

Dear Friend of the Cathedral,



We are all trying to keep happy and positive and many of us are succeeding! Two of our Church School children made this delightfully optimistic drawing of their family outside their house. I wonder if anyone has written a thesis about bluebirds as symbols of hope?

There is good news about Duncan Shaddick. His daughter Anne wrote “We are just waiting for Dad to have two positive tests and then he can go back to his home. He is doing very well and grew a beard, which we think looks great.”

We were delighted to welcome Canadian Primate Linda Nicholls to our morning services last Sunday. You can listen to her sermon by following the link to recent sermons from the website <https://www.montrealcathedral.ca/in-the-time-of-covid-19/> She spent quite some time answering people’s questions, and webmaster Jane has posted some useful links around the topics discussed. You will find them in this same section of the website, along with Daily Bread reflections, previous newsletters and information about chat rooms. We owe Jane an enormous thank you for the hours of work she puts into the website.

One of the things you’ll find on this same page is the glorious video made by Jonathan of our choir singing the Palestrina motet, Sicut Cervus. Hearing it during the service on Sunday brought me – and I suspect others – to tears on Sunday. There will be more choral pieces in the service from time to time – not every week because of the huge amount of work involved.



<https://www.facebook.com/cccmusic/videos/339666610354936/>

Nick Capozzoli, our Assistant Organist, has put together a sing-along tribute to Patrick Wedd, our previous Choir Director, who had retired in June 2018 and died on May 18 last year. You will see many pictures of the choir and hear the hymn “How can I sing that majesty?” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wyR57gHZZ4I&feature=youtu.be> Have a tissue handy and join in the singing!

I think quarantining must be particularly hard on students and on pregnant women, so I asked Ben and Erica Stuchbery how they are managing during this crisis. Here is what Ben wrote to us:

For Erica and I everything feels like it’s part of waiting for baby. For the most part, we are enjoying the gift of time that we’ve been afforded due to the lockdown measures. I finished my Master’s degree at McGill, and am devoting my time to caring for our household. I will be returning to Dio in the fall for my last year of seminary which may begin online. I will have to wait and see how that unfolds. Erica is doing all of her teaching online and has only one week to go before she starts parental leave. I am enjoying sinking into the rhythms of daily life: sleeping, eating, washing, praying, moving, cooking, conversing, sitting. With nowhere else to be, and nothing else to do, I find myself appreciating the gift of small tasks and small moments which give shape to my day. Its a holy exercise in patience! Baby preparations are well underway. We have plenty of diapers washed and ready to use, lots of very cute clothing, a car seat, and prepared meals ready to eat in the freezer (further food contributions welcome!) The pandemic lockdown has brought its challenges. Mostly we are saddened that we will be unable to introduce our newborn to so many of our friends and family in the near future, at least not in person. We feel that loss. Yet we know that the love of our community will nevertheless surround us when it is time to welcome our baby into the world. We are sure of that. We are also fortunate that Erica will be giving birth with the midwives at the Côte-des-Neiges birthing centre. There she will have an excellent team to support her, and happily, partners are permitted to accompany the birthing parent!

Being confined to the city is also hard on people used to large open spaces – the woods, the mountains, the sea. Robin Durnford is from Dorset, England, and Newfoundland, so greatly misses the ocean. She sent us this wistful poem.

Bells of Montreal
May 3, 2020

it doesn't stop
for ten minutes clangclangclang
like god coming at us, and I'm sick
of these peals I want sadness not joy,
the sea's sonorous rhythms
not the city playing coy
among the *cloches des églises*
ambulances chase me
to flesh out holiness
outside I glare at the sky with wonder:
who are you, where do you go
in the pew I feel lonely,
unfounded, with Handel or Bach
I feel counfounded, drifting
down that endless aisle
today the world drowned
in ancient sounds rippling still:
church-knell spells
sirens' song

Another person used to wilder spaces is Anne Douglas who has spent much time up North in the community of Arctic Bay. Here is a description of her research and what she is doing during the pandemic.



Arctic Bay

For some years I have been writing an account of the changing way of life among the Inuit of Arctic Bay, the most northerly settlement on Baffin Island. This is where I carried out the field work for my doctorate in anthropology and education, learning to what extent parents here could influence the local school system, an institution recently imported from the “south”.

Previously, as a teacher for McGill's Native and Northern teacher training programme, and as a facilitator for indigenous communities' school boards, I had been taken aback by the persistently colonial approaches on the part of many non-indigenous educators, particularly their reluctance to learn what knowledge and learning methods the communities themselves preferred.

When I first arrived in Arctic Bay in 1991, school was a relatively new phenomenon. People were still moving in from their family camps in the mid-seventies, and the majority of adults over 35 were unilingual; in fact Inuktitut was the prevailing language. Over time, as I visited community members and attended meetings, I realized that while parents wanted their children to learn standard school knowledge, their main concern lay in preserving their own culture—not simply the language and knowledge, but almost more importantly, their culture's morality.

While I eventually completed my thesis, I felt I had left the real story untold, hence the book I'm writing, ***What Was Left Behind***. The title implies, on the one hand, a past way of life, but on the other, the still vibrant cultural heritage left by passing generations.

Although I went north to learn about school, All Saints Anglican church was my real entrée to the community. Inuktitut, with its unfamiliar structure and challenging pronunciation, was a difficult language. But as I could read the syllabic alphabet, I sang along to the familiar hymn tunes. My new friends thought I knew more than I really did!

I had hoped to finish the book by the end of this June, but I have learned to accept that, under our current strange way of life, there are days when the analytical part of my brain just won't function. On many evenings I enjoy watching National Film Board films, free to all of us on their web site: <https://www.nfb.ca/> There are some particularly fine films, both old and new, about (and by) First Nations. Two films by Boyce Richardson, visually and historically interesting, recall the time of the James Bay and Northern Quebec agreement, Job's Garden and Cree Hunters of Mistassini. But there are endless choices—have a look!

We have been invited to attend a zoom conference “Culture pour tous”, 5 – 6:30 pm on May 27. It is being organised by Lab Culture, an initiative of the Quebec government to protect and expand cultural initiatives in Quebec. The invitation in French translates as “You are invited to an online happy hour for the unveiling of the brand new version of the Culture for All Cultural Lab. Come and discover the six innovative projects that won the hearts of the jury! Coming from different regions of Quebec, this 5th cohort shares a common territory, that of divergent and creative thinking, where an impressive diversity of disciplines, actors and communities come together.” I imagine the conference will mainly be in French, but it sounds very interesting. Some Cathedral people are planning to attend. If you would like to join the group you will find more information and the way to register for the conference here <https://www.facebook.com/Culturepourtous> Their website also has a document in both languages on the challenges faced by cultural communities today.

Two important reminders:

1. Biodiversity mini conference by zoom this Saturday organised by SJAG. Details and registration here <https://www.montrealcathedral.ca/social-justice-outreach/ecological-social-justice-action-group-esjag/>
2. Lisa and Joseph have been delivering orders of items from the stock of the Fair Trade Boutique. You can see what is available): <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1RMenh5mth8204T6DQmq5IAPzUN38SiatEn4iXwMb69c/edit?usp=sharing>. Please take a look, and if you want to place an order write to fairtrade@montrealcathedral.ca

Finally, some computer quirks:

- Check your spam/junk folder to make sure you are receiving all communications from the cathedral
- beware of phishing messages purporting to come from the Dean or other members of the cathedral team asking you to buy gift cards or something similar on their behalf. They would NEVER make such a request
- refresh your browser (click on the circular arrow at the top of the page) if you don't think you are seeing the most recent posts on the web page

Enjoy the blessing of this beautiful weather!

Ann Elbourne
May 22, 2020