

The Right Reverend
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Bishop Riscylla's Letter to Vestry 2020

January 23, 2020 ~ Saint Marianne Cope (1838-1918)

Dear Friends in Christ ~ grace to you and peace this important day as you gather in the name of Jesus.

As I write this, please be assured of my prayers and best wishes as you gather for your annual Vestry meetings. I am deeply grateful for your vision and work in fulfilling the mission of Christ in your life together, in your communities and in your neighbourhoods. In the year ahead, I appeal to you and I challenge you to bravely find ways to work and worship more and more together, to increase our courage, to share our passion for the Good News of Jesus, and to seek and find new meaning as followers of Jesus Christ in the 21st century, where we are confronted with the emerging economic and social realities of our two-thousand year old organization.

It was a joy to hear of the efforts and interest across the area in the variety of your ongoing ministries, new initiatives and innovative interests in seed-planting Reconciliation, Recovery & Mental Health, and Radical Inclusion that was our emphasis together in 2019. I strongly encourage you to keep up the good work in these areas, as it deepens our faith to serve our family and neighbours, builds infrastructure for lasting relationships and has great potential for both your own discipleship and especially your mission to disciple others in organic and creative ways.

“Our relationship with the natural world has always been, and must again become part of our identity.” ~ wisdom from world-class wildlife photographer Steffan Widstrand. It must be our spiritual discipline from this day forward, to live in our God-created natural world with integrity and sensitivity, to reduce our consumption and increase our collective consciousness in our planetary environmental crisis. We have been tasked as stewards of this one wild and beautiful earth ~ how can we learn to see – and therefore act - differently? Looking through the lens of his camera, Mr Widstrand establishes a particular perspective. How does Jesus teach us to see beauty? worth? value? sustainability? responsibility? prosperity? service?

Using our Jesus-shaped lens, let us look intentionally to our future:

- inspired to be co-creators of rich and vibrant congregations
- fearlessly merging and adapting to address current financial, social and cultural conditions and constraints
- to faithfully anticipate and actively facilitate opportunities for development and re-development in our buildings, congregations and communities.

May God bless you and equip you richly with grace in 2020.

Yours faithfully,

to embody, in word & action, God's grace, reconciling love, justice, compassion & liberation