many and varied ministries have included teacher and administrator at the Henry Budd College for Ministry, hospital chaplain and territorial archdeacon. She has also been an enduring presence in her own church and community of Opaskwayak Cree Nation. Constant worked for years as a school bus driver and now continues her contact with the community’s children, spending her mornings in a classroom as an elder. Marion Jenkins, Director of HBCM, describes Constant’s “very special ministry” to Opaskwayak’s elementary school as she provides classes in “basic Christian teaching.”

*Interviewed on CBC Sudbury’s *Points North* on June 23, 2014.

Constant's ministry has brought healing and spiritual guidance to so many, but it all began when she first set foot in the College. Jenkins explains, "Thirty years ago a very timid Lydia Constant set foot inside the doors of the Henry Budd Christian Training Centre as it was known in 1984." She had come to visit her friends who were in their 3rd year of studies, and was just popping in to "take a look." But, Jenkins says, Constant would later write in the College's 30th Anniversary book that she "found something that gave her comfort and solace in a time of personal distress." She persisted in her studies and, four years later, she was ordained.

The healing gatherings, the local training schools, the translation work—all of these depend upon patient and sacrificial ministry in northern communities, and an unshakeable faith in the power of our Lord to heal us, to forgive us and to reconcile us to each other.

Thinking back on what he has seen in his diocese, Bp. Robertson knows that more change, and more healing, is needed. But, he says, "Healing has begun; God is good."

Discussion Questions:

1. What are some healing ministries within your own parish community?
2. In the story, The Rev. van Duffelen realized that the workshop format that had been used in healing gatherings was not suited to the culture of her community.
 - What cultural barriers to ministry exist in your community?
 - Like the men in the Bible passage who lowered their friend through the roof, are there ways your parish can do things differently in order to bring people to Jesus for healing?
3. In the story, The Ven. Lydia Constant found personal healing through the church, and through studying for ministry at Henry Budd College for Ministry.

- Can you share a story of how the church or your faith have helped you to heal from a difficult experience?
- How can you share this in your everyday life? Do our actions and words point others to Jesus' healing power?

Going Further:

Please consider holding a Council of the North Sunday in your parish. Learn more here: <http://www.anglican.ca/cn/resourcesconmonth/>.

Closing Prayer:

"God, your son Jesus came to heal our broken and hurting world. We ask you for the courage to bring our brokenness to you with open and honest hearts, and we pray for our northern brothers and sisters on their journey to wholeness and healing. In Jesus' name, Amen."



Welcome & Introduction

(Study leader)

Opening Prayer

“We thank you, God, for the great diversity of ministries in our Church. Help us always to open our hearts to learn from each other; enrich our parish and your whole Church through this sharing. Amen.”

“I have been changed by the beautiful ministry that I saw—extraordinary ministry that I would not otherwise have witnessed.” —The Rev. Dr. Mike Foley, visitor to the Diocese of Saskatchewan.

Scripture Reading: Philippians 1:3-11

3 I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, 4 always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, 5 because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. 6 And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ. 7 It is right for me to feel this way about you all, because I hold you in my heart, for you are all partakers with me of grace, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel. 8 For God is my witness, how I yearn for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus. 9 And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, 10 so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, 11 filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

Stories of the Council

“I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now.” Across the Church, north-south partnerships are flourishing, and so is a sense that the Council of the North and the wider Church share a “partnership in the Gospel.” One of the great blessings of these partnerships is in learning that although there may be different challenges and different methods, the church in the North is engaged in the same mission as the rest of the Church. Ministry in the Council of the North truly is a ministry of the whole church, by the whole church.

Several years ago, the son of a northern Ontario chief, an Anglican, died in a Thunder Bay hospital. The chief said that the Church had failed him and his family because his son did not receive a visit from an Anglican priest. When Bishop Stephen Andrews (Diocese of Algoma) heard this, he was deeply concerned about providing better support for Indigenous Anglicans in his diocese—especially those who travel from the far north of Ontario down to Thunder Bay for medical or educational services. In many cases, it is as if a diocesan boundary comes between them and the pastoral care they need. Bishop Lydia Mamakwa (Bishop of the Indigenous Spiritual Ministry of Mishamikoweesh, based in Kingfisher Lake, ON) says there are other challenges too: “It’s the language barrier and some of them have never been to a city and they’re not familiar with the surroundings.”

Following a consultation between Bishops Andrews, Mamakwa and Mark MacDonald (National Indigenous Bishop), a committee called MAMOW—“together” was formed to ensure that Anglicans travelling south receive pastoral care from ministers who can, as Bp.

Mamakwa puts it, “read, and speak, and pray, and sing in Oji-Cree.” In the years since the partnership began, St. Paul’s in Thunder Bay, led by The Ven. Deborah Kraft, has worked closely with Bp. Mamakwa to recruit and train Indigenous layreaders, many of whom are originally from Mishamikoweesh.

Bp. Andrews has given Bp. Mamakwa licence to function episcopally in Thunder Bay—the first time this arrangement has been made in Canada. For her part, Bp. Mamakwa says, “I’m thankful this relationship is growing—it’s all for the glory of God.”

“It is right for me to feel this way about you all, because I hold you in my heart...” Another diocesan partnership exists—this one between the Anglican Parishes of the Central Interior and the Diocese of Montreal. Bishop Barbara Andrews (APCI) explains how the relationship began: “When we were facing the uncertain future after the demise of the Diocese of Cariboo, it was wonderful for us to have another diocese reach out to us in mutual support and friendship.” And that support and affection have grown: when Bp. Barbara describes the relationship, it is clearly much more than a formal one, but rather one that has taken root in the hearts of Anglicans in these two regions.

Sue Winn, Chair of the Montreal Partnership Group, says that Bp. Barbara is “much loved” in the Diocese of Montreal and the two dioceses have enjoyed “many visits and exchanges.” In an example of this cross-cultural sharing, at the Oct. 2015 Montreal synod, Bp. Barbara joined with The Rev. Annie Ittoshat (who serves Montreal’s Inuit congregation) to provide a workshop on Indigenous ministry.

And most recently, St. Paul’s Cathedral in Kamloops was blessed with the arrival from Montreal of The Rev. David Sinclair to serve as interim Dean. Sinclair praises one of the things he noticed in APCI: “The degree of pastoral care exercised by lay people is amazing – licenced Lay Ministers of Word and Sacrament do most of the care in Nursing homes and other care centres.” Sinclair saw the challenges too: “There are not the ancient stone buildings here, but maintaining wooden



Tony Whitehead receiving his Lay Reader’s scarf at St. Paul’s in Thunder Bay. Photo-Dave Coy.

ones can be just as demanding. Distances are quite staggering: Kamloops to Prince George is at least a six-hour drive, over 50 km between points in a parish.”

Bp. Barbara says that APCI’s interim Dean was “deeply interested in our mission and ministry. He asks a lot of questions and it is a joy to begin to see our ministry from another point of view.” Moving forward, she says the two dioceses are looking at the “twinning of parishes with real excitement” and are exploring ways to “use social media to share stories of the life and ministry of each of the twinned parishes.”

“And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.” On Sept. 21, 2015, Aigah Attagutsiak was ordained to the priesthood at Ottawa’s Christ Church Cathedral, bringing to completion a “good work” that The Rev. Roger Briggs had prayed for for over 30 years. Briggs was, until recently, Chaplain to the Inuit congregation meeting at St. Margaret’s Vanier in Ottawa, and had for many years hoped for the day that an Inuk priest could lead the congregation. Briggs had been closely involved in The Rev. Attagutsiak’s theological training and preparation for ordination. Attagutsiak, who moved to Ottawa from Arctic Bay in 1998, is the first Inuk to be ordained in a southern diocese. Both her ordination and the congregation she will help to lead are the fruit of a

long-term partnership between the Dioceses of Ottawa and the Arctic. That partnership has taken different forms over the years and at present is an informal one; however, the ties are strong and the congregation continues to grow.

Briggs, who spent much of his 50-year ministry in the Arctic, says the congregation was formed to serve Ottawa's Inuit population, which has seen major growth since the 1960s with Inuit coming south for education, medical care or employment. "The folk to whom we once went are now come amongst us," says Briggs.

On Sunday mornings, the congregation meets for the Inuktitut service followed by tea and bannock. And Rev. Attagutsiak will be there, continuing the leadership and care that, through a partnership between a northern and southern diocese, has made St. Margaret's Vanier a true spiritual home for Inuit Anglicans in Ottawa.

These partnerships can also be inspired by stories of northern ministry. "I was reading a copy of CONTACT*," says Nova Scotia priest, The Rev. Dr. Mike Foley, "and Bishop Michael [Hawkins] spoke about ministry of presence and about the sacrificial ministry happening in remote communities in northern SK....and it came to mind that I was pretty familiar with where I could bump into God in my daily travels in my ministry. But I wasn't at all sure where I would find God in a culture with which I had no familiarity at all."

And so, in the Fall of 2014, Foley found himself speaking with Bp. Hawkins in Prince Albert, SK and then moving on to visit Stanley Mission, and to help with ministry in Weyakwin, Hall Lake and La Ronge. Foley was quickly integrated into the daily ministry of the priests he visited—preaching, baptizing and assisting with funerals. He describes the work of lay minister Eugene Merasty and his wife, Alice, in Stanley



The Rev. Dr. Mike Foley and lay minister Eugene Merasty on the way to Holy Trinity, Stanley Mission. Photo-Alice Merasty.

Mission, SK: "It was wonderful to learn of Eugene's work—visiting homes at night, in what I truly believe was saving people. And as we were having dinner in the home, he shared with me that people are in the community and they're at his home and he is out and about and some of that is counselling people out of suicidal ideology. And, you know, this is his life. And regardless of how disruptive that it must be at times, there was no disruption that I could detect in his voice. It's who he was."

Foley reflects, "I'm afraid sometimes that church becomes so bureaucratized, and we become so concerned about keeping the church doors open, that we can lose a sense of our true mission."

Foley says this partnership also "stirred up hope" in him. He describes a Sun. afternoon baptism in Hall Lake, SK: "We arrived there at 1:45; church service was at 2:00...Well, at 1:45, there was no one there. And here I was thinking, 'Well no one's going to show up!' But in comes the first family—a very young couple, and they had a young child we baptized. Someone else came in. Within 10 min. the church was full! We performed 12 baptisms that day.... I'm thinking 'Christianity is alive and well and it's growing!'" Foley left Hall Lake that day with questions about the future of our church and

*CONTACT is the newsletter of the Council of the North.

where our priorities should be: “Christianity is growing phenomenally within our Indigenous communities—my eyes have been opened.”

“For God is my witness, how I yearn for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus.” Foley, whose parish is also interested in partnering with a northern Saskatchewan ministry, says, “As I prepare for Christmas services here, I have to tell you, very truthfully, that my mind’s also wandering to services going on in those communities I visited and I’ll be in touch with folks there very shortly.”

North-south partnerships can take many forms, but one of the most common is a parish-to-parish partnership. One of the longest-standing of these is between St. Matthew’s in Ottawa and a parish 750 km north on James Bay—St. Thomas’, Moose Factory (Diocese of Moosonee). Weekly prayers, emails and occasional visits keep the parishes connected. Several winters ago a group of four from Ottawa went to visit Moose Factory. “We toured them on who we were and took them on an overnight on the trapline,” says The Rev. Norm Wesley, Incumbent at St. Thomas’. “It was a great time in building relationships.”

Rick Trites, one of the visitors from Ottawa, says that with each step in the relationship they “come to understand a little bit more about differences in culture and how that manifests in our understanding of the core and boundaries of the relationship.”

These congregations continue to be in relationship, across the miles, and find that their cultural differences become not barriers, but opportunities for learning, and for strengthening a common mission, that they may both be *“filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.”*

Discussion Questions:

1. In this module, you’ve heard stories of bishops, parishes and individuals overcoming boundaries in order to work together to share the Gospel.
 - Think of a time when your parish tried to do

something like this—for example, working with local schools or community organizations. Reflect on the difficulties and rewards of this experience.

- Is there a natural opportunity in your community for partnership, something you could explore?

2. In this Module on Partnership and throughout this study, you’ve heard stories of northern and southern parishes, individuals and dioceses in relationship, learning from each other.

- What is one thing that you learned about ministry in the Council of the North that has surprised or inspired you?
- How has this study changed the way you think about ministry in your own life, parish, diocese or in the wider Church?

Going Further:

- 1) Participation in this study is itself a kind of partnership. Please write to us and let us know how this study has affected your own life or the life of your parish.*

- 2) As a group, pray for guidance around a specific northern ministry that you can support through a prayer partnership, or possibly another form of partnership. To learn more about parish partnerships, go to <http://www.anglican.ca/cn/north-south-parish-partnerships/>.

Closing Prayer:

“We thank you, God, for the mission of your Church in northern Canada. Let us hear your call to learn, to make new connections, and to deepen our partnership in the Gospel—that our love may abound more and more. Amen.”

*Send us a quick email at cnc@national.anglican.ca or see the final page of this study and provide us with more detailed feedback.

Donations

If you or your parish are interested in supporting the Council of the North financially, please make all cheques payable to: **The Anglican Church of Canada** with **The Council of the North** written in the memo line of the cheque. Cheques can be mailed to the following address:

Council of the North
c/o Giving with Grace
80 Hayden Street
Toronto, ON M4Y 3G2

You can also make either a one-time or a monthly donation online at this link:
<http://giving.anglican.ca>

Thank-you for your generosity.

Feedback

We are so thankful that you have been willing to give your time to study the Bible and to learn more about the Council of the North, and our prayer is that this study has been enriching to you and to your parish. One of the themes of this study has been “partnership.” Participation in this study is itself a kind of partnership, and we hope you will share your feedback with us now and that, going forward, you will be inspired to intensify your prayers and your support for those who serve in the North.

Please write to us at cnc@national.anglican.ca (Council of the North Communications) with your responses to the following:

- 1) Did you find this study helpful?
- 2) In reflecting on ministry in your own parish or personal life, what connections or commonalities with northern ministry came to mind?
- 3) Were there aspects of the northern ministry stories that were challenging to you or to your group?
- 4) Would you recommend this study to others?
- 5) What might you like to see in a future Bible study?