



BY BRIAN SMITH

THE REV. BRIAN SMITH IS ON THE DIOCESAN SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Very often people come to our retreat house because of a desire for a deeper level of life in God. It is so encouraging to work with folk who actually want to grow spiritually and who are hungry for God! That is the foundation of a church. A church might have pretty ceremonies and a lovely view, but without a foundation in the Spirit, that church will not survive. We have a choice and an opportunity to orient our lives to God's presence, to be connected. Without it we are not a church. So we need to be paying attention, to be mindful of the Divine

presence within us. The challenge is how to do that. We are usually not taught, or encouraged. What we need is a spiritual practice, or an even bigger term than that: a Rule of Life. In the middle of living our busy lives, we lose our connection and our focus. The awareness disappears. I had a water system, that had a gravity feed up the mountain about half a kilometre. When the water level was low, sometimes we would get air locks in the pipe and then we had no water for a family of five. Fun, fun! I had a piston pump in the house and when this happened, I had to get down on my knees and prime the pump to get the water going again. It could take over an hour. Regularly, in our spiritual lives we run low, we get "spirit locks" and the flow stops. Then we have to get down on our knees. However, a spiritual practice can be like priming the pump. We also have to ask ourselves what is causing the block? Usually, we don't get instant results and we live in a culture of instant results. We expect instant nirvana and God

consciousness. Many people in churches don't have any kind of spiritual practice and rarely pray. They think that's only for monks in monasteries. Not! Spiritual practice can be frustrating when we don't get the reliable results that we want. When we are running on empty the temptation is to give up. We need solitude, silence, prayer and an active spiritual practice in order to have a rootedness, a connection with God, so that we can live in hope that God's grace will sustain our souls.

This will require an intentional approach, some discipline. We need a plan. Spiritual growth and transformation get the back seat so often. It is about: who do I want to be and how do I want to live? This spring my wife was busy in the garden with tomato plants and peas. They all require support in order to grow; otherwise they just fall down and rot on the ground. We also need structure in order to grow as we are meant to. In the Christian tradition we call this structure a "rule of life." So, a Rule is a pattern of spiritual disciplines

which give us direction for growth. They are routine, repeated and regular. Anybody who is serious about the spiritual life knows the importance of discipline. Transformation does not happen automatically and is not necessarily a natural process. Where did we get the idea that, when it came to matters of faith, we need only engage in spiritual disciplines when we felt like it? A rule of life gives us a way to enter into a process of transformation.

The components of your "Rule" might include some of these:

1. Listening/discernment/prayer in silence
2. Spiritual reading
3. Examination of consciousness
4. A monthly 24 hour retreat, or a periodic longer silent retreat
5. Daily scripture reading and Lectio Divina
6. Keeping a spiritual journal
7. Healthy body-adequate sleep, along with good diet and exercise
8. Meditation
9. Fasting

10. Regular attendance at church
11. Connection to a community of spiritual friends
12. Mindfulness walking/ Labyrinth
13. Spiritual direction
14. Some yearly training experience
15. Intercessory prayer.

In the formation of a Rule there are some other considerations we need to keep in mind. Some time spent in discernment would highlight where God is calling us to grow. We need to ask God to show us which practices to adopt. What balance do we need in our lives? What is keeping us from living fully in the hope that God has for us? What practices do we find attractive? Which ones do we resist? What is realistic for us? Which practices suit our individual personalities and circumstances? There needs to be a balance between structure and flexibility. It is worthwhile to spend some time looking at and thinking about this if we want to grow in God. □

Highlights Diocesan Council

Highlights from Diocesan Council meeting June 10 at St. James Armstrong

BY HEATHER KARABELAS

The Archbishop:

- has issued A Pastoral Statement to Clergy explaining the National House of Bishops' statement regarding "open table," but also recommending a pastoral supplication that would not turn people away from the Eucharist and would also encourage Baptism.

- announced that the Kootenay School of Ministry appointed the Rev. Bill Harrison as Principal.

Diocesan Centre

- A detailed Construction Budget has been presented and the accepted. Budget is \$591,660. In addition to the contract, the computer systems and software are \$5,876.

- Financing will come initially from Diocesan Funds and replenished from the expected sale of properties. Computer systems and software will be paid from the 2010 surplus in Operating Expenses.

- Demolition, renovation and construction started on May 24 and are expected to be completed by September

2011. The Construction Manager has found cost savings in several supplier subcontracts. Construction Insurance was more expensive since the entire building has to be insured.

The Compensation Committee

Parishes have been reminded to confirm that clergy will be placed on the new Salary Grid

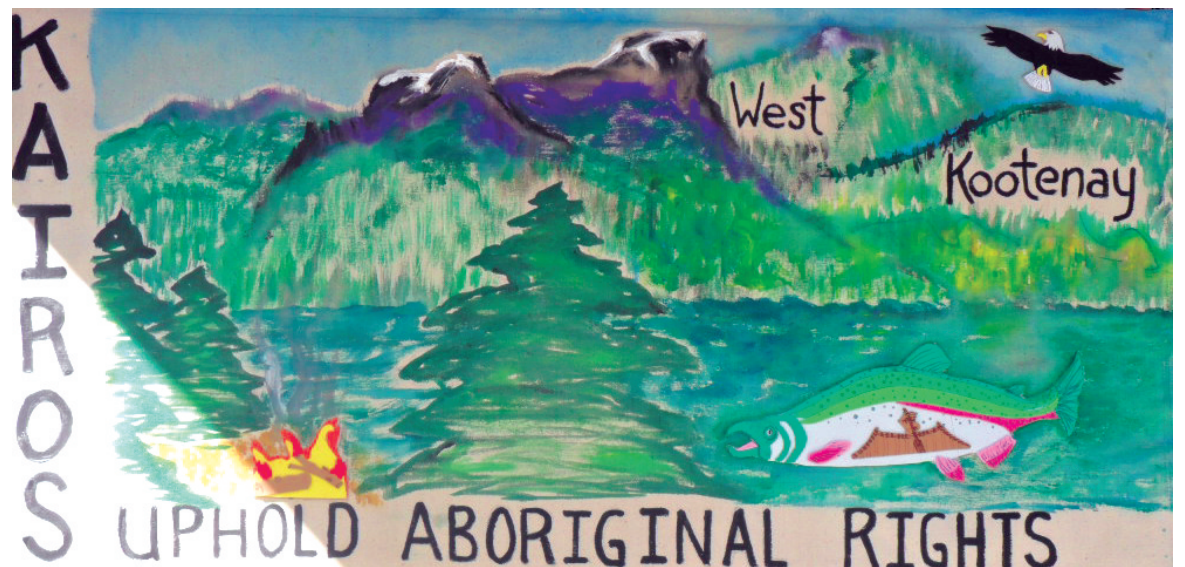
by January 2012 or present an action plan as to how the parish will bring clergy onto the Grid by January 2014.

Rental Agreement of Church Facilities as Policy

- A cover letter will be sent to each parish explaining the policy.

A draft policy on gifts to clergy is being prepared.

PLEASE SUPPORT
The Highway
by
responding to the
Anglican Journal
Appeal



BANNER OVER US — West Kootenay banner celebrating National Aboriginal Rights was created by three churches in Nelson (ACC, RC and ELCIC) and was displayed with hundreds across Canada on Parliament Hill asking for the speedy implementation of the UN declaration.