

## I Was Thinking..... October 13, 2024



Over the coming weeks leading up to the season of Advent, we will be focusing on the Gospel of Mark. Mark is a very interesting book because it is a story of conflict; particularly the many conflicts between Christ's messages about the kingdom of God and the thinking and practices of the high priests and the Roman occupation. Jesus continually challenged those in authority, and the Gospel of Mark documents how he used his ministry to bring about change. When we listen to or read Mark carefully, we can come to understand that Jesus is really bringing about a massive change to the history of the people of Israel. He is taking the very daring step of bringing religious beliefs to bear on the social, political, and economic life of the Jewish people. This was a very dangerous because, in doing so, he was challenging not only the power and authority of the high priests, but also challenging the power and the authority of the Roman Empire.

For those of us living in the 21st century, we can also see that Christ's ministry as it is described in Mark was about what we now call *social justice*. One of the major voices calling the Anglican Church to become much more deeply involved in matters of social justice was William Temple, Archbishop of Canterbury from 1942-1944. Temple was born in England in 1881, and his father (Frederick Temple), also a member of the clergy, became Archbishop of Canterbury in 1896 when William was 15 years old. His father's deep concern for the working poor and for the farmers of England had a major impact on William as a young man and laid the seeds for his own ministry which began in 1909. William Temple's ideas on the role of the Church in matters of social justice became more widely known in 1913 (just prior to the start of World War I) when he was appointed to the committee on Church and State. While the British government of the time declared that the Anglican Church had no business interfering in social, political, and economic matters, William Temple firmly stated that government held the responsibility for organizing society in such a way that justice, rather than self-interest, should be the driving force. In the years leading up to World War II, Temple became Bishop of Manchester (1921-1929) and Archbishop of York (1929-1942), continuing to use his ministry to promote the role of the Church in achieving social justice. By 1926, he also saw the importance of working in cooperation with other Christian denominations to carry out this significant work. As Archbishop of Canterbury from 1942 until his death in 1944, Temple used his position to promote the view that, if government was unwilling or unable to make justice the cornerstone of British life, the Anglican Church and its partnering denominations had the right to have their voices heard in every aspect of life; social, economic, and political. I think it is interesting that his social justice work predated the human rights work of the United Nations, and I often wonder what else he would have accomplished if he had lived longer.

As a member of the Pictou County Council of Churches, ACPC proudly carries forward the message and work of William Temple into this century. Working with other denominations, the Council of Churches supports disaster relief efforts around the world, as well as more local needs such as the HelpLine for those in crisis and the fuel fund for those in our community who struggle with the high costs of heating their homes.

Other ministries of ACPC that help to support our community include:

- the palliative care snack donation program
- the pillowcase ministry with handmade cases in a butterfly theme, and the prayer/comfort shawl and lap blanket ministry for patients in palliative care
- the Food Bank ministry and support for the Opportunity Shop
- collecting and donating school supplies for local children
- the CAIRN ministry to support refugees
- the Pastoral Care Team who engage with those in need of encouragement, friendship, prayers, home communion, nursing home worship times, and reminders that we are all valued children of God

Across the three congregations of ACPC, we have vibrant ministries of hospitality, offering food alongside fellowship after services. This same Gospel hospitality is extended through the monthly luncheons and Helping Hands group at St. Bee's, our teas, fundraising efforts, the donation of church calendars, and the St. James Christmas cake sales. The ongoing offer of friendship made by our greeters is a ministry. We have those engaged in the ministry of helping to administer our work by being members of council or other committees, as well as those that donate office and cleaning supplies. Our counters and treasurers offer a ministry in helping with the stewardship of our finances. We have those who are engaged in ministry related to maintaining our buildings, grounds, and cemeteries as welcoming and peaceful spaces. There are those who offer talents to decorate our churches for special occasions. We also have active ministries in regional and diocesan matters that support the broader work of the Anglican Church in Nova Scotia and PEI and allow us to be engaged and contributing members at these levels.

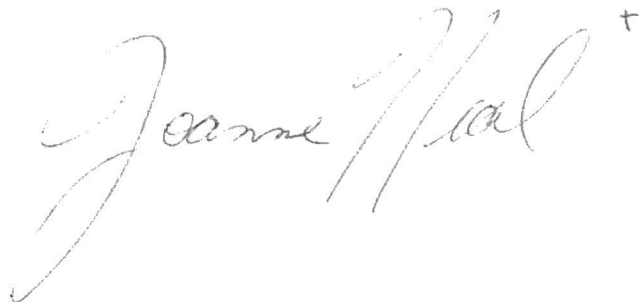
Spiritual development is another important ministry that helps us to further nurture that aspect of our lives through educational opportunities and study groups. Those who take on the leadership work of EFM, the viewing of the series "The Chosen", the centring prayer and rosary groups, and other spiritual development offer their time and talents to this end. The ministry of our Liturgical Leadership Team is aimed at supporting and leading meaningful worship experiences that also feed our souls.

All of these above named ministries were listed and described in the 17 returned stewardship pledge forms that were collected throughout September. No doubt there are additional ministries in action and it would be very valuable for all of ACPC to be aware of these yet

unlisted ministries. But the pledge forms also included offers of new ministries and new ideas. For example, we have an offer to lead spiritual development through a book study, a spiritual gifts assessment, sharing groups, or art journaling. To that end, a survey will be shared in church in order to find out where people's interests and needs for spiritual development lie. As well, we have someone in our midst who is interested in leading liturgy aimed at healing. We give thanks for God's inspiration to those people to share their time and talents!

As I have mentioned in earlier newsletters, a big piece of my work as your Pastoral Administrator is to coordinate and support our many ministries and to work with those who are interested in developing new ministries. This will help us to continue to grow in our faith, individually and collectively, but will also help us to identify our needs for future leadership through a priest-in-charge or equivalent. I am very grateful to those of you who completed the pledge forms! But please don't feel that the door has closed if you would still like to share. Being effective stewards of our many blessings of time, talent, and treasure is ongoing work that I will continue to share with you.

Wishing you and those within your circle every blessing and happiness as we gratefully reflect on all of God's goodness towards us this Thanksgiving season. Blessings!

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jeanne Hal" with a small cross symbol at the end.