

REPORTS OF VISION GROUPS AND VISION RELATED GROUPS

Vision Groups Leaders

It has been our recent practice to cluster together the Synod reports from various Vision-related groups: what were once called “petal groups”, the Vision Values Group and the Journeys in Faith Group. This makes a good deal of sense when we wish to hold up and give visibility to work specifically devoted to promoting awareness of and living out Niagara’s Vision for Ministry. However, it is also misleading, if it gives the impression that the Vision is only being pursued in these settings.

The reality is that Niagara’s Vision for Ministry is being lived out in all that we say and do and in all that we are. The work of the Financial Advisory Committee and the Bishop’s Advisory Committee on Church Buildings, for instance, are just as much the place where we live out our vision as is in any particular “Vision Group.” The work of all of our parishes can also be just as much places where we live out our vision as in any particular Vision Group venture. I was particularly made aware of that taking part in a moving Vision Workshop held in St. James’, Fergus, where the clergy and lay leaders of that parish explicitly claimed and explored the diocesan Vision as the parish’s vision for ministry!

Nevertheless, we Anglicans are sacramental, in both a narrow and broad sense. In the narrow sense, we centre our life and ministry around two “dominical” sacraments: baptism and eucharist, and five “commonly called” sacraments (ask a recent confirmand for this list!). In the broad sense, the outward and visible world provides many signs of the inward and spiritual graces with which God blesses our lives and ministries. And so, we continue to gather in Vision-related Groups to promote vision awareness and prompt vision-engagement in the baptismal ministries of individual Christian disciples and in the many communities of faith which form the Diocese of Niagara. They are (broadly) sacramental reminders of our awareness of and engagement with our Vision for Ministry in every aspect of our ministry.

In the Vision Groups Leaders Group this year, we welcomed the Rev’d Elizabeth Huether as the newly appointed Convenor of the Vision Values Group. We also gathered from time to time to learn about another’s work and to consider and coordinate together the Vision Groups’ budget submissions, Synod reports and presentations, and policies and procedures for education and training grants.

Looking forward continuing to live the Vision with all our partners in ministry,

Yours faithfully,

The Rev’d Canon Terry DeForest, Vision Advocate and Director of Human Resources

The Rev’d Canon Dr. Cathie Crawford Browning

The Rev’d Canon Terry DeForest

The Rev’d Matthew Griffin

The Rev’d Elizabeth Huether

The Rev’d Canon Rob Hurkmans

The Venerable Lynne Marchant

The Rev’d Bill Mous

Canon Christyn Perkons

Ms. Carolyn Vanderlip

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Continuous Culture of Innovation

On November 23rd, 2013 the Innovation Group held its first ReChurch Conference at St. Thomas' St. Catharines, where we spent the day unpacking the word "Discipleship" with the help of our guest speakers, Rev. Harold Percy and Rev. Peter Blundell. It was a successful day which also included lunch, Q & A, and opening and closing worship. There were approximately 100 in attendance.

The Innovation Group also paid for 4 participants in the 2014 Vital Church Planting Conference (January 30th - February 1st). The Keynote Speaker was Michael Moynagh, an expert on Fresh Expressions in the UK, and author of "Church for Every Context".

On April 26th, at St. Andrew's Grimsby, we hosted a "Day of Discipleship" workshop, which was really a follow up to the ReChurch Conference. This morning workshop was facilitated by Prof. John Bowen, and approximately 40 people attended.

In August I (Rob) began a year-long certificate program in Missional Leadership, offered at Wycliffe College. This cohort program is intended to equip church leaders to better understand their changing cultural context, and to reimagine ministry in this new world.

Preparations are now underway for our second ReChurch Conference "The Church in Post-Christendom" taking place on November 15th, 2014. Prof. David Fitch will be lead us as we reflect on how the church's ancient practices and traditions can be missionally redeployed in our world today.

The Reverend Canon Robert Hurkmans
Mr. Andy Kalbfleisch
Mrs. Sue Kalbfleisch
Dr. John Bowen
The Reverend Canon Kevin Bothwell
Mr. Bill Connor

Submitted by The Reverend Canon Rob Hurkmans

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Generous Culture of Stewardship

Our team is a small group of busy, dedicated, creative people who have a passion for promoting what it means to be the kind of disciple who lives with a grateful heart and shares generously from all of the rich bounty that God has placed in our lives.

Our activities and discussions this year have been focused on that premise. We are still working on making changes to the GCoS area of the website that will make the excellent resources you find there more accessible. There is a new tool kit with basics items included that help answer the question 'how do we get started?' Printable versions that you can bring to your stewardship meetings or use with the parish – and lots of other good ideas that you need to watch for by year-end!

Undergirding our work this year has been a struggle to shift from the long-standing concept of stewardship meaning only, time, talent and treasure, often with an emphasis on the latter. **The S word** is almost as bad as that E word (evangelism) in that it shuts people down – they no longer listen to the conversation as they are really waiting for the ask = \$\$\$\$.

Any culture has a language. Lose the language and you lose the culture. What then is the language of a generous culture? It means using words like abundance, bounty, and counting blessings. It means living as a disciple of Christ with a generous heart, giving more than is expected, realizing that all we have comes from God's generosity and abundance. God puts no limits on providing all that we need, and then some. How do we encourage each other to 'go and do likewise'? (John 6:13)

As we go forward with this work, we need your help! At Synod we will be asking for your creativity and ideas to re-name the GCoS area of the vision for Niagara to one that will encapsulate and inspire such a sense of God's unending generosity in loving us, and providing for us, no matter what, and not depending on if we deserve it!

Living as generous, giving disciples with grateful hearts will change the world, and it will change each of us. This is what it means to be an Anglican in the world today.

Respectfully submitted by

The Venerable Lynne Marchant

Ms. Ella Turnbull

The Reverend Deanne Patchett

The Reverend Dr. Derek Anderson

The Venerable David Pickett

The Reverend Canon Jean Archbell

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Journeys in Faith

Journeys in Faith has organized two major initiatives this year. We saw even more people and parishes engaging with this year's bishop's Lenten book, Richard Rohr's *Falling Upward: A Spirituality for the Two Halves of Life*.

In September, we worked with the Life-Changing Worship petal team to welcome the Rev. Regan O'Callaghan to Niagara as our first ever diocesan artist-in-residence. Over the course of the month, Regan preached in Guelph, Hamilton, and Saint Catharines; gave talks in a number of locales; met with artistic communities; led a creative experiential worship at the Gathering; and led three workshops on the writing of icons--two in Hamilton and one in Guelph. From interacting with people at the Cathedral during Art Crawl to the intensive workshops, he helped people to engage their faith lives through creative endeavours. We hope to share some images of his time with us during synod, and also hope to be able to share video recordings of two talks he gave while he was with us in an online mechanism.

The Rev. Jack Cox

The Rev. Michael Deed

The Rev. Matthew Griffin (Convenor)

Sr. Margaret, CSC

Sr. Michael, CSC

The Rev. Aaron Orear

Canon Christyn Perkons

The Rev. Dr. Patricia Stansfield



Life Changing Worship

Life Changing Worship has primarily worked in partnership with Journeys in Faith this year with our key project being the Artist-in-Residence program. The two groups worked on planning and logistics for Regan O'Callaghan's visit which according to those who participated in the many events was a successful endeavour. Reflections on Regan's visit and its impact will appear in the December Niagara Anglican. Regan facilitated a Gathering worship service for youth and their friends at St. John's Ancaster with a powerful focus on home as identity and surety; pictures of which can be seen on the diocesan Face Book page.

Upcoming plans include another Indaba session for Clergy and Licensed Lay Workers as well as workshops for lay readers and intercessors.

Life Changing Worship Members:

Ms. Stephanie DeForest Furtado
The Reverend Matthew Griffin
Ms. Janet Hope
Canon Christyn Perkons (Chair)
The Reverend Dr. Patricia Stansfield
The Very Reverend Peter Wall



Outstanding Leadership for Ministry

Our team has met regularly this year in an effort to further our commitment to encourage and support outstanding leadership in the Diocese of Niagara.

Highlights of our work include:

- A diocesan ministry leaders' training consultation at St. John's, Ancaster on January 28. Participants joined in facilitated discussions on the competencies of transformational leaders and best practices in ministry partnerships. It was exciting to listen to the many ways that outstanding leadership is being exercised in Niagara.
- Began the process of planning a 2015 Diocesan Leadership Conference. We are hoping to attract a stellar leader who can inspire and challenge leaders in Niagara.
- A re-working of our team's goal, initiatives and indicators. (attached)
- Encouragement for the development of a Ministry Covenant for every parish in the Diocese. A training video will soon be available.
- Some attention to financial resourcing of leadership training, including the new Bishop's Scholar initiative and new Leadership Grants.

We bid farewell to the Rev. Dr. Renee Desjardins, one of our longstanding members. We welcomed several new members to the team: Ms. Jenny Street, the Rev. Canon Dr. Bob Wright and the Rev.

Brian Galligan.

Respectfully submitted,

The Rev. Canon Dr. Cathie Crawford Browning

Team Members:

Mr. Stanley Bowers

The Rev. Canon Terry DeForest

The Rev. Brian Galligan

The Ven. Dr. Stephen Hopkins

Ms. Cathy McCann

Ms. Jenny Street

The Rev. Canon Dr. Robert Wright

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Prophetic Social Justice Making

Goal: The Diocese of Niagara engages with those seeking justice, striving to faithfully uphold the dignity of all, and with God's help to transform lives.

Highlights for 2013/2014, include:

- Being a sounding board for the work of the Rev. Bill Mous, Director of Justice, Community & Global Ministries (in his animating, communication, advocacy and facilitation roles) and for several diocesan committees and working groups.
- Restructuring the work of the Niagara Social Justice Committee to a smaller advisory group with working groups in order to streamline our administrative tasks and enhance our ability to engage in justice issues and initiatives, including enhancing regional representation.
- The committee also supported many social justice initiatives, including:
 - Raising awareness of the White Ribbon campaign and the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women.
 - Inviting parishes to support a vestry motion regarding an increase to the minimum wage so that all people working full time earn a wage that is above the poverty line. A letter was sent to the Minister of Labour by the Bishop.
 - Supporting Youth Synod in Action, which brings together youth to learn and engage in a variety of justice issues within our diocese.
 - Supporting the Proud to Protect Refugees campaign that challenges the stigma associated with being resettled as a refugee in Canada.
 - Participating in a National Day of Action to protest the cuts made to the interim Federal Health program for refugees.
 - Organizing a tri-diocesan initiative to engage MPPs and urge bold action to reduce poverty in the Province as part of the renewal of Ontario's poverty reduction strategy and during the lead up to the provincial election.
 - Supporting The Chew on This! campaign calling for a national anti-poverty plan as part of the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty.
 - Sharing information about climate justice events and movements.
 - Promoting PWRDF's food-security initiative, Fred Says.

To stay informed about the latest social justice happenings, sign up for JUSTnews, a monthly electronic newsletter published by the diocese. You can sign up here: <http://eepurl.com/n5RzL>

Prophetic Social Justice-Making Vision Group Members:

Ms. Alicia Archbell
Mr. Roy Campbell
Ms. Judy Connor
The Rev. Canon Dr. Sharyn Hall
The Rev. Elizabeth Huether
Ms. Cathy Hughes
Mr. Dennis Hurst
The Rev. Deacon Rod McDowell
The Rev. Bill Mous (staff)
Ms. Sue Pratt
Ms. Carolyn Vanderlip (chair)
Ms. Ellen Woolaver

Submitted by the Rev. Bill Mous & Ms. Carolyn Vanderlip

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Vision Values

The work of the Vision Values group continued its work of discovering just what our mandate as part of the Vision team might be. We experienced some time during this year when we did not meet as we were without a Convenor. However, when we did gather we have done some great work. We clarified for ourselves, our goal and are working to create strategies for attaining this goal. We want to provide helpful ways for individuals, committees, parishes to do everything with an awareness of the values : integrity and honesty, respecting diversity, passion and hard work, and various expressions of spiritual disciplines which we believe are the threads that weave throughout the tapestry of our Diocesan vision holding it together.

Our Goal:

Is to promote within the Diocese i) reflection and discernment of AND ii) engagement with the values of our Diocesan vision for ministry

Our Strategies: (Still a work in progress)

- 1) To develop a tool/ resource to assist vision groups, diocesan committees, parishes and individuals in meeting the goal of reflection, discernment and engagement with our Vision Values
- 2) To explore models for partner/observation/ rapporteur work and to do some training of people within the Diocese in this skill in order to help us develop a living awareness of the ways the values impact our work of living the Vision.

Thank you to all the members of this Group: Ms. Cindy Blades, Ms Shirley Boorstaad, Mr. Michael Edwards, The Rev. Pamela Guyatt, The Rev. Canon Dr. Sharyn Hall, The Rev. Deacon George Henry, The Rev. Elizabeth Huether (Convenor)

Respectfully Submitted by Elizabeth Huether

Goal

Lay and clergy leaders in the Diocese of Niagara, working together in partnership, grow missional communities, nurture disciples and make new disciples who follow Christ passionately and live out God’s mission in the world.

Biblical Reference: Luke 4:16-21 “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news...”

Key Outcomes [Indicators]

More leaders in the Diocese who:

- Have a vision and can inspire and motivate others with it
- Develop and empower other leaders (e.g., through mentoring, coaching)
- Are always learning intentionally, reflectively, and critically
- Are effective change agents: have skills for initiating and supporting change, are creative, take courageous and wise risks
- Can build effective teams
- Are healthy: committed to their own wellness, self-aware, spiritually grounded, emotionally intelligent, know their strengths and weaknesses
- Foster a positive climate for mission, building community, and making connections.

More faith communities that:

- Are engaged in community outreach and justice initiatives in partnership with other parishes and organizations outside the church
- Live the Marks of Mission:
 1. To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom
 2. To teach, baptize and nurture new believers
 3. To respond to human need by loving service
 4. To seek to transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind, and to pursue peace and reconciliation
 5. To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth

More people in those faith communities who:

- Identify themselves as disciples
- Can describe how that makes a difference in their lives
- Can describe/tell stories about what God is doing in the world and how their church is engaged in that mission.

A diocesan culture that:

- Is serious about leadership
- Values the expertise of its leaders and where leaders learn from each other.

Key Initiatives

Sponsoring Leaders’ Conferences and education grants to facilitate leadership development for lay and clergy leaders

Changing diocesan systems through:

- reform in parish reporting to reflect our vision in what we count, measure, evaluate, and reward
- training for compliance

Advocating for ministry covenants to uphold:

- the mutuality of Bishop, clergy, and laity in leadership;
- a shared commitment to the vision;
- the learning goals of the parties to the covenant.

Creating leadership development events and resources specifically for lay leaders in parishes

Modeling the vision:

- through the Bishop’s embodying the change in leadership culture we are promoting;
- promoting change in our language away from “we/they” and “us/them” (We will seek to adopt more inclusive language and encourage others to do so as well.)
- at clergy days (as people share strengths/resources, their own leadership stories)
- and, at Synod (through story-telling and increased involvement/profile for lay leaders).