

## REPORT OF THE DIVISION OF CONGREGATIONAL SUPPORT

*Our Mission is to provide support for the strong, vital, committed faith communities of the Diocese of Niagara, and to nurture the leadership required to create and sustain them.*

Through programs, events, training days and parish consultations, Congregational Support and Development continues to support the diocesan vision of **Life Changing Worship, Outstanding Leadership for Ministry, Prophetic Social Justice, Generous Culture of Stewardship** and **Continuous Culture of Innovation** grounded in **Spiritual Values** (spiritual discipline, valuing diversity, honesty & integrity, passion & hard work) so that we may **Journey in Faith**; following Christ passionately, pursuing excellence and continuing to grow.

### **Staff of the Division are:**

- Christyn Perkons, Director of Congregational Support & Development, Ext. 460, christyn.perkons@niagaraanglican.ca
- Brian Reusch, Program Consultant, Children, Youth & Family Ministry
- Jane Wyse, Senior Administrative Assistant, Ext. 420, jane.wyse@niagaraanglican.ca

Brian Reusch submitted his resignation and concluded his ministry September 15, 2014.

The Children, Youth and Family Ministry position is currently vacant; a call for applications concluded on October 15 with the receipt of 19 applications. Interviews will be held on November 15 with a proposed start date of January 2015 for the successful candidate. In the meantime, Christyn Perkons is overseeing this work with the support of key volunteers.

### **Congregation Support**

Christyn facilitates congregational support and development work with parishes using tools such as Open Space, Asset Mapping, Appreciative Inquiry & Holy Conversations/ Strategic Planning She also offers resources and support in areas such as staff performance evaluations, functional job interviewing and missional tools as well as maintaining a CSD resource library. Christyn serves on Candidates Committee and the Journeys in Faith team, and chairs the **Life Changing Worship** petal of the diocesan vision leadership team. She is also the Bishop's representative on the Canterbury Hills Board of Directors and the Niagara Anglican Publication Board.

### **Congregational Support & Development Resources**

- Emerging Church/Alternate Worship – books, videos, DVDs.
- Change Management – books and 'how to' manuals.
- Adult Education – programs; Via Media, Living the Questions (1 & 2) Saving Jesus, Eclipsing Empire, The Fit Life.
- Parish Guide for Same Gender Blessings Discussion.
- New Resources:
  - **Singing the Unsung** – a 9 session DVD study with John Bell exploring the theology of our music with practical techniques for singing and praying together
  - **Tex Mix: Stories of Earthy Mysticism** – Tex Sample's introduction to storytelling, 20 stories (on mpeg that can be inserted in PowerPoint) along with a discussion guide for each of the stories
  - **Countering Pharaoh's Consumption Society Today** – a 5 session DVD-based study facilitated by Walter Brueggemann
  - **Victory and Peace or Justice and Peace** – a 4 session DVD-based study with John Dominic Crossan

- **Embracing Spiritual Awakening** – a 5 session DVD-based study with Diana Butler Bass on the dynamics of experiential faith
- **Embracing Emergence Christianity** – a 6 session DVD-based study with Phyllis Tickle on the Church's next rummage sale; the changing face of Christianity
- **Embracing the Prophets** – a 6 session DVD-based study with Walter Brueggemann on confronting today's pharaohs
- **Embracing a Life of Meaning** – a 5 session DVD-based study with Kathleen Norris focusing on what really matters
- **Missional Map-making: Skills for Leading in Times of Transition** – charting new paths towards stronger, more vibrant and more missional congregations
- **Stirring Up Advent** – a 4 session Advent study looking at the themes of covenant, grace, empowerment and intimacy in relationships (leader and participant guide)
- **Charles Dickens' A Christmas Carol** – a 4 session Advent study guide exploring redemption and hope through the story of Ebenezer Scrooge

### Children and Family Ministry

**Consultant:** Brian Reusch

- Works to enhance the ability of the Niagara Anglican Community to nurture the spiritual growth of children and their inclusion in faith communities.
- Provides resources and leadership training for Sunday morning programming, junior youth ministry and family ministry to parishes and parish clusters by request.
- Visits parishes by invitation to get to know volunteers and staff involved in children and family ministry; to get a sense of what's happening in parishes across the diocese, and to offer resources.
- Providing staff support to the Undermount Children's Ministry Resource Group which offered workshops on engaging children and families, Godly Play, and curriculum selection to support the programming provided in parishes

#### **Family Ministry**

- Resources particular to family needs are available through the lending library and include books in the areas of parenting, family spirituality, family activities, special needs children, sexuality and family milestones as well as games, music and videos/CDs.
- Parishes wanting to enhance ministry to families are encouraged to contact Brian for ideas and resources.

#### **Puppet Ministry**

- Eighteen puppets along with puppet skits, instruction guides, and training manuals are available for loan to parishes to use in Sunday morning children's programming, children's talks, worship, Bible storytelling, and church announcements. Mini training workshops can be provided to parishes by the consultant, and training days by a professional at a puppet training school are offered as interest dictates.

#### **Lending Library**

A wide variety of books, activities, games, music, videos and CDs are available for three week loans through the Program Consultant's office. New resources include:

- **All in One Sunday School: Stories of Jesus**
- **All in One Sunday School Favourite Bible Stories**
- **Go Look in the Manger DVD**
- **Candy Maker's Christmas DVD**
- **Bed Bug Bible Gang Christmas Show DVD**

## Resources

The consultant can provide:

- Resource packages for All Saints Day, Ash Wednesday and Pentecost.
- Baptism, First Communion and Confirmation materials.
- Retreat planning resources.
- Innovative worship resources including instructed Eucharists.
- Response to particular needs such as: specific types of crafts, crafts related to a particular observance such as Good Friday, games for teaching servers, developing a junior youth ministry, working with special needs children, and summer activities related to church and faith experiences to name but a few.
- Information handouts including articles on Prayers for Children, Hosting an All Saints Party, Working with Behavioural Challenges, Christmas Pageants, What's Available in Church School Curriculum, Teaching Tips 101, Co-operative Games, Puppet Ministry in the Parish, and Young Teens Ministry Toolbox.

## Youth Ministry

**Consultant:** Brian Reusch

- Work to enhance the ability of the Niagara Anglican community to nurture the spiritual growth of youth and young adults and their inclusion in faith communities.
- Develop and train a strong and committed group of lay and clergy leaders to staff our programs and to share this leadership and their abilities with the larger diocesan community.
- Provide resources and leadership training for junior/senior youth ministry and young adult initiatives to parishes and parish clusters by request.
- Visit parishes on request to get to know volunteers and staff involved in youth ministry, to get a sense of what's happening in parishes across the diocese and to offer support and resources.

## **Diocesan Youth Ministry Committee (DYMC)**

Mission:

Diocesan Youth Ministry is called by the Spirit to create and uphold authentic and transformative experiences in faith for youth, young adults and those who minister to and with them. We equip them for passionate leadership, ministry and advocacy; empower them in their response to God's call and in faith-based decision making; nurture their spiritual gifts; and provide opportunities for them to explore their relationship with God through intentional safe communities, creative and engaging worship, Christ-centred leadership development and relationship-based programming, rooted in the Anglican tradition.

We honour and uphold volunteers and staff in youth ministry at the parish and diocesan level; respecting their call to ministry by providing continuing education, support, recognition, and resources, and by encouraging them in faithful risk taking. In our quest for excellence in ministry, participants, volunteers, staff and parents regularly provide feedback about programs, resources and goals which is integrated into our continuously developing ministry.

The committee meets monthly to support this mission.

## The Annual Calendar of Events includes:

### Diocesan Synod Youth Members Orientation & Residence

- An orientation to synod procedures for Youth Members of Diocesan Synod (16-25 years of age) during the annual Synod meeting in November.
- The program will take place November 7-8, 2014 at Christ's Church Cathedral, Hamilton.
- This **Outstanding Leadership for Ministry** event provides an opportunity to create relationships amongst the youth and young adult community attending Diocesan Synod, and offers support and education about procedures and meeting content for Synod so that youth are able to take a leadership role that reflects the vision **Spiritual Values**.

### aWay...

- An intimate spiritual retreat for youth aged 16-25 highlighting **Spiritual Values, Journeys in Faith, Life Changing Worship** and a **Continuous Culture of Innovation**; focused on young adults joining their peers in a time apart to reflect on life transitions, God connections, and meaningful life choices
- aWay... was held at Crieff Hills Retreat Centre in Puslinch, with 12 participants and three leaders, January 31-February 2, 2014.
- aWay... 2015 will take place January 30-February 1 at Crieff Hills and **registration is open now**. Leaders are Jamie Barnes, Rev. Leslie Gerloffs, Rev. Max Woolaver & Sharon Millar

### Youth Leadership Training Program (YLTP)

- A three-year leadership training program held during March Break to develop youth leaders who can offer **Outstanding Leadership for Ministry**. In addition to an emphasis on developing leadership skills, participants experience and create **Life Changing Worship** and focus on a **Generous Culture of Stewardship** within the context of the vision's **Spiritual Values**. These **Journeys in Faith** took place at Canterbury Hills, this year from March 9-12, 2014 with 37 youth participants, ages 13-16, including seven adult leaders.
- A Commissioning Service for the 3rd year participants, their families and supporters was held at Church of the Resurrection on September 27, 2014.
- The 2015 event will take place Sunday, March 15 to Wednesday, March 18, at Jericho House in Wainfleet, Ontario.
- *Applications for first year participants are available now and will be accepted until the end of January 2015.*

### Youth Synod in Action

The largest youth ministry program in Niagara with a dual focus on **Prophetic Social Justice Making** and **Outstanding Leadership for Ministry**, the reshaped Youth Synod now known as Youth Synod in Action was hosted by Christ's Church Cathedral, Hamilton, May 2-4, 2014. In 2015, St. Jude's in Oakville, Ontario will be our host.

- Offers youth delegates ages 13-21 the opportunity to become more knowledgeable about justice issues as well as to immerse themselves for a day in the justice work that God is undertaking in the community
- In addition, the event provides multiple opportunities to experience **Life Changing Worship**.
- Over 70 delegates, 12 small group leaders, and over 50 adult volunteer staff (including 24 community partners) participated representing over 40 parishes. The minutes are available on the website & in the convening circular. Many thanks to our host parish, Christ's Church Cathedral, for their enthusiasm and gracious hospitality!

## Youth Ministry Sunday

- A variety of resources (bulletin covers, theme ideas, and liturgical material) are offered to parishes to help them celebrate Youth Ministry in their congregation on the date of their choosing. This contextual liturgy material is developed within a **Continuous Culture of Innovation** framework and is intended to help youth and the parish families that support them celebrate their ministry through **Life Changing Worship**.
- Resource material and bulletin covers is available online prior to the June event (our target celebration date; parishes can use the material at their own convenience). The 2015 resource material will be posted by late April.

## Niagara Youth Conference (NYC)

- The cornerstone event in youth ministry in Niagara with a multiple focus on **Spiritual Values**, **Life Changing Worship**, a **Continuous Culture of Innovation**, a **Generous Culture of Stewardship**, and **Prophetic Social Justice Making** - this year was the 67th Anniversary of the first NYC (formerly NLC).
- The purpose of this five day residential event is to establish a caring, spiritual, participatory, learning community that encourages inclusivity and personal sharing (mitigated, of course, by fun and frivolity) as a means to deepening one's relationship with God and enabling participants to more fully live out their call to participate in co-creating God's kingdom.
- NYC took place from August 24-29, 2014 at Canterbury Hills. The program is staffed by 17 volunteers who give nine months to the planning and execution of this conference, pictures are posted on the Youth Ministry Facebook page.
- NYC 2015 takes place from August 30-August 4 and registration will open in May.

## The Gathering

- This event, reflecting the vision in the areas of **Continuous Culture of Innovation**, **Life Changing Worship**, a **Generous Culture of Stewardship**, **Journeys in Faith** and **Outstanding Leadership for Ministry** and now completing its seventh year, offers worship quarterly with a live band and liturgy written and delivered by youth and young adult participants.
- A group of committed youth leaders and adult supporters meet along with diocesan youth ministry staff to plan this worship.

## Resource Library

- Includes resources for program planning, current youth ministry theory and theology as well as worship and music resources all supporting the diocesan vision in **Life Changing Worship**, **Outstanding Leadership for Ministry**, **Prophetic Social Justice**, **Continuous Culture of Innovation**, and **Generous Culture of Stewardship**. Resources are available to borrow by individuals and parishes. They are located in the Program Department offices at Cathedral Place. New Resources include:
  - **Trailblazing: Theological Formation for Youth Ministry** – we have purchased 10 subscriptions to this online training resource and are meeting with a group of adults and young adults who are developing their skills for youth ministry leadership
  - **It's Advent-ageous - Contagious, Outrageous Ways to Wait for Teens and Young Adults**
  - **Advent in Action** – daily devotions and things to do for Teens and Young Adults that encourage them to move to action

## Children, Youth and Family Ministry Consultations and Training

- The program consultant is available to consult with parish and offer advice and support on an as-needed basis.
- Consultations can be as simple as telephone support and resource sharing electronically or as complex as a multi-event response created for your parish.

- Consultations are designed to meet the needs of the individual parish. The focus of the consultation may include visioning for ministry in the specific parish or area, development of a youth ministry program, specific training for children, youth and family ministry staff and volunteers as well as advice on hiring children, youth and family ministry personnel.

### **Adult Education - Bishop's Diploma Course (BDC)**

- This program provides instruction related to faith issues for over 50 lay people through two eight-week terms (fall and winter) and is offered in as many as six parish centres. Course themes include Old Testament, New Testament, ethics, liturgy, history, spirituality, world religions and Anglicanism.
- Diploma requirements are completion of six courses and attendance at a retreat.
- Retreats and graduations are planned biennially. The next retreat and graduation will be held June 6, 2015 at St. Andrew's, Grimsby.
- Thank you to BDC leaders Canon Steve Hallford, Venerable Bruce McPetrie, Reverend John Ripley, Reverend Deacon Ron Vince, and Reverend Paul Whitehouse for their ongoing leadership and dedication to the program.
- Jane Wyse provides staff support for BDC and may be contacted for information.

### **Thanks to our Volunteers!**

Thank you to the dozens of volunteers who have supported our work in the past year. Without you, these ministries would not be transforming the lives of children, youth and adults across the Diocese. Thanks especially to those volunteers who are gifting the diocese with an extraordinary donation of time and talent to maintain youth ministry programming in 2014 as we work to fill the youth ministry position.