

THE CHURCH OF SAINT JOHN THE BAPTIST MESSENGER



Telephone: 514.697.1714 • Email: stjtheb@videotron.ca • www.stjtheb.ca

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A novelist

My parents are children of the Quiet Revolution and I am a grandchild of it so I come from a completely secular background where religion was replaced by art. In my family, growing up, if we wanted to understand the human condition, we did it by reading great books, seeing great paintings and listening to great music. Those were the tools we had for understanding who we are and why we are as a species. By the time I got to India, being a strongly secular person, having very little tolerance or patience for religion, I discovered more benign aspects of religion and I was struck by that very curious phenomenon called faith. Faith is a very unusual phenomenon in this day and age where we are so encouraged to be rational, reasonable and pragmatic, serious, down to earth factual, scientific, etc. Faith, if you think of it, is a phenomenon in which you believe in something of which you have no proof. It is entirely subjective, irrational, a very odd phenomenon, yet a key engine of life. We all make leaps of faith whether it is in the direction of gods, or a loved one, a sports team or a politician. We all act in ways which are not necessarily reasonable.

What is interesting about faith, of any faith, is that it is a very curious mechanism, and one of the great features, the qualities of faith, is its capacity to deal with evil. A completely secular, materialistic point of view has very few tools to deal with evil. So a scientist whose child dies run over by a truck has very little to say about it from that scientific point of view. A little being died, it rips you apart like a well-placed spear in your chest and

An editor

Tucked away in our subconscious minds is an idyllic vision in which we see ourselves on a long journey that spans an entire continent. We're travelling by train, and from the windows we drink in the passing scenes of cars on nearby highways, of children waving at crossings, of cattle grazing in distant pastures, of smoke pouring from power plants, of row upon row of cotton and corn and wheat, of flatlands and valley, of city skylines and village halls. But uppermost in



our minds is our final destination – for at a certain hour and on a given day, our train will finally pull into the station with bells ringing, flags waving and band playing. And once that day comes, so many wonderful dreams will come true. So restlessly, we pace the aisles and count the miles, peering ahead, waiting, waiting, waiting for the station.

Yes, when we reach the station that will be it! We promise ourselves. When we're 18, that will be it. When we win that promotion to buy that 450 SL Mercedes-Benz, that will be it. When we pay off that mortgage, that will be it. When we have a nest egg for retirement, that will be it. From that day on, we will all live happily ever after.

(Above articles are continued overleaf)

The scientists

Leaders of the LIGO experiment, L twin observatories in Louisiana and Washington State, announced Thursday that, on Sept. 14 at 4:50:45 am, EST, their devices detected a split-second ripple through space-time caused by some distant cosmic cataclysm. It was the shock wave from the merging of two black holes 1.3 billion years ago, said David Reitze, a physicist and a spokesman for the team.

“What’s really exciting is what comes next,” said Reitze, comparing it to Galileo’s pioneering use of the telescope, in that it offers a new way to observe distant events, such as the explosions of supernovae, the collisions of black holes, or the whirling orbital dance of a pair of neutron stars. “We will also hear things that we never expected, and as we open a new window onto the universe, we may see things we have never seen before.”

September’s discovery prompted a flurry of analysis to make sure this was a real signal. The shock wave was so tiny it could easily be drowned out or mimicked by any other perturbation, from the expansion of heating metal in the instruments themselves to an earthquake or a passing truck or a scientist’s sneeze. The ripple they were looking for, which literally distorts the structure of space as it passes through, is measured by a change in the distance between two mirrors set four kilometres apart. Measured by lasers, that change is far smaller than the wavelength of light, and just one ten thousandth the size of a proton. But it represents a long ago collision that carried 50 times the energy of all the stars in the universe.

(Novelist continued)

there is nothing you can do. What is interesting about faith is that it tends to put evil in a greater context, it contextualizes evil in such a way that it makes sense... not necessary to you. It is not that the pain is diminished but it is put in a context. The standard answer of religious thinking to suffering is that it makes sense if you can understand God's ways. There is evil in this world because God's ways are mysterious; we have a limited ability to understand. We have, in a sense, a peek at a tiny part of the canvas but, if we could see the whole picture, we would understand that evil plays a role - and also, with religious faith, death is not an ending, it is a transition. Is that true? That is why it is called faith, you have no proof for it; that is the very point of faith. It cannot be rationally proven but, in practice, those who have faith have a slightly greater capacity to let go whereas purely materialistic people cling or tend to deny. Largely, in our materialistic, secular society, we have an enormous denial of death; we just pretend it does not exist and, when it does happen, we are completely at a loss for words and for thoughts.

From an interview with Yann Martel:
All in a Weekend, CBC, February 2016

A contributor

The Martell interview took place around the same time that reports appeared in the newspapers about the LIGO discovery. Both authors seemed to be pointing to the need to examine the necessity of proof; when considered side by side, one becomes aware of both congruity and contradiction. One might argue that *faith* has little to do with either, relying more on an internal sense of believing within a religious context; however, believing is not exactly the same as faith.

C. S. Lewis maintained that: "The battle is between faith and reason on one side and emotions and imagination on the other.... Supposing a man's reason once decides that weight of evidence is for Christianity. I can tell that man what is going to happen to him in the next few weeks. There will come a moment when there is bad news, or he is in trouble, or is living among a lot of other people who do not believe it, and all at once his emotions will rise up and carry out a sort of blitz on his belief."

While reason may question the facts of many Bible stories, for most Christians they form a framework open to study - acceptance, rejection or, at least, inter-

(Editor continued)

Sooner or later, however, we must realize there is no station in this life, no one Earthly place to arrive at once and for all. The journey is the joy. The station is an illusion - it constantly outdistances us. Yesterday's a memory; tomorrow's a dream. Yesterday belongs to history; tomorrow belongs to God. Yesterday's a fading sunset; tomorrow's a faint sunrise. Only today is there light enough to love and live.

So, gently close the door on yesterday and throw the key away. It isn't the burdens of today that drive men mad, but rather the regret over yesterday and the fear of tomorrow. Relish the moment is a good motto, especially when coupled with Psalm 118:24, "This is the day which the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it."

So stop pacing the aisles and counting the miles. Instead, swim more rivers, climb more mountains, kiss more babies, count more stars. Laugh more and cry less. Go barefoot more often. Eat more ice cream. Ride more merry-go-rounds. Watch more sunsets. Life must be lived as we go along.

Robert J. Hastings

Quoted in a sermon, Angela Deslauriers: Jan. 2016

(Scientists continued)

Both identical LIGO observatories, on opposite sides of North America, registered the same wave at precisely the same time, lasting a split second, with the distinctive upward sweep in frequency predicted by the field equations of general relativity. It marked the first time a binary black hole system has been observed merging into one. Most importantly, though, it was the first direct observation of a gravitational wave, a concept predicted a century ago by Albert Einstein. This theory introduced the concept of a four-dimensional structure to the universe, known as space-time, and it predicted that waves could ripple through this structure, like a swell on the ocean or sound through the air. The century since has seen many efforts to detect the biggest of these waves, with some indirect success.

What they needed was a cosmic event that involved a lot of stuff moving very fast, which is precisely the sort of thing astronomers are most interested in, not just in colliding black holes and exploding stars, but also the greatest shock wave of all time - the grand inflation of the Big Bang.

From an article in the Huffigon Post:
February 2016



pretation. How far, after all, is the Big Bang from the story of the Creation and the Garden of Eden? Where does Darwin fit in?

Yan Martell is on record as saying that Dante's *Divine Comedy* is the single most impressive book he has ever read. Perhaps coincidentally, much of his writing is allegorical and can be interpreted to reveal hidden meanings or symbolism. We will all reach conclusions of our own. For some, a non-critical acceptance, engendered early in life, may form the basis of their religious belief. For others, it will remain a struggle to reconcile imagination and personal experience, seeking in the doctrines of religion, spiritual understanding and the faith to accept it.

DLP

Vicar's Vignette

Just Asking

Just a short while ago we celebrated the mystery and majesty of God's resurrection miracle, the raising of Jesus of Nazareth from the dead. That unfathomable event that testifies to God's steadfast love for a world that continues to put that Love at arms length. An event that affirmed Christ's heritage as the Son of God, confirmed Jesus' place as Savior of the world, spelled an end to sin's sting and opened up the door to life beyond death. An event that ushered in a new age, a new means by which to kindle one's relationship with God; through faith in the resurrected Christ.

On Easter Sunday many of us attended outdoor sunrise services to celebrate the Risen Christ. Dozens of people gathered to sing, pray and break bread together as the sun rose over the horizon, the sky turned blue, and as flocks of geese flew high overhead.

Many others gathered in church later on in the morning to do the same; sing, pray, worship, welcome in baptism a young child into the family of faith, share in the Eucharist meal and enjoy one another's company in community at the end of the service.

Easter Sunday was truly a day of celebration and fellowship. My question however is, Now What? Life goes on! Our work still must be done; the house to clean, meals to make, dishes to wash, clothes to clean, cars to fix, school to attend, groceries to buy, errands to run, appointments to keep, neighbors to contend with, sickness to struggle with, taxes to pay, and so on.

Now that our Easter celebration is over, how will we go back to our routines?

Will we quickly forget the sunrise services we may have been at? Will we remember the Easter church services we attended, the hymns we sang, the prayers we prayed, and the sermon that was preached? Will the message of Easter motivate us to possibly think and act differently in the coming days, weeks and months ahead? Will we remember that because Christ was raised from the dead, our futures can look very different?

If we truly believe that the gift of resurrection Life offered to the world by God in Christ is true and ours to receive, will we remember to shape the way we live after Christ's example, long after the Easter season has past?

Just asking...



Keep calm & Sing Hymns

During my ten years as a secondary school Music teacher, I was always the accompanist lurking at a piano next to the main attraction of the choir! So, it comes with great surprise and amusement, that with little vocal expertise and experience on my part, I now spend most of my working week teaching and guiding others in singing. After delivering six or seven hours of vocal workshops and lessons, I always come home happy and exhausted: the exhaustion is both physical and mental as I am up on my feet for hours at a time, learning song words and never 'switching off' my enthusiasm; and the happiness is seeing the progress people make and the enjoyment they get from singing.



Just one of my vocal projects is co-ordinating Truro Cathedral's 'Big Sing Cornwall', a singing development programme for primary schools.

I work alongside Charlie (Bass, Lay-Vicar in the cathedral choir) and between us we work with three or four schools at the beginning of each term. As Singing Leaders, we build on previous singing experience, introduce new repertoire and work on specific techniques or skills with the children. The final part of 'Big Sing Cornwall' brings each school together for a public performance at Truro Cathedral. On the afternoon of the concert, as well as rehearsing for their performance, the schools take part in a "cathedral learning experience", such as art and craft activities and a Crypt visit where the children can try on vestments - this is kindly delivered by the wonderful Education team at the cathedral.

I think that my favourite part of 'Big Sing Cornwall' is at the start of each rehearsal when the children first hear themselves singing in the cathedral. The heady combination of the prospect of performing in the magical setting of the cathedral in front of a large audience and the auditory overload of their beautiful voices affects each child very differently: some children become so over-excited that I am quite sure that they will 'burst' before the concert even begins; some children have the 'light bulb' moment and now understand why they were expected to work so hard in our singing sessions; and others are just simply speechless... for a few minutes!

As a church organist, I rarely have the opportunity to sing during a service and I always admire, with a hint of envy, those who can recite hymn verses verbatim and sing the harmony parts without a hymnbook in sight. However, I can name quite a fair few hymn tunes after just a couple of notes! I read an article recently about congregational

Yours in Christ, Rev. Corne



A potted history of church music

For many people, the quintessential Church of England choral experience is that of standing around in a cold building and mumbling. This is a shame because there is a rich tradition of inspiring, beautiful music which is as old as the Anglican Church itself. It's just that none of it appears to have been designed to require an actual congregation. Given trends in church attendance, this seems, with hindsight, to have been inspired prescience. A defining feature of the tradition is that it depends on having a small but highly trained bunch of musicians to do most of the singing.

Most church choirs employ four voice parts, i.e. soprano, alto, tenor and bass, the latter two voices generally being those of male singers. All sing their own notes to provide harmony, if all goes according to plan; most of the time, they are all singing the same words to the same rhythm at the same time. Such is the theory. Failing the success of that requirement, enthusiasm, persistence and resistance to cold can also be usable attributes for choristers.

Church services augmented by a choral contingent follow the same format as their unsung counterparts, but with sections of the liturgy strategically set to music. The choir will lead the congregation who attempt to sing the melody, but very often only choristers get to sing. For this reason, opinion is often divided as to the purpose of the choir. Some believe that singing adds a valuable dimension to the spiritual experience of worship. Others feel that the choir simply find church services provide a great excuse to sing lots of fabulous music; they have a tendency to equate 'service' with 'performance', and 'congregation' with 'audience'. Most of the choirs that take music more seriously than religion have very sensibly adopted Evensong as their preferred service, rather than the more traditional mid-morning Eucharist, enabling them to stay in bed as late as mid-afternoon.

As is the case in our own parish, choral involvement usually requires the participation of an organist to coordinate and inspire the choir, congregation and, where appropriate, the priest. Organists are strange creatures. To control the typical church organ can require skillful exploitation of three or four 'manuals' (keyboards, with the usual piano layout, but typically shorter), the pedal board (basically a piano keyboard on the floor, only with much bigger keys so you can play it with your feet), a couple of swell pedals (foot-operated volume controls)



and an array of 'stops' (switchgear for controlling the nature and volume of the noises the organ makes, either manually or pedal operated). The cumulative complexity would put the average jumbo jet flight deck to shame.

The remarkable thing is that most organists manipulate all of these things concurrently and manage to produce musical noises as a result. Clearly this requires feats of anatomical contortion that would put most people off their dinner, so the organ console in most churches is thoughtfully hidden away in a so-called 'loft'. This way, nobody has to look at the organist. Of course this makes the work of the organist even more arduous as they frequently can't see the choir from their seat, often having to use an arrangement of mirrors just to catch even the vaguest glimpse.

The inadvisability of anything smacking of high church in the years leading up to the Restoration, had a disproportionately severe effect on music

in English churches, almost wiping it out entirely for a while. This enabled choral music in Anglican worship to develop a flavour all of its own as it recovered from the brink of extinction. The relative scarcity of organs after a particularly overzealous spate of puritanical vandalism made an especially deep impact. This scarcity broke the continuity with Roman Catholic traditions and also forced choirs to compensate for the lack of instrumental accompaniment. Even today a choir's duties are supposed to include supporting the congregational singing, notwithstanding the notion that Anglican psalm chants can stand alone harmonically, even without accompaniment.

The destruction of church instruments, along with the time it took for organs to be rebuilt (many of those destroyed in the 17th Century were not rebuilt or replaced for a century and a half after episcopal restoration), is probably the most significant factor in the early development of the choral tradition and its attributes. Most settings, therefore, have been centred around the 1662 edition of the Book of Common Prayer, so all the upheaval ultimately had a far greater musical impact than it did liturgical.

Towards the end of the 18th Century, pretty much every church that was going to build another organ had already done so, and we saw another step towards choirs of the form we see today. There was a much-needed movement to improve decorum in choirs to an acceptable standard, and this led to the widespread enforcement of a dress code, perhaps aimed at eliminating sectional differences, both physical and musical. To accomplish such homogeneity, the traditional surplice and cassock, which originated in college choirs, was adopted.

This appears to have been the last major development to pervade the world of Anglican choral music.

From "The Anglican Choral Tradition" in The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy". Adapted by DLP

(Keep Calm & Sing continued)

singing in which the author described Christianity as a “singing faith” and I could not agree more since there are so many references to singing and music-making in the Bible. Singing can help us remember words and stories and setting these words to music helps us to engage with them emotionally. In church, we sing the words that God wants us to remember and our songs are much more than filling a gap between the sermon and receiving Holy Communion.

The above article is taken from the most recent issue of **Five Alive**, *The Magazine of the Redruth Team Ministry in Cornwall*, of which our *Prayer Partners*, St. Andrews Church, Pencoys, are a part. Complete versions of recent issues of **Five Alive** can be found on our website:

<http://stjtheb.ca/prayer.html>



DLP

Bons mots

Next to the Word of God, the noble art of music is the greatest treasure in the world.

Beautiful music is the art of the prophets that can calm the agitations of the soul; it is one of the most magnificent and delightful presents God has given us.

Martin Luther

Life's most persistent and urgent question is, 'What are you doing for others?'

Faith is taking the first step even when you don't see the whole staircase.

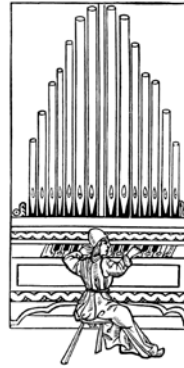
Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter.

The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy.

Martin Luther King Jr.

Either, Or or Both?

On Sunday, the opening and closing hymns at the church we visited were “*Glorious things of thee are spoken*” (H40: 385) and “*Songs of thankfulness and praise*” (H40: 53). Everyone knew the hymns, we sang together, and we were united in song.



Hymns provide not just a unity in place, but in time. Yes, as a music minor I would probably have loved the respective tunes: *Austria* (tune by Haydn) and *Salzburg* (harmonized by Bach). More importantly, they are songs I have sung countless times over the decades – as a chorister, a young adult and now in middle age.

At the same time, some of my friends at another church were singing “*Holiness*.” At other praise band services, Christians were undoubtedly singing “*Majesty*,” “*Shine Jesus Shine*” or “*Shout to the Lord*”. While these songs do not provide the continuity across generations or centuries of classic hymns, they do provide unity within a parish that learns and loves them.

Last month I attended a church planting workshop in the ACNA* deanery of San Diego. Of the 30 or so people there, from what I know of their respective parishes, at least 25 worship each Sunday with some form of praise music – whether as the predominant style, or as part of a “blended” worship. Whether they chose this style – or the rector chose it as part of a conscious strategy to be more contemporary and welcoming to the culture – it is what they are used to.

During our two days, we did two Morning Prayer and one Evening Prayer services from the ACNA trial use liturgy. In using the ACNA liturgy over the past two years, it is my im-

pression that the ACNA is a slightly less radical modernization than is Rite II of the 1979 prayer book. Perhaps more importantly, the differences between Rite I and II (and ACNA) are less dramatic in morning prayer than in Holy Communion. So together, we were saying the same (mostly familiar) words, and had unity in worship, belief and purpose. This is exactly the reason Cranmer created the Book of Common Prayer.

At any rate, if I went to their parishes – and I have been to many in the past year – I would feel like an alien or at least an outsider. Younger people who grew up on praise chorus music would feel alienated listening to Bach, Crüger, Vaughan Williams – or even Sullivan. So at the risk of (re)stating the obvious, the Worship Wars between traditional and contemporary styles are more about the music, and less about the words. Some Anglo-Catholic leaders that I know and respect say they could give up their “thees and thous,” but that is a subject for another post.

However, I think there is a third point of difference if not division between the traditionalists and modernists: the process. When it comes to modernizing efforts, is the updating a one-time event that happens once every 400-500 years? Or is it an ongoing process – whether due to an ideology of modernization, change or quest for relevance – or a publisher's business model of planned obsolescence?

One-time changes can and do happen, as when Luther, Cranmer and Vatican II shifted from Latin to the vernacular. These changes create disruption, but still allow continuity across generations and the centuries. Conversely, a belief in constant change – whether of liturgy or music – means that what we learned as children will be obsolete by the time we escort our own children (or grandchildren) into the pews.

* ACNA : Anglican Church in North America

Blog posting by J. West

Bible Study

The new pastor was visiting in the homes of his parishioners. At one house it seemed obvious that someone was at home, but no answer came to his repeated knocks at the door. Therefore, he took out a business card that he had printed "Revelation 3:20" on the back of it for just such an occasion, and stuck it in the door. When the offering was processed the following Sunday, he found that his card had been returned.

Added to it was this cryptic message, "Genesis 3:10." Reaching for his Bible to check the citation, he broke up in gales of laughter.

Revelation 3:20 begins "Behold, I stand at the door and knock." Genesis 3:10 reads, "I heard your voice in the garden and I was afraid for I was naked."



Health tips

- My goal for 2016 is to lose 10 pounds. Only 15 to go.
- *I don't mean to brag but... I finished my 14-day diet in 3 hours and 20 minutes.*
- A recent study has found that women who carry a little extra weight live longer than the men who mention it.
- *I think I'll just put an "Out of Order" sticker on my forehead and call it a day.*



Favorite Things For Aging Boomers

Can you still belt out *My Favorite Things* from *The Sound of Music*? If so, you are all set . . .

Maalox and nose drops and needles for knitting,
Walkers and handrails and new dental fittings,
Bundles of magazines tied up in string,
These are a few of my favorite things.
Cadillacs and cataracts and hearing aids and glasses,
Polident and Fixodent and false teeth in glasses,
Pacemakers, golf carts and porches with swings,
These are a few of my favorite things.

When the pipes leak,
When the bones creak,
When the knees go bad,
I simply remember my favorite things,
And then I don't feel so bad.

Hot tea and crumpets, and corn pads for bunions,
No spicy hot food or food cooked with onions,
Bathrobes and heat pads and hot meals they bring,
These are a few of my favorite things.

Back pains, confused brains, and no fear of sinnin',
Thin bones and fractures and hair that is thinnin',
And we won't mention our short shrunken frames,
When we remember our favorite things.

When the joints ache, when the hips break,
When the eyes grow dim,
Then I remember the great life I've had,
And then I don't feel so bad.

With thanks to J. Andrews

Please place contributions in the MESSENGER envelope outside the Office or send to the Editor:

David L. Paterson : dlpater@videotron.ca