

THE MONTRÉAL LAY READER
LE PRÉDICATEUR MONTRÉALAIS

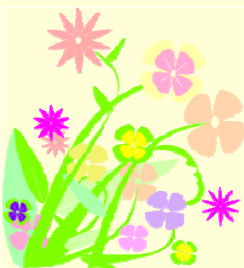


The newsletter for lay readers of the Anglican Diocese of Montreal
Le bulletin des prédicateurs laïcs du diocèse anglican de Montréal

MARCH 2016

INSIDE THIS
ISSUE:

It's Still Winter but Spring is Coming!	2
Following His Example	4
From Oka to Afghanistan, Prayer transcends borders	5
Paris the Day After	7
Reflections	8
The Bishop's Messenger	9
2016 Study Day and Commissioning Service	11
In Memoriam Margery Brown	11
2016 Spring Retreat Registration Form	12



SPRING RETREAT AT MANOIR D'YOUVILLE

Ile St. Bernard, Chateauguay

Friday April 29 (5 pm) to Sunday, May 1, 2016 after lunch



Speaker: The Rev. Danny Whitehead is a priest and Ministry Developer in Lytton and Scw'exmx Parishes in British Columbia. Danny has been serving in APCI, the Anglican Parishes of the Central Interior, since 2013. Previously Danny provided sacramental and pastoral presence and Christian Education to faith communities in North Dakota, USA.

His experiences as a social worker and a mental health therapist, as well as his work with indigenous peoples enables Danny to speak about the Ministry of Presence, Ministry to the Marginalized in our Society, and Self-Care for Caregivers. Danny has sent us the following message:

"I'm Danny and this is a picture of me this past Maundy Thursday when our faith community decided to wash windshields instead of feet. I send you greetings from our Territory, which will hopefully have a name soon. I look forward to meeting all of you and sharing your spring retreat when I hope and pray that we will have an opportunity to grow together in our understanding of the Ministry of Presence with a focus on the Marginalized in Our Society, while incorporating some Self Care.

I love to read. I am thinking that we can use novels written by two of my favourite Canadian authors, Joseph Boyden and Miriam Toews, in preparation for our time together. I am asking each of you to read, or perhaps reread, **one** of following novels prior to our time together.

Joseph Boyden:

Three Day Road
Through Black Spruce
The Orenda

Miriam Toews:

Summer of My Amazing Luck
A Complicated Kindness
All My Puny Sorrows

While reading I ask you to consider: What marginalized groups or individuals are depicted in the novel? What opportunities for ministry come to mind? You may want to jot down a few notes and come prepared to discuss your chosen novel in the context of our discussions. Most of all, I want you to come prepared to have a good time, to be refreshed, renewed and empowered to continue the ministry for which you are called."

Please see last page for registration form



IT'S STILL WINTER BUT SPRING IS COMING!

The Rev. Lorne Eason

Listening to the weather forecast recently and its projection that freezing rain was on the way, I decided to go to the hardware store and buy more rock salt to spread out on the sidewalk and driveway in the hope of making both safe to walk on during the impending slippery conditions.

While in the store I decided that besides buying bags of salt, I would also buy a plastic jug of salt, designed specifically to dispense the salt in a relatively easy and clean manner. But I couldn't find these unique jugs. So instead of doing the easy thing and asking a sales person for help, I walked through the whole store looking for these particular containers. I'm sure it took me a good 10 minutes to finally find them. It was while I was traipsing through the store that I noticed the store's inventory being changed. The shelves were now being stocked with items for the spring season; garden tools, lawnmowers, lawn care products, camping gear and so on, while certain products particular to winter were being taken away.

Here it is the end of February, the dead of winter really, and the hardware store is looking forward to Spring, preparing for a new season. And the thought occurred to me, isn't that what we in the Church are doing in the season of Lent, preparing ourselves for a new season, the coming season of Easter? It's a season that celebrates the beginning of a new creation in Christ, that acknowledges the start of a sea change in human experience with God and with one another, and one that anticipates a new future filled with hope and the eternal presence and intimacy with God?

This is what I think Paul is reminding the Corinthian Christians and us of in the 5th chapter of his 1st letter to the Corinthians when he writes,

"So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!"

The blessing of the Lenten season is that it calls us to set aside time, time to reorient ourselves, to take stock of our spiritual and personal inventory and refocus on the hope and promise of Easter and the new life made possible in Christ's resurrection from the dead. It is a time to ask God to help us identify those attitudes, habits and practices that may be inhibiting us from receiving God's love more fully and of giving that love more generously, especially when the changes and chances of life sometimes leave us feeling like our lives are being held in the cold grip of winter, a winter that doesn't want to let go.

The blessing of the Lenten season is that it reminds us that Easter is right around the corner and so too our celebration of the goodness of God and new life with Him and each other offered in and through Christ.

continued on next page

And so my prayer for you dear Lay Readers is that your faith and witness may continue to be renewed and strengthened this Lenten and Easter season, and that your ministry as ambassadors for Christ and trustees of the ministry of reconciliation be exercised with a measure of God's grace, love and steadfastness.

Your fellow servant in Christ,

Lorne +

Rev. Lorne Eason

Pastor to the Lay Readers

LAY READERS' ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

WEDNESDAY, MAY 25, 2016

5:30 PM

Fulford Hall, Cathedral Place

1444 Union Avenue

Montreal

Mark your calendars now for this time of fellowship, dinner and our annual business meeting.

- 5:30 pm Gathering and Registration
- 6:15 pm Dinner (\$10 for a delicious dinner prepared by Chef Juliet Komboni)
- 7:30 pm Business Meeting (Annual Reports and Elections)
- 8:30 pm Closing Prayer and Dismissal

Please bring your thoughts and ideas for our year ahead! We look forward to seeing you all at this important meeting!



FOLLOWING HIS EXAMPLE

Glen Marcotte



Following His example, Christ's message to us today continues to be one of service. Through service, lay readers use their skills and develop gifts to support God's children in responding to His grace. This raison d'être fuels your Association's comings & goings. It also assures the Association's on-going vitality & its quest for creativity in reaching out to others.

Bishop Mary Irwin Gibson and Dean Paul Kennington illustrated this vision during our November 21st 2015 Study Day & Commissioning Service. Subsequent to the taking ill of our planned speaker, the Rev. Dr. Eileen Scully. Bishop Mary & Dean Paul enriched our understanding of wholeness, leadership & liturgy for the community. As the day progressed, the fellowship & creativity (including music) bathed us in the assurance of God's presence & love.

The Saturday workshops continue to be well attended as they are being offered away from the MDTC. Rev. Ralph Levitt's September 26, 2015 Saturday workshop at St. Francis of the Birds Church in St. Sauveur on *The Spirituality of the Lay Reader* broadened our understanding of the spiritual path. The Thomistic spiritual path of the spirit focuses on the intellect & teaching, the Franciscan path on service & fellowship, the Augustinian path on devotion & the mystery of God while at the heart of the Ignatian path is asceticism & prayer. The January 23rd, 2016 workshop given by Rev. Brian Perron at the Church of the Epiphany, Verdun spoke to ministry & outreach to the community at large. Important instances of sharing the Good News were explored, particularly in the varying contexts of those thirsting for God's love. Reaching out, particularly to the disenfranchised, will be further explored in the February, March & June workshops. Rev. Danny Whitehead will lead our April 29-May 1st annual retreat in his exploration of *The Ministry of Presence: Ministry to the Marginalized.*"

Strengthening our kinship with the francophone members of our lay reader family is key to our vision: to support God's children in responding to His grace. It would be helpful to establish a working group from our membership to put this into practice. Our first step would be to translate this newsletter. Can I count on you to help out?

Please feel free to call me at 514-527-1573 for any assistance that you may be able to offer in the realization of this goal.

In His Service,

Glen Marcotte

President

FROM OKA TO AFGHANISTAN, PRAYER TRANSCENDS BORDERS

Anne Claude Geoffrion

A few years ago an Afghan friend of mine called me to say he had just received terrible news from Afghanistan. His twelve year old nephew was in critical condition following a car accident and the prognosis was grim. I had known Safi for only a short time and knew of course that he was Muslim so even though I felt a bit shy, I asked him if he would allow me to pray for his nephew and to ask for prayers at our church. He said that prayers would be much appreciated. Over the next few weeks, we were in touch and his nephew's condition did not improve and his family was told there was no hope. A few days later, my phone rang at three in the morning. It's always unsettling to have the phone ring at such a time and I answered it with trepidation. It was Safi. He was euphoric. He had just received a call from Afghanistan telling him his nephew had regained consciousness and that the doctors were expecting him to make a complete and full recovery. They were astonished and said the young boy's recovery was miraculous.

Safi was almost in tears and kept saying "Thank you, we all thank you, my family, my nephew's family thank you. You and your church saved my nephew's life. Your prayers saved his life". I had goosebumps. I tried to explain to Safi that we had not saved his life, that only God could have done that and we had only added our prayers to his but he insisted our prayers had brought about this miracle. A year later, his nephew wrote saying he would like to come to Canada one day and meet the people who had prayed for him and saved his life.

I can't really explain how this whole story made me feel. I still have goosebumps just thinking about it. I feel as if I was the conduit through which God worked his healing power. It was as if I was an inert electric wire and God the Divine passed through the wire to bring about change.



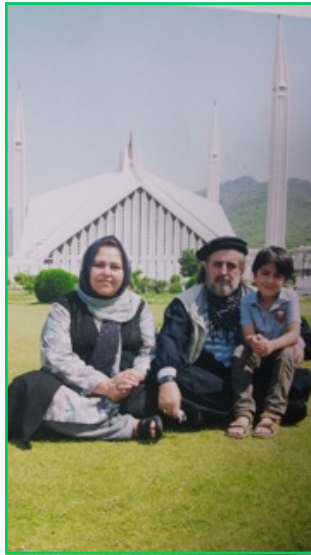
Safi

Something else happened a few months ago which again confirmed for me this Divine connection. Safi regularly goes back to Afghanistan with his wife and 8 year old son. As we all know the Afghan situation is only getting worse every day. News of suicide bombers and multiple deaths and injuries happen daily and I fear for their lives. Safi calls me regularly every two weeks or so. A few months ago, he asked me if I still pray for him and I said: 'Of course, you know I do'. He said: "When was the last time you prayed for me?" I said: "I prayed for you this morning, Why?" It seemed like an odd question to ask.

Well, it turned out that that afternoon he and his wife Safia and their son Said Jamaluddin were driving in Kabul with their body guards when a car bomb exploded 10 meters in front of them killing over 40 people and injuring a hundred more. The people in the two cars behind them and on both sides of them were killed. Safi's car was totalled, the front end nothing but twisted metal, yet they and their body guards were unhurt, not even a scratch.

There is a 9 hour and a half hour difference between Kabul and Montreal. When we compared times we realized I was praying for them at around 6:45 am which is 16:15 Kabul time when the car bomb went off. Safi told me: "You saved our lives" and he could not have been more serious even though I kept telling him that God had saved him not me. His argument: "You prayed for Allah's protection on us. Everybody around us died or were badly injured, we were the only ones not hurt. Your prayer saved us!"

continued on next page



**Safi's wife Safia Siddiqi,
Safi and their son Said
Jamaluddin in Jalalabad**

Again, I am speechless by this divine coincidence. Here is a Muslim man thanking me a Christian for saving his life through prayer. Like all human beings, I am a weak and powerless vessel, but I am nevertheless a creation of God with a spark of the Divine in my soul. When we pray and reach out to our Divine Creator, we tap into his awesome power. He in return responds to our pleas and channels His Divine power through our prayers and that is a game-changer. Prayer is universal, prayer transcends boundaries and religions. We are all children of God whether we call Him God, Creator, Allah, Yaweh or something else. I have always believed in the power of prayer but these very special and powerful experiences have only increased my trust and confidence in Him. We can all trust in Him, He is our Strength and our Redeemer.



**A shepherd praying
Afghanistan**



**Communal prayer at
Safi's home compound in
Jalalabad**

PARIS THE DAY AFTER...

Ian Sinclair



We were within half an hour of boarding a plane for Paris, and I was browsing CBC News on my phone. There it was – a news flash – terrorist attacks in Paris, of all places! The borders were closed – our flight was boarding! Once on, we asked the stewardess about it – she knew nothing. We settled down, wondering what we were heading for.

We arrived at Charles de Gaulle, and spent time in a long and very patient line at customs. The metro was running, and we found the hotel with no trouble – in the arrondissement next to the one that had suffered the attacks!

The city was eerily quiet, except for the incessant tolling of bells. First one church, then another, they rang on and on, the sound filling the mournful streets. It was a time to be sad with the people of Paris. I could imagine them sitting in their living rooms, watching their TVs in disbelief.

We met our friends, and wandered over to the closed Place Pompidou, its enormous square occupied by a few people walking in pairs and talking quietly. A street artist had chalked “Pray for Paris” at one end of the plaza. We were sad, and prayed inwardly, but also aware that we were looking on a troubled city as visitors. All museums were closed – it was a time to wander.

We headed to a restaurant known for its *soupe à l'oignon*, and sat down to hearty bowls of soup at a table by the sidewalk. It wasn't hard to get good tables – restaurants were empty, the streets were vacant. We were finished and had paid the bill, and were lingering with our coffee when a man came by crying in loud wails. The brusque *maitre d'* came out and embraced the sobbing man, holding him as he grieved the loss of a companion.

Only then did it come home – the bells were ringing for the many who had just died, and here was someone who had lost a friend or a lover. We left quietly, having put one face on the tragedy of a city.



It was good to be there. The next day, the Parisians came out in force. We were on a busy pedestrian mall, and stopped for waffles. The waffle man said there had just been a scare on his street, and he had wondered where he could hide. Then he remarked to us, “What can you do? Eat waffles!”

We enjoyed our waffles, and continued to wander. We prayed for Paris, and the man who had lost a friend so tragically. Life goes on – *la vie continue à Paris*.

REFLECTIONS

Geraldine Frances Kavanagh

Recently, taking a pause from my crocheting, I sat, wool-gathering, looking out the window into our back yard. Without realizing it, my eyes were drawn to a particular rotting tree, and I noticed, for the first time, a silhouette of a face. Why hadn't I seen it before, I asked myself. Then I began to wonder if there was anything else that I had been looking at but not really seeing. I remembered something that I had recently read:

"It is only with the heart that one can see rightly; what is essential is invisible to the eye."

-Antoine de Saint Exupery-novelist

I wondered what it would take to see with my heart. First, I had to go to a quiet place within. Slowing down isn't easy in our fast-paced present. With time and practice, and of course, patience, I was able to feel the quietness even in the most chaotic environment. Then and only then was I able to really see what I was looking at. Believe me, at first it was a rude awakening.

People became more human as I began to understand the meaning behind smiles, expressions, sighs, gestures and things left unsaid. Colours were more vibrant; scents more aromatic; sounds sharper. I realized that these things had always been that way, but, since I had slowed down and became more aware, it was me that was seeing the world differently. Words like empathy and compassion took on a real meaning; I was learning how to see instead of just looking and hear instead of just listening. These exercises had an added bonus: they took the importance away from me and directed it to where it was needed ---family, friends, places and situations. What an enriching experience!

I believe that God sends us messages when He knows that we are ready to receive them, and that day, sitting on my love seat, day-dreaming, my message came through loud and clear. What a gift it has been.

I'll be seeing you!



THE BISHOP'S MESSENGER:

A STEP ALONG THE WAY TO WOMEN IN THE PRIESTHOOD

Ann Cumyn

We all have relatives, no longer living, from whom we would like to have discovered more about their past! My Aunt Monica, was a Bishop's Messenger. It was not until I started to write about her and *Googled* 'Bishop's Messenger' that I learned that she, with the others like her, has a place in the history of the development of the role of women in the church.

Monica had been the daughter who stayed at home to look after her aging mother. Her mother died in 1938 and Monica, my shy, retiring aunt, felt a call to do something for God. As a result she went to St Christopher's College in Blackheath, just southeast of London. St Christopher's was a college for women that combined theological study with theory and practice in education. In 1940 she left England to be a Bishop's messenger in Manitoba.

A Bishop's messenger was a lay person licensed by the Bishop to look after a church when there were insufficient ordained priests. There were limitations on what they were permitted to do. They could take services, preach, baptize in an emergency and bury the dead. The only difference between them and ordained priests, was that they could not consecrate the elements of the Eucharist or conduct weddings. This concept came from England (!!) where, beginning in 1917, Bishop's messengers were licensed to fill the gap in the number of priests created by the enormous casualties in WWI. England did not continue with this licensing of women. However, the concept was taken abroad, including to Canada, by Bishops who had originally come from England. Bishop's messengers served in Canada from 1928 to 1979.

Monica would visit us from time to time and talk about her experiences. Between 1940 and 1956 Monica served in three places. She went first to Eriksdale. There the congregation was large enough to need two messengers. When you consider their duties you will understand why her partner, Claire, was more than once introduced to a visitor as 'this is the person who buries people'! Although the messengers could not preside over the Eucharist, there was a travelling priest, known as the TP. Every so often the TP would come for a day or two. Then there would be a service of Holy Communion and from time to time a wedding. One such TP was known for his speediness when driving across the prairies. He could be seen from afar by the speedball of dust coming ever closer, and, as most of the roads were very narrow, it was wise to pull into the first passing place and wait for him to rush past. This TP did not back up for lowly citizens!

In rural areas Halloween could be taken seriously by the local youth. More than once All Saints day dawned and the outhouse was no longer there! The villagers were very quick to find the outhouse and the culprits and demand that it be restored to its rightful place. There appears to be little doubt that these women messengers were appreciated and protected by the congregation.

Unfortunately, like many of a younger generation, I did not ask enough questions. I remember only a few things. Monica loved children and led a Brownie Pack wherever she worked. She loved gardening and in the spring she would sow flowers and vegetables in the earth that had been piled against the house in the fall for extra insulation.

continued on next page

The houses in which she lived were wooden and were heated by a wood stove. One extremely cold winter's night at Eriksdale, she and Claire had over stoked the stove and to their horror it started to turn red. That night they took turns in sleeping so that, should a fire start, one of them would be awake to alert the other and they could both escape to safety.

Monica served in two other places, Wabowden and somewhere else, I have forgotten the name. She was on her own in these places. All I remember about the former was that she was surprised to learn that the name was not aboriginal, but the name of the person who had founded the town: Mr. W.A.Bowwden!

Eriksdale no longer has an Anglican church. The old church, which now has a hall attached at the back, is part of Eriksdale's museum.



**2016 LAY READER STUDY DAY AND
COMMISSIONING SERVICE**

**SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 2016
9:30 AM - 3:30 PM**

**Church of St. John the Baptist, Pointe Claire
233 ave Ste. Claire
Pointe Claire**



Speaker and Leader: Bishop Mary Irwin-Gibson

**Topic: "Supporting the Diocesan Vision and Mission Through our
Work and Words"**

Lay Readers have a privileged opportunity to be part of a diocesan and/or parish ministry team. They often minister in places where there are limited clergy resources.

How can we support and enrich the communities we serve?

**The Right Reverend
Mary Irwin-Gibson**

A fee of \$35 covers all refreshment breaks, lunch and materials

Commissioning Service and Evening Prayer with Bishop Mary Irwin-Gibson
3:30 pm, followed by a reception for all family and friends

**In Memoriam
Margery Brown 1939-2016**

The Lay Reader Association was saddened by the passing of Margery Brown, a dedicated lay reader for many years.

A requiem in thanksgiving for Margery's life was held on Saturday, February 27th, 2016, at St. Margaret of Antioch in Saint-Hubert. Several of her colleagues participated in the service: Luvina Scope as altar server and leader of the psalm. Valerie Bennett led the prayers of the people. Carol Gingera and Gloria Augustus also represented the Lay Readers at the service.

The celebrant was the Venerable Michael Robson, assisted by The Rev. Christopher Belle. The Rev. Linda Faith Chalk delivered the eulogy. Margery will be sadly missed by friends and family.



*"Give rest, O Christ, to your servant with your saints,
Where sorrow and pain are no more,
Neither sighing, but life everlasting."*

ANNUAL RETREAT REGISTRATION FORM
Lay Readers of Montreal
April 29 to May 1, 2016

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Food allergies and special requests:

Payment for room:

Please call Sue Winn to determine room availability at 514-457-0736.

Single with bath (\$265) \$ _____

Single no bath (\$200) \$ _____

Twin beds with bath (\$175) \$ _____

All six meals, snacks and materials included.

Please make cheques payable to: **The Lay Readers' Association**

Please mail form and cheque to:

The Lay Readers' Association of the Diocese of Montreal

c/o Ann Cumyn

71 Strafford Road

Baie D'Urfé, QC H9X 2Y7

acumyn@sympatico.ca

514-457-5280

Please click here for Google Map

or type this url into your browser:

<https://goo.gl/QoAYQR>