

One World, One Faith, Many Nations

Bishop Jane Alexander

Fourth Week of Lent

Friday April 1

Scripture

Romans 8:19, 22

For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God... We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labour pains until now.

Reflection

Romans 8:19 reminds us that “creation is standing on tiptoe for the children of God to be revealed.” We might not be able to hear the groaning of plants and soil and air, but we can see it. We can hear the groaning and the cries of our brothers and sisters. Every single step we take to care for creation is a tiny act of healing. Our individual choices make a difference – and when those many small changes are networked with multitudes of others, they can lead to transformational change. The voice of faith is important in the current ecological crisis because although we recognize the seriousness of the current situation, we do not lose hope.

The Arctic National Wildlife Refuge is under threat. It is known by the Gwich'in people as “the Sacred place where life begins” – they treat it as holy, not even stepping on it – for it is the calving area of the Porcupine Caribou herd. As one activist said “we have always depended on the caribou, now the caribou are depending on us.” The majority of Gwich'in people are Anglican/Episcopalian. Indigenous communities around the world are the frontline groups facing climate change and biodiversity loss – for they live in high risk environments. They include nomadic herders living on desert margins, fishers in small and low-lying islands, hunters across the Arctic and dwellers of the forests. Archbishop Mark MacDonald says “whatever hits society at large, be it climate change, epidemics, or other disasters, usually hits the First Peoples hardest.” (Anglican Alliance)

Prayer

*Creator of glaciers, vast reaches of tundra and pools of life, we pray for the North:
For northern migrating herds of caribou and pods of whales,
for polar bears, seals and reindeer;
For northern birds that migrate from farthest north to deepest south;
For the peoples of the far North across Siberia,
for the Saami of Scandinavia,
for Inuit and First Nations of Canada,
who have lived in and cared for the land and its creatures.
PWRDF Prayer in the Four Directions, Anglican Alliance website*

Cold weather, warm hearts

In Dawson City, St. Paul's Church supported PWRDF in its response to the wildfires in Fort McMurray and its contribution to safe water and sanitation in Pikangikum First Nation in northern Ontario. Built with money donated by gold miners in 1902, the church organizes a Shrove Tuesday Pancake supper to raise money for causes such as PWRDF, as well as a women's shelter and whatever local needs may arise.

In Moosehide, just north of Dawson City where many of the Tr'ondek First Nation went after gold prospectors descended on Dawson at the turn of the 19th century, St. Barnabas Church is still standing, but with an ever-so-weak floor. Georgette McLeod says Tr'ondek hope to see the church restored, for the community to grow more confident, and for settler populations to learn more and to right the wrongs of history, such as of residential schools and overfishing.

Dan Davidson, the editor of the local Klondike Sun says it well: "In St. Paul's and in all the parishes in the Yukon, we know how important it is to follow Christ's command to care for others and that the need is sometime local, sometime in Canada, something further afield... it's important to be involved. We need to try to do all these things, not choose one over another."

PWRDF Diocesan Representative Betty Davidson (right) talks to a parishioner at Christ Church Cathedral in Whitehorse about PWRDF.

The people of St. Paul's as well as St. Martin's got behind the purchase of a solar suitcase from last year's Gifts for Mission gift guide. The process of working together to select a gift and organize fundraising was an entry point to learn of the needs and opportunities that solar-generated light can bring to health facilities in the most remote parts of Mozambique. The solar suitcases have really "perked up our eyes," says Bishop Larry. "People in the Yukon know what it's like to be isolated, where lights go out, in storm without power, 25 degrees below, when it's dangerous, in times of storm, when generators go down. It makes us realize that the work of PWRDF is such a great thing – an established way of giving for the church, part of who we are."

At the Church of the Northern Apostles and Christ Church Cathedral in Whitehorse, people asked how we partner with local churches and organizations, how we work ecumenically, how our support is making an impact and how we are increasing support in case of emergencies here in Canada. The Whitehorse churches have organized community barbeques to raise money for local needs and for refugee support – and of which there are an increasing number in the Yukon too.

"People are caring," says Betty Davidson. "If there is an emergency in Haiti or Nepal or famine in South Sudan, everyone is keen to know where we can send our money. It's our responsibility, it's a Christian thing to do."

Read the whole story on our website at

<https://pwrdf.org/cold-weather-warm-hearts-pwrdf-in-the-yukon-diocese/>