



# The Eagle

Summer 2021

## Dear Associates, Oblates and Friends,

Finally we are seeing rays of hope for the future. A highlight in June was welcoming our organist, Dan Norman, back to play for the Eucharist. We have invited some of our volunteers who have been twice vaccinated to return to help us at Reception. Many of us have plans to go to Bally Croy in Port Sydney for our holidays in the summer.

So what have we been doing since the last newsletter went out? In Lent, we did a book study using *Love Is the Way*, written by Bishop Michael Curry, the Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church in the United States. I would highly recommend it for either individual reading or for group study.

We welcomed Sr. Florence Au as a Novice in our Community on March 25<sup>th</sup>, the Feast of the Annunciation. One of the gifts which Sr. Florence has brought to our community is the ability to use a camcorder. We were able to buy a new camera in the fall and we have since learned to livestream our Sunday Evening Prayer service, which you can also find on YouTube.



Sr. Elizabeth presents Sr. Florence to the sisters

Our celebration of Holy Week and Easter was closer to normal, but without guests. On Maundy Thursday, the liturgy began as usual in the chapel, but after exchanging the peace we processed to the refectory where we continued with the Eucharist. Sr. Connie and Fr. Freeland concelebrated and the bread and wine was passed from one table to the next. After everyone had received communion we had our meal with gentle conversation. After the meal was over, we read antiphonally a reading entitled "Passover Remembered" and then returned to the chapel for the Stripping of the

Altar.



SSJD's 2021 Paschal candle

On Easter Day we had the lighting of the new fire in the Guest House courtyard. Sr. Connie had prepared the Paschal Candle using royal blue strips of wax to form the SSJD cross on the candle. It was truly beautiful. Sr. Elizabeth Ann sang the Exsultet and we had Dan Norman on the

organ. What a joy to have a full sung Eucharist for Easter Day!

The leaders of the Anglican/Episcopalian religious communities usually meet two or three weeks after Easter. For the last two years our meetings have been on Zoom. One of our speakers this year was Br. James Koester, the superior of the Society of St. John the Evangelist; his theme was Monastic Hospitality after COVID-19. It was a very thought-provoking talk. He began by describing some of his companions through the pandemic. They included the Martyrs of Memphis, members of an Episcopalian community who looked after the residents of Memphis during the Yellow Fever

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*Letter from Sr. Elizabeth, continued from page 1*

epidemic in 1878; Florence Nightingale and Mother Hannah Grier Coome, both of whom nursed the wounded during wartime; Julian of Norwich who survived the Black Death and the Great Famine in the 14<sup>th</sup> Century; and finally his own grandmother who exchanged her school bell for a nurse's uniform in the Flu Epidemic following World War 1.

What his companions told Br. James was that “we have been here before, and unfortunately, we will be here again. COVID-19 is just the latest.” His companions taught him several things: the reality of grief, social and political upheaval, hope and the centrality of a life anchored in prayer. He told us that in the years to come we will be facing a crisis of grief. Allison Gilbert in the New York Times estimates that for every death from COVID-19, nine people are bereaved, and that only takes into account immediate family members. (As of June in Canada, over 26,000 people have died; world-wide we're approaching 4,000,000 deaths.) Many children have lost at least one parent to COVID-19. “The grief those children carry will not only impact their mental and emotional health, but their education will also be adversely affected. The emotional toll of these past 16 months is incalculable.

Br. James went on to say: “I believe that one of the things which we will need to do as monastics who have a ministry of hospitality is to make a safe, secure, and welcoming space for grief. Literally everyone who comes through our doors... will be grieving and we will need to make a space for that. Monastic hospitality will be about opening space for grief. Even before we begin to think about reopening, we are being invited to pray, and even befriend, our own grief.” He challenged us to be places of hope, and to be firmly grounded by the reality of death. We need to be able to say with Dame Julian that “All shall be well.”

For Pentecost Sunday Sr. Elizabeth Ann created paper lanterns to look like tongues of fire which she hung from the dividing beam between the chapel and the narthex.



*Sr. Constance Joanna with “tongues of fire” in the background*

I would ask your prayers for two of our sisters. Sr. Jocelyn has been unwell for over a year with different skin conditions, ending up with scabies, which we think she picked up during a visit to Emergency. Unfortunately, several of the staff in the infirmary also got it as well as a few sisters. We spent May 24<sup>th</sup> undergoing a deep clean to try to get rid of the scabies. Jocelyn was affected the worst. She has been in and out of hospital and as I write has just returned home from St. John's Rehab where she worked on regaining her strength. Sr. Amy Joy had surgery for cancer and is now having chemotherapy treatments. Both of them would appreciate your prayers. Sr. Mary Francis left the Sisterhood at the beginning of May. We were sad to see her go but glad that she is following her passion to work with people who are struggling with substance abuse.

In the last *Eagle* I told you about our new Companions Online program which began on Sunday, June 6<sup>th</sup>. (You can see more about the program on pp 4-6.) The companions meet on Sunday afternoons for teaching and discussion and then join our Sunday Evening Prayer which we are livestreaming each week. Also in June, Sr. Connie and I attended a clergy conference on Zoom for the clergy in the Diocese of Toronto. It was led by Susan Beaumont who wrote *How to Lead When You Don't Know Where You Are Going*, published in 2019 before the pandemic had

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## From the Archives

### Dear Readers:

*Here's the second part of a memo (unedited) by our Mother Foundress Hannah, from our Archives. This memo talks about the Church Home for the Aged, Bishop Bethune College and mission work.*

The Church Home for the Aged was begun in 1886. The first house on Larch Street being provided by the Vestry of St. George's Parish, later removed to John St. where a larger number of inmates could be received. Parish work was undertaken by the Sisters for St. George's and St. Margaret's Churches. In 1907 Dr. Temple's Hospital on Bellevue Avenue was purchased – Mr. James Henderson advancing the money until we could sell the John Street Houses. Later the addition of a new wing gave larger accommodation and was built and furnished by Mrs. Edmund Osler as the "Gwyneth Osler Memorial Home". Sir E. Osler has always contributed largely to its support.

In 1890 with warm encouragement from the Bishop, we built a Mission House at Seaton Village, the Sisters actively working in that very poor and neglected district – invalid dinners, Dispensary, Mothers' Meetings, Children's Sewing School etc. soon gathered a good congregation to the Services there, faithfully carried on by Mr. Roper and Mr. Lenox Smith. Later the Congregation overflowed the Mission room and Chapel. Mr. Shortt was appointed to the District then separated from St. Thomas' Church. The temporary Church of St. Cyprian's was built – our house being still the centre of Parish Work. Later on, the present St. Cyprian's was built with Parish House, where all work could be carried on. Our Mission House was bought by Mr. Seaborn and turned into a good Rectory, and the Sisters transferred their work to East Toronto (1915), where their New Mission House is used as the temporary Church of All Hallows, under the active care of Rev. H.R. Mockridge, who has gathered full congregations and overflowing Sunday Schools. The Sisters resident have mother's meetings, Guilds and Bible classes in addition to house-to-house visiting.

The Bishop Bethune College was undertaken in 1892-3 at the urgent request of the Council. It had been founded as a memorial to Bishop Bethune, incorporated as the B.B. College Company. After failing under two principals, the property could only be retained by the Church if the Sisters would undertake to



*Bishop Bethune college students and staff in the 1920s*

carry it on. It was placed in the hands of Trustees, Mr. J.H. Plummer, Dr. Bethune and Mr. Carter, to be held for two years. In 1895 the Shareholders transferred the College to the Sisterhood; the work having prospered in their hands.



*Early photo of Bishop Bethune College, Oshawa, Ont.*

Since taking over the College the Sisters have added at various times, Refectory, Dormitories, practice rooms, infirmary and a beautiful Chapel, as well as a large Hall and Library, and enlarged music room. All these improvements are paid for, the only debt now being only \$6,000, incurred by much needed installation of hot water heating throughout the building.

From the beginning the Sisters have carried on Church needlework, the need for which was undoubted. Churches throughout Canada have been supplied with Frontals, linens and all requisites for the Altar. Orders are many from the United States also. The Sisters and their Associates gave all the Frontals, etc., for the Altar of St. Alban's Cathedral when services there were begun. These are still in use. Many Missions have been freely furnished through the money earned in the Church Workrooms.

## The Companions Program

Many of you may be familiar with our residential or “in-person” Companions program where women aged 21+ live within the SSJD community for eleven months. As the pandemic wore on, we realized it would not be possible to offer the Companions program “in-person”. After much prayer, conversation, creativity and brainstorming, the leadership team began developing an online version of the Companions program. While similar to the “in-person” Companions program in many ways, there are some differences; most notably, this program is offered online through Zoom.

Companions Online has been developed specifically for people who are working, have families or are in school. Companions have the opportunity to become “monastics in the world,” living a Benedictine rhythm of prayer, work, study, and recreation within an intentional online community. The Companions learn to develop practices that support and nurture their spiritual life from their homes. This year’s program began in early June. As we continue to form this new kind of community, I invite you to join me in accompanying the 2021-2022 Companions through your prayers.

Shannon Frank-Epp  
Communications Coordinator

### Donna Beek



Hello from Oromocto, New Brunswick! It is an honour and pleasure to become acquainted with all the sisters and others who will be journeying together over the next year in the Companions Program. I am a former wife of a military member so have moved around a bit and have experienced

many cultures and places.

I am a mother to four grown sons, and now a grandmother to three beautiful grandchildren. Being on my own now, I want to explore my spirituality in a more intentional way, discerning what is next on my spiritual path.

In March, 2009, my eldest son was killed in combat

in Afghanistan. This was *the* reset in my life causing very deep and debilitating grief. Yet, it was also the beginning of another chapter of spiritual seeking and renewal.

I returned to school and enrolled in the MTh program at Tyndale Seminary. There I discovered the richness of theological insight, understanding, and realized how vast and limitless this learning could be. It also allowed me to explore the depth of my own spirituality and learn how to be in relationship with God, through Jesus Christ.

Being accepted as a fellow-traveler through this spiritual journey with many others in the Companions Program will be a truly enriching experience. I look forward to meeting you all and learning from you. As the Sisters’ book title says, this is a “journey just begun”...

### Elizabeth Chan



My name is Elizabeth Chan. I was born and raised in Hong Kong and came to Canada to study as a visa student when I was 18 years old. Even though I went to Catholic schools in Hong Kong, it was in Canada that I was first exposed to the idea of having a personal relationship with God. The commitment of my life to Christ was made while I was doing post-graduate studies in Scotland.

I immigrated to Canada in 1988, and during the first twelve years in Toronto, I did not go to church, and God to me was non-existent.

In 1999, because of family issues, I began to realize that God was the only one I could rely on during this difficult time. In 2000, I became a member of Scarborough Chinese Alliance Church and have been involved in children’s ministry since. I also serve as a small group leader and bible study leader in my fellowship.

I worked at the same hospital since I immigrated to Canada (32 years), and I officially retired in April this

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year. My hobbies keep me entertained during this time: reading, hiking and walking with my dog. I have come to know quite a few hiking trails in the east end. I look forward to learning to love God and the community through the Online Companions program. See you all soon!

### Jess Dowling



Hello everyone! My name is Jess (she/her) and I am 34 years old. I live with my wife, Michelle, our roommate Delphine, and our cat, Puck in the west end of downtown Toronto. I am currently finishing my Master of Divinity degree at Trinity College, UoT

and God willing, I will be ordained in the Anglican Church next year. My first career was in nursing, and I continue to work at a large paediatric hospital on a part-time basis in the area of adolescent psychiatry and eating disorders. In my spare time, I enjoy reading, biking, hiking, canoeing, seeing friends, and going to the theatre. Pre-COVID-19, I loved spending time at the convent on retreat and am very much looking forward to meeting all of you in this virtual space. Cheers, Jess.

### Kelly Mangoff



My name is Kelly. I am 44 years old and I am married to my husband for 18 years; we have a 16 year-old daughter and a 9-year-old son. I was raised in Toronto but now live in a small northwestern Ontario town with a population of under 2000 people. I work for a non-profit family resource organization that offers resources and programming for families to take part in together. I am looking forward to exploring and opening up my understanding with the Online Companions program and deepening my faith and prayer life.

### Laura MacNewman



My name is Laura and I am delighted to be beginning this journey with you all.

I am the mother of two children, aged 15 and 11, and I work as an archivist. I grew up in rural Dorset, England, and spent my childhood in the fields

and woodlands; thus, I have nurtured a lifelong love of nature.

I have lived in Michigan, U.S, for 20 years and belong to an Episcopal parish. I enjoy diverse interests including reading, needlework, calligraphy, church architecture, and gardening. Literature and poetry are important to me for their wonderful articulation of the human condition, which helps me reflect on my own experience.

I have an academic background in law, sociology, and archive administration. My studies have focused on the history of knowledge and its relationship to attitudes in modern society.

My spiritual path began as a young woman with a great love of Native American spirituality and I later studied Tibetan Buddhism. During a difficult time, I was strongly drawn to the writings of St. Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153).

It is mostly through his liturgical sermons that I learned (and recurrently learn) that that which I seek is not found in dialectics but in meditation and prayer. I have been devoted to his teachings for almost five years, but I am only now finding spiritual community.

I am grateful to be joining this program to learn in the monastic tradition with you.

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## Rachel Sutherland



My name is Rachel Sutherland. I am a Registered Massage Therapist and live in London, Ontario. I spent 6 years (18-24) living as part of an evangelical Christian community in Chicago and have been interested in community and religious life since.

Over the last 5-10 years my faith journey has taken some unexpected twists and turns that led me to EfM and the Anglican church.

I am Cree, and the pandemic has provided me many opportunities to reconnect to my culture. I have had a short film screened at an aboriginal film festival, began taking a Cree language class and have recently taken a position as an Aboriginal Patient Navigator.

It is my hope that as I continue my faith journey, I will be able to better connect my faith and my culture. I am super excited to be part of the Companions program.

## Sharon Sanderson



I am the proud parent of two children and two grandchildren, 2 and 5, whom I babysit part time.

For more than 30 years, I have been a licensed lay worship leader in the eastern Ontario region of the United Church of Canada. As such, I fill in when ministers are absent and travel to a variety of churches in

the eastern Ontario region. My home congregation is Rideau Park United Church in Ottawa. I am co-chair of the Worship and Music committee, as well as participating in their Healing Pathway ministry.

I am retired from the IT department of the Bank of Canada, where I worked for 17 years. I love to read mysteries. My daughter does also, so she keeps me supplied with books.

After more than 30 years in the same house, I have finally succeeded at gardening. I started by planting plastic flowers—they look lovely and are low maintenance.

My favourite vacation is to spend 10 days silent retreat with the sisters. Unfortunately, since my retirement five years ago, I have not been able to visit the sisters. I have been an Associate for about 14 years.

I am looking forward to spending time with the sisters during this year and to meeting and learning from the other companions as we journey through this time together.

## Toni Williams-Sanchez



Greetings from the west bank of the Panama Canal! Toni is my legal first name, on my U.S. passport and Panamanian permanent residency documents.

Bible study and recitation, and Morning Prayer start most of my days. Under quarantine, many people who resisted technology have come to embrace it. I believe Mother Earth has been calling us to consider the human and environmental costs of travel everywhere. Thus, my participation in services and study groups across the Anglican Communion have been facilitated via WhatsApp, Zoom, Facebook or YouTube. These bring deep satisfaction to connect with new friends in Canada, the Caribbean, Europe and back home in Arizona, South Carolina or New York.

Providing hands on or supervisory oversight for the acquisition of meals, lodging, gardening, Pilates, dancing, reading, writing, board games, and piano playing, in a variety of combinations, for three to six people, four dogs, and one cat in my household brings much fulfillment.

So as a volunteer, I formally support the Diocese of Panama (in the Anglican Province of Central America) as the new incumbent Director of our Christian Education Center, and informally serve as counsellor to one parish's chapter of Daughters of the King.

# Leaving a Lasting Legacy – The Power of Planned Giving

## Gifts of Securities

When you donate securities, such as stocks, bonds or mutual funds, directly to the Sisterhood, capital gains tax is eliminated, allowing you to donate more. A transfer of securities is a tax effective and simple way to give. Please consult your financial advisor to see if this is a good choice for you and contact the Fundraising Office for the transfer form. You will receive a significant charitable tax donation receipt for Gifts of Securities.

## Gift of Life Insurance

You can give an existing or new life insurance policy to the Sisterhood today by making the Sisterhood the owner/beneficiary of the policy, or in the future by making the Sisterhood the beneficiary of an insurance policy. If you make the Sisterhood the owner/beneficiary of an insurance policy today you will receive a charitable tax donation receipt for the cash surrender value of the policy and for all the future premiums you pay. If you prefer to retain ownership of a life insurance policy and make the Sisterhood the beneficiary of the policy, your estate will receive a charitable tax donation receipt for the proceeds received by the Sisterhood. A gift of life insurance reduces probate taxes as the proceeds are paid outside of your estate. Please consult your advisors as there can be tax implications when you donate an existing insurance policy.

## Gift in Your Will

A gift made in your will can be a specific amount, a percentage of the residue of your estate, or specific assets, such as securities or real estate. Unrestricted donations are the most helpful to us. Your estate will receive a charitable tax donation receipt. If you would like to do this, please contact the Fundraising Office for suggestions.

## Gifts through a Charitable Remainder Trust

A charitable remainder trust is funded with cash, securities, or real estate. You receive the income generated by the assets held in trust and the Sisterhood receives the capital used to set up the trust on your death. The donor normally receives a charitable tax donation receipt at the time of the donation. The trust property is outside of your estate, which reduces probate fees.

## Charitable Gift Annuity

A charitable gift annuity allows you to make a gift to the Sisterhood while receiving life-time income that can be largely tax exempt. You receive a charitable tax donation receipt at the time of your gift, and the Sisterhood receives the remainder of the gift annuity capital on your death. A charitable gift annuity is outside of your estate, reducing probate fees.

**We recommend you consult a financial and/or legal advisor before making these important decisions.** Your generosity benefits the Sisterhood and your support needs to be suitable to your individual financial situation. If you decide to name the Sisterhood in any of these ways, we would be pleased to know about it. It is encouraging to us to know that our future Sisters will have the support of friends like you who want to give a lasting legacy to the Sisterhood of Saint John the Divine. Please use our legal name – The Sisterhood of Saint John the Divine – on any documents.

To contact the Fundraising Office, email Sr. Doreen, [doreen@ssjd.ca](mailto:doreen@ssjd.ca) or call 416-226-2201 ext 303.

*Letter from Sr. Elizabeth, continued from page 2*

begun. On her website Susan describes the book in this way:

“How do you lead an organization stuck between an ending and a new beginning—when the old way of doing things no longer works but a way forward is not yet clear? I call such in-between times liminal seasons—threshold times when the continuity of tradition disintegrates and uncertainty about the future fuels doubt and chaos.” It is the perfect book for our time and Susan was an excellent presenter.

We ended the month by celebrating the First Profession of Sr. Suzanne Marie on June 29<sup>th</sup>, the Feast of St. Peter and St. Paul. We were able to have Dan Norman play the organ; it was also the first time we could invite an outside guest, Sr. Mary Ellen Francoeur, of the Sisters of Service, who is Sr. Suzanne Marie’s spiritual director. She was able to join us for dinner afterwards when we had a lovely celebration.

July 1<sup>st</sup> was very low key as we prayed for the First Nations peoples who are grieving the many bodies



*Sr. Suzanne Marie holds her First Profession candle.*

of children found in unmarked graves in B.C. and in Saskatchewan.

We hope that all of you will be able to enjoy a restful summer.

**Sister Elizabeth, SSJD  
Reverend Mother**

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