

The Parish Light

The Parish of the Northern Lights Newsletter
November 2019



A Prayer for Autumn Days

By Joyce Rupp

God of the seasons, there is a time for everything;
there is a time for dying and a time for rising.
We need courage to enter into the transformation process.

God of Autumn, the trees are saying goodbye to their green,
letting go of what has been.
We, too, have our moments of surrender, with all their insecurity and risk.
Help us to let go when we need to do so.

God of fallen leaves, lying in colored patterns on the ground,
our lives have their own patterns.
As we see the patterns of our own growth, may we learn from them.

God of misty days and harvest moon nights,
there is always the dimension of mystery and wonder in our lives.
We always need to recognize your power-filled presence.
May we gain strength from this.

God of harvest wagons and fields of ripened grain,
many gifts of growth lie within the season of our surrender.
We must wait for harvest in faith and hope.
Grant us patience when we do not see the blessings.

God of geese going south for another season, your wisdom enables us
to know what needs to be left behind
and what needs to be carried into the future.
We yearn for insight and vision.

God of flowers
touched with frost and windows wearing white designs,
may your love keep our hearts from growing cold in the empty seasons.

God of life,
you believe in us, you enrich us,
you entrust us with the freedom to choose life.
For all this, we are grateful.

Amen.



Remembrance Day



Lest We Forget

The 11th hour on the 11th day of the 11th month

The Minister's Message

My Friends:

In over 40 years of ministry in 4 Dioceses, which consisted of several language groups, races, and cultures, I have learned that although we may express them in different ways all people have the same basic needs. There are the physical needs of food and shelter. There are social needs of familiarity and being accepted on one hand and the need to be independent and challenged on the other. Then there are spiritual needs such as a hunger for the Holy Other (God), the need to please and be pleasing to God. It has been my experience that problems within the individual or community are because these needs are not met. I also believe that the physical, social and spiritual are dependent on each other to bring contentment and each influence the other. Because of these beliefs I see the Church, that's you and me as Christians, as God's channel for his healing and saving power to the world. We are the channel through which God reaches out into the world with His love that has the power to heal, bring peace, to change a life and help people to strive to their full potential as Children of God.

To do this we ourselves must be strong and healthy. We need to be in tune with God as individuals and as a body seeking and doing His will. Over the next year, I will commit myself to doing all that is in me to helping and guiding this Church to become all that God has in store for it.

This has many implications. We will look at strengthening our own relationship with God. It means seeking God's will for our individual life, as I believe we are all called to serve. Each has a role to play in God's plan and we need to discover what that is. It also means seeking God's will as congregations, as each congregation is different and finally it means seeking God's will as the Parish of Northern Lights.

This is a journey I commit to taking with you. Together we will seek, learn and serve. God has an amazing journey planned for us. I thank you for allowing me to be part of it.

Blessings.

Bishop Larry Robertson

Interim Minister

Lessons from the High North

Over the next few issues I would like to share with you some lessons I learned from my ministry in the Yukon and the Arctic.

When I first moved to the Arctic I tried to teach about the love of God. What I got at first was some confused stares, as if they did not know what I was talking about. I knew that many were strong Christians. So what was I saying that they did not understand? Overtime I learn that the problem was not with the Inuit, but with me.

You see, I was talking about love like an object that you could handle. This did not make a lot of sense to Inuit. Love was something you did, not something you had. In their language there is no word to deal with love as a subject. There was no word for love on its own. You can say "I love you", or "he loves them" but not "love". To the Inuit, Love was something you did, it was an action, not something you possessed.

This concept began to change the way I looked at things. We do not seek God's love as if it was packaged and handed out like a present. Instead we seek to know that God is loving us. We seek a relationship with God where we experience God loving us.

So much of what the Inuit taught me was that Christianity is not about having right beliefs as important as they are, but Christianity is about relationships: A relationship with God and relationships with each other. Our beliefs help us to define and shape those relationships.

I pray that God will enable me to love Him in a deeper way each day. I pray that I would know that God loves me. And I pray the same for you.

Blessings

Bishop Larry Robertson

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## **What is a prayer?**

Prayer doesn't only happen when we kneel or put our hands together and focus and expect things from God.

Thinking positive and wishing good for others is a prayer. When you hug a friend, that's a prayer. When you cook something to nourish family and friends. that's a prayer. When we send off our near and dear ones and say, 'drive safely' or 'be safe' – that's a prayer. When you are helping someone in need by giving your time and energy. You are praying. When you forgive someone, that is prayer.

Prayer is a vibration. A feeling, A thought. Prayer is the voice of love, friendship, genuine relationships. Prayer is an expression of your silent being in tune with God.

Keep praying always....

# And God Looked Down



Most seniors never get enough exercise. In His wisdom God decreed that seniors become forgetful so they would have to search for their glasses, keys and other things thus doing more walking.

*And God looked down and saw that it was good*

Then God saw there was another need. In His wisdom He made seniors lose coordination so they would drop things requiring them to bend, reach & stretch.

*And God looked down and saw that it was good.*

Then God considered the function of bladders and decided seniors would have additional calls of nature requiring more trips to the bathroom, thus providing more exercise.

*God looked down and saw that it was good.*

So if you find as you age that you are getting up and down more, remember it's Gods will. It is all in your best interest even though you mutter under your breath.



## Reasons Why Even Committed Church Attenders Are Attending Church Less Often

A growing number of kids are playing sports. And a growing number of kids are playing on teams that require travel. Many of those sports happen on weekends. And affluent parents are choosing sports over church.

Despite a wobbly economy, travel is on the rise, both for business and pleasure. More and more families of various ages travel for leisure, even if it's just out of town to go camping or to a friend's place for the weekend or a weekend at the lake.

And when people are out of town, they tend to not be in church.

Fortunately, more and more blended families and single parent families are finding a home in church.

So how does this translate into attendance patterns?

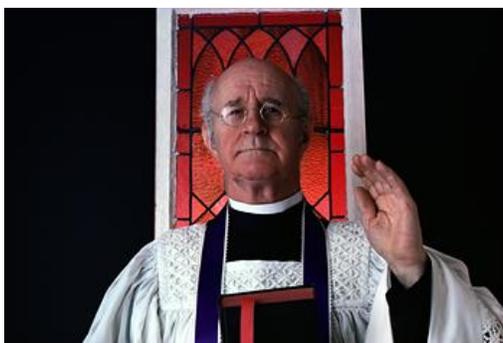
Church leaders need to remember that when custody is shared in a family situation, 'perfect' attendance for a kid or teen might be 26 Sundays a year. Similarly, while the affluent might not be in church because of *access* to reliable transportation, single parents (who, not always, but often, struggle more financially) might not be in church because they *lack access* to reliable transportation.

So here's the strange twist. People who *have* a car are often not in church *because* they have a car. People who *want* to be in church are often *not* in church because they *don't* have a car or because it's not their 'weekend' for church.

Sadly, people who want to get to church simply can't.

Words of Carey Nierwhorf

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A priest was invited to attend a house party. Naturally, he was properly dressed and wearing his priest's collar.

A little boy kept staring at him the entire evening. Finally, the priest asked the little boy what he was staring at.

The little boy pointed to the priest's neck. When the priest finally realized what the boy was pointing at, he asked the boy, "Do you know why I am wearing this?"

The boy nodded his head yes, and replied, "It kills fleas and ticks for up to three months."



Your Prayers are requested for the 3 nominations for the New Bishop of Athabasca to be elected on **Nov 16**. The following is a excerpt from the Facepage of the Diocese of Athabasca.
Candidates for Bishop of Athabasca

The members of the Electoral Search Committee have unanimously agreed to nominate the following people for candidates in the election for Bishop of Athabasca:

- The Reverend Canon David Greenwood,
All Saints' Anglican Church, Athabasca
- The Very Reverend Jason Haggstrom,
Saint James' Cathedral, Peace River
- The Venerable Canon Terry Leer,
Archdeacon for Mission Development

Please continue to hold the Electoral Synod in your prayers and especially the candidates and their families.



St Andrew's Zion Church Colinton & St Thomas Church Perryvale
Presents their

Christmas Tea, Craft and Bake Sale

Saturday, November 23rd

St Andrew's Zion Church Hall, Colinton

10:00 am to 1:00 pm

Back by popular demand

Another Taste Of Syria

A celebration of Syrian Cuisine Buffet Meal

Sunday, November 10th - Athabasca Seniors Centre

5:00-7:00 pm ... \$35. Adult/\$15. Child

Sponsored by the Syrian Refugee Support Group

For Tickets, call Jan at 780-675-3083