

Bishop supports primate's efforts

By BISHOP RALPH SPENCE
Dear Friends in the Diocese of Niagara

Recently we have seen a good deal of press coverage about the international Anglican Communion. First of all, you can read about the results of

the Primates' meeting in Ireland on our website (www.niagara.anglican.ca) and in various other places.

Secondly, you know that the Archbishop of Canterbury has chosen not to meet with Canadian and American Bishops in May.

Thirdly, you have read that there has

been some cross-boundary interference by Archbishop Gregory Venables, who went into the Diocese of New Westminster after the Primates' meeting. This was clearly discouraged by the primates when they met in Ireland.

This is time of political turmoil in our

church. It's not the first, and it certainly will not be the last. It's interesting that this is happening during the season of Lent, as we begin to reflect on the Easter mystery. As followers of Christ, we know that suffering and death is followed by life. This is the

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Positive vibes at DM&M meetings

By PETER SWIRE

In response to some questions raised over the way in which the DM&M is calculated, Bishop Ralph Spence established a task force under the leadership of Archdeacon Bruce McPetrie to look into the way in which we, as a diocesan family, share in the cost of running the diocese.

The task force, whose membership is broad in both experience and geography, is presently on a fact finding mission to see how our present method works; how it could be improved and how it compares to other dioceses.

As part of the fact finding mission, four regional town hall meetings were held to listen to the thoughts and concerns of parishes. At press time, only three of the four meetings had been held.

With over 100 interested souls attending these meetings, there seemed to be a few developing trends.

Given the issues raised on the cost of running the diocesan church at this past Synod, it would have been reasonable to predict that these town hall meetings would have been negatively charged and clearly "anti-diocese".

Nothing could be further from the truth.

The one item that came through loud and clear was the need for better communication regarding the DM&M.

Parishes are clamouring for a better understanding of the top line item on the expense side of their vestry budgets and matching that to the DM&M invoice with the basic question, "where does it go?"

Parish leaders are asking for more information on how to complete the forms, ensuring they get all allowable deductions.

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NEWLY-TRAINED PUPPETEERS shine during the closing Eucharist at Servers' Fest held recently. "Timothy" sings out the Good News with Michael's help. For story, see page 2.

Guarded optimism for Saadia, Timmy's return



SAADIA AND TIMMY in Morocco

By DIANA HUTTON
Editor

There is "guarded optimism" that a Hamilton woman deported to Morocco and her Canadian-born son will soon return to Hamilton.

Archdeacon Rick Jones, whose parish - Church of the Resurrection, Hamilton - has been pivotal in assisting the family, said Canadian government See GUARDED / page 2

Synod needs to be more representative but less costly

Help improve Synod, have your say

By BRIAN GROSE

The Task Force, appointed by Bishop Ralph Spence "to consider options for conducting Diocesan Synod and to develop recommendations concerning the content and focus of future synods", held its first meeting on Feb. 15.

We shall feel that we have met our objectives if our recommendations produce Diocesan Synods that are more representative, more effective, more participatory and less costly than those of recent years.

If we can include "more interesting", "more stimulating" and "more enjoyable", we shall have exceeded them. Ours is a small task force - there are seven of us

including staff - but we have big objectives.

It would be a daunting prospect if we felt we had to depend solely on our own resources, but we are conscious there is a wealth of talent, experience and ideas waiting to be tapped.

We have the benefit of the material produced during the Open Space Meetings held last fall as well as feedback from recent Diocesan Synods. But that's just the start.

We will contact dioceses across North America to find out how they have improved their Synods in recent years.

Current technology allows us to do that inexpensively, just as it allows any reader of this article to let us have the benefit of his or her ideas, wisdom and advice, virtually cost free.

We urge every reader to submit ideas and suggestions

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Guarded optimism for Saadia's return

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officials here have been helpful in moving the case along. But the bureaucracy in Morocco has been slow to respond. However, progress is being made.

Saadia and Timmy have been in hiding in Morocco since Jan. 30. Saadia is at risk of an "honour killing" since she fled her family and married Timmy's father, her husband Suad, himself a refugee from Kosovo.

For the moment, Saadia and Timmy are safe but "the longer they are there, the more likely it is that Saadia's father will find her."

Archdeacon Jones said there is concern for two-year-old Timmy, as well. Since arriving in Morocco, his exzema has worsened. He also misses his father,

Archdeacon Jones said.

"They say he cries every day for his father."

In order to leave Morocco legally, Saadia must have a Moroccan passport. But to be issued a passport required the permission of her husband, Suad. Suad sent his permission to the Morocco government. But the government refused to accept him as Saadia's husband since the country does not recognize the authenticity of Christian ministers.

"They requested we send them anything from the government indicating Saadia and Suad were married."

An application was made to the Ontario government for an official certificate of marriage.

"It's been this kind of thing all along," he said.

At the moment, the marriage certificate was being expedited in hopes Saadia will then be granted a passport.

"We're guardedly optimistic," Archdeacon Jones said.

With "profound" gratitude, he said his parish is set to welcome back the two.

"We have enough money in hand, thanks to the tremendous generosity of others, to pay all the charges we're required to pay."

He noted the Church of the Redeemer, Stoney Creek, held its own fundraiser to help out Saadia, Suad and Timmy.

"Hats off to them," he said, adding people stepped up to the plate in terms of donations.

Servers' Fest. '05: A glorious celebration!

By JANE STEWART

"Those who didn't attend missed a great day!" is how 71 servers from 20 parishes from all the regions across the diocese felt on Feb. 19. Twenty-two volunteers, workshop leaders, round robin leaders and diocesan staff supported these servers, young and old.

Servers gathered in the morning and were welcomed by the Dean, The Very Reverend Peter Wall, to Christ's Church Cathedral which hosted the day's learning, celebration, creation and play.

Servers spent the morning participating in four round robin activities.

Servers learned about the ministry of serving with the Dean.

They explored vestments with The Reverend Dan Brereton Christ's Church Cathedral, vicar, and then modeled the various vestments for each other much to everyone's amusement.

The Reverend Canon Charles Stirling, of Christ's Church Cathedral, guided the round robin groups on an interesting tour of the Cathedral providing a brief history lesson.

The Reverend Canon Elaine Hooker, (diocesan Interim Priest) facilitated labyrinth walks using the Creation and Chartres diocesan labyrinths.

Judy Worsley, St. Luke's, Burlington, and her helpers pulled off a pizza lunch – 27 extra large pizzas, 350 Timbits, carrots with dip, and litres of pop, juice, tea/coffee and water.

Over the lunch hour, servers were able to connect with friends new and old.

The afternoon saw everyone in their workshop of choice. The Reverend Audrey Conard, St. Cuthbert's, Oakville, led a group through *Tending the Soul* – exploring and enjoying our deep connection to the God who gives us life.

Another eager group danced around the Cathedral preparing a liturgical dance for the Eucharist under the direction of Heather Grant, St. Christopher's, Burlington. Donna Ellis, Christ Church, Woodburn, taught servers basic puppetry principles in preparation for a performance in the Eucharist.

Creative arts, instructed by Sarah Clarke, Church of the Transfiguration, St. Catharines, used a batik technique to create individual collages which they could take home.

MUSIC filled the Choir Room as servers worked with Mary Jane Price and musicians from St. Christopher's, Burlington to learn the music for the closing Eucharist. Mary Jane led an enthusiastic singing group in a mix of contemporary songs.

The closing Eucharist was celebrated by The Very Reverend Peter Wall. Many of the servers were involved as prayers, readers, puppeteers, dancers and singers in a glorious celebration of who we are and whose we are.

Patricia and Amberle from St. Alban's, Grand Valley summed up the day, "It was a good experience and we learned a lot."

Turmoil in Church is nothing new

Continued from page 1

promise of the Risen Christ and His Spirit – alive among us today.

I do want to make one thing clear. As a member of the house of Bishops and as the chief pastor of this diocese, I throw my support behind the work of our Primate Andrew Hutchison. I know that this is a difficult time for him and I'm certain he had hoped that during his ministry as Primate, a division like this would not have happened. I cannot think of anyone who is more able to help build a united Church, nationally and internationally than Archbishop Andrew. The pastoral well-being of all members of

our church is a priority to him – and this will continue as he works through this difficulty.

Please offer your prayers and your support for Archbishop Hutchison.

While you are praying, take some time to reflect on the death and resurrection of Christ. Knowing that the Spirit is among us, we can be confident that this situation will bring life and hope to all God's people.

With warm regards

+Ralph
Bishop of Niagara
Wednesday March 09 2005

Making synod more effective

Continued from page 1

for consideration and to help us broaden our horizons and expand our vision.

The more submissions we receive, the better equipped we will be to produce Synods that delegates look forward to attending. Synods will be inspiring gath-

erings of dedicated individuals, enthused at the prospect of participating in a process that is not only challenging and invigorating but which is leading towards the "New Niagara" we are trying to create.

Members of the task force include Chair Brian Grose,

Michael Bird, Terry Jackman, Bill Mous and Mark Tiller; assisted by Steve Hopkins and Karen Nowicki.

Submissions should be sent, preferably by e-mail: c/o Karen Nowicki at karen.nowicki@niagara.anglican.ca)

The group who brought you "God in Transition" and "God Beyond Genders" presents

IMAGINING ANEW:

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Workshops will include:

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Where: St James Anglican Church, Melville St, Dundas

Cost: \$25

What to bring: Bag lunch (drinks and snacks provided) and comfortable clothes

To register: Please call St James Church at 905-627-1424

DM&M meetings draw out the positives of diocesan life

Continued from page 1

Most people seemed pleased to hear that the formula focuses on ministry rather than buildings.

Some questions were raised on added deductions or a move to a flat tax. Many raised the idea of standardized accounting systems and reporting.

The more affluent parishes made mention of sharing their abundance with the struggling sister churches of this diocese.

Whatever the outcome of the process, the participants clearly had a positive outlook and eagerly want to be part of the solution.



Cursillo - Building up the Body of Christ

The Cursillo Method approaches lay ministry as a very natural act of being Christ-like within each of our daily activities. While most people would like to live their lives in a Christ-like manner, the pressures of the world often make this difficult. The Cursillo Method provides individuals with the tools, the strength, and the support to equip each one for the ministry of building up the body of Christ (Ephesians 4:7, 11-12)

The Cursillo journey typically starts with a 3-day weekend experience of living in Christian community, developing a deeper understanding of what it means to be Christian, and discovering your personal calling in the church. Weekends are held in the spring and fall each year.

If you would like more information on Cursillo:

- visit our website – www.niagaracursillo.org
- join us at one of our monthly gatherings (called an *Utreya*) in your region, or attend one of our educational events. Dates and locations can be found on our website under *Utreyas* and *Coming Events*, or on the Niagara Diocese website (www.niagara.anglican.ca) under *Parishes – Events*
- contact either our Spiritual Director: Rev. Susan Wells 905-547-8851, Spiritual.Director@niagaracursillo.org; or Lay Director: Brian Galligan 905-875-2800, Lay.Director@niagaracursillo.org

If you would like to have a presentation on Cursillo at your church, please contact Ted Moore 905-875-0611; pre-cursillo@niagaracursillo.org

• The Cursillo Movement operates under the authority of the Diocesan Bishop •

Parish Assessment Tool is now ready

Undermount, Port Colborne first to use it

By JIM NEWMAN

The Bishop's Task Force on Parish Viability has made its final recommendations to Bishop Ralph Spence following four months of intensive study and development.

Diocesan clergy, archdeacons, and senior staff of the diocese were given an overview at a Clericus Meeting held at St. Matthew on-the-Plains March 8.

The Task Force's primary goals were to develop a framework for collecting benchmark data and to create effective assessment tools for evaluating parish and regional viability.

The Task Force focussed on finding objective ways to help parishes understand the reality of their situations through assessment, providing more useful information, tools, and processes, and assisting parishes with effective interventions.

Task Force members Archdeacon Lynne Corfield, The Reverend Amy Cousineau, Catherine Cumming, Archdeacon Dr. Fred Gosse, The Reverend Canon David Howells, Pat Leece, Diocesan Treasurer Bob McKinnell, Jim Newman, chair, and the Reverend Canon Michael Patterson based their work on the following principles, beliefs, and assumptions:

1. Throughout their lifespan all parishes will experience cycles of growth, stagnation, decline and renewal. Failure to thrive does not necessarily indicate a lack of parish will or commitment, but may be due to forces which may be external to the parish and transient in nature.

2. Viable parishes are necessary for a viable Diocese. All parishes are committed to the long-term health and viability of the diocese and the diocese is committed to building viable ministries in its parishes.

3. The diocese's financial resources are currently the major limiting factor to its ability to sustain parishes. The diocese must make difficult choices in allocating its financial resources to parishes most likely to become or remain viable. While the diocese may continue to sustain parishes for a time when their viability is challenged, it cannot financially sustain any parish indefinitely.

4. The diocese requires a process that is comprehensive, fact-based, objective and participatory to facilitate decision making about resource allocation and parish viability. To be equitable and comprehensive, this assess-

ment process will be used throughout the diocese.

5. The diocesan assessment process will be based on an examination of the financial, mission and leadership characteristics of parishes.

6. The impact of diocesan choices may be painful for the parishes that can no longer be sustained.

Parishes that are no longer sustainable will be treated with dignity and consideration.

At the outset the Task Force reviewed the work of the Diocese of Toronto's Strategic and Sustainable Ministry Working Group and the Diocese of Niagara's Mission Strategy and Planning Committee.

This facilitated the development of criteria and a methodology for evaluating parish viability.

A process was designed to gather additional parish statistical information, and integrated with the year-end on-line collection of data by the diocesan Finance Department.

The primary outcome of the Task Force is a Parish Assessment Tool that uses a seven-step approach to determine parish health and viability based on evaluations of parish mission, parish finances, and parish leadership.

The process is self-guiding and self-documenting.

It is intended for use by the bishop, the executive archdeacon, and the regional archdeacons.

Other senior staff may be involved in assembling data and assisting parishes with remedial and other consultative roles.

Volunteer parish consultants may be requested to work with parishes under the direction of Synod staff.

Task Force Chair Jim Newman acknowledges that assessment is almost always disconcerting, but suggested that clergy and parishioners in Niagara should be much more alarmed if such a process were not being implemented.

He said learning more about matching parish's needs with available resources should lead to more effective application of time, talent, and treasure.

More details and information will be provided at clericus meetings, clergy days and workshops.

Two areas, Port Colborne and Undermount, have requested first use of the assessment tool.

The Parish Assessment Tool is a living document and further modifications may be recommended as more familiarity is developed with its use.



Home for Mothering Sunday

Parishioners of St. John's, Thorold, filled the pews of their beloved church on Mothering Sunday March 6. The service was the first since a devastating fire in November destroyed part of the adjacent office and hall space. The church and kitchen also sustained smoke and water damage. An honour guard was invited to help commemorate the faith and hard work of those who helped with cleaning and refurbishing the church. Thanks in large part to the generosity of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Thorold, the congregation at St. John's has been able to function.

Did your parish earn 8% last year?

By MARK SKUSE

Over the past few years, the amount of monies that parishes have invested with the diocese has doubled to more than \$16 million.

There are several reasons why a parish should put long-term monies with the diocese. They include:

Fiduciary Responsibility

The incorporation of a parish is legally responsible to ensure that decisions regarding investments are undertaken in accordance with Trust law, the highest standard required under legislation.

Should just one parishioner or deceased's person family member question decisions made, legal action can result.

The diocese invests parish funds through Frank Russell of Canada Investment Group.

Russell invests the monies with 24 of the top investment companies in North America.

Can your parish diversify to that extent?

If your parish feels that investing in GICs is foolproof, think again.

Parishes can still be held to task for not obtaining the return that stocks and bonds would have given.

Parishes may also forget about the \$60,000 limit for Canada Deposit Insurance.

Rates of Return

Russell of Canada provided a net 8 per cent return to parishes that invested through the diocese in 2004.

The guidelines the Investment Committee of the Diocese stipulate are monies are to be invested

30 per cent into Canadian stocks, 30 per cent into foreign stocks and 40 per cent into fixed income investments, such as bonds.

In essence the mix is considered to be balanced.

The diocese conducts a review every five years, utilizing an outside consultant to ensure that Russell is doing the job it should be for the diocese.

Availability of Parish Monies

If you invest through the diocese but need to make a withdrawal, you can obtain your monies

usually within 24-48 hours. There are absolutely no withdrawal charges as there are with some mutual funds.

Diocesan Treasurer Bob McKinnell, along with members of the Investment Sub-Committee, can answer questions and obtain more information for your parish.

If your parish didn't earn 8 per cent last year, start asking why.

Mark Skuse is a member of the St. John the Evangelist, Hamilton and sits on the Investment Sub-Committee

Where does the Anglican Church Go Now?

You are invited to an evening of hope and encouragement at

St. Peter's Anglican Church

705 Main Street East, Hamilton

Friday, April 15, 7:30 pm

- Speakers: Canon Charlie Masters and Mr. Michael Edward, former Prayer Book Society chair
- Refreshments afterwards



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Waltman completes IIC exam

It is with great pleasure that the Insurance and Risk Management Committee and David Ricketts, O.N., announce Kim Waltmann, administrator of Insurance, Investments, Trusts and Assessments in the Finance Department of the Synod of the Diocese of Niagara, has successfully completed the Insurance Institute of Canada examination for Principles and Practice with a B, representing a mark in the range of 75-79. Well done Kim.

The Insurance Institute of Canada is the leading national provider of insurance courses through examinations set four times a year.

Editorial

Evangelism – time to take the leap

As I write this article, which has to be written a couple of weeks before the publication and delivery of the diocesan paper, I am still looking at piles of snow out my window and still feeling the chill and cold of winter.

Yet Lent is coming to an end and by the time you read this, Easter will have passed and I have every hope that we will begin to sense spring in the air and the new life of nature around us will become ever more evident. New life is the hope of spring.

Our Church has certainly felt and known the winter of our existence over the past number of years and perhaps even more intensively during the past months. The topics which this could raise would take columns of this paper which are not available to me. So I will not raise them – not only because there is no space, but because I believe winter is over and spring is upon us.

I have and will continue to have a great deal of hope with respect to the life of our international, national and local Anglican Church.

With all the difficulties and division we have experienced, some might say the Bishop's Mitre is a bit too tight these days and that it's causing me not to think too clearly. Well, let me tell you that it's not – I'm thinking clearly and positively. I'm not in a dream world with my hope, but rather I am currently living – and challenging all of us to live – in a world of action.



Bishop
Ralph
Spence

On Nov. 9, 2001, in my charge to the 127th synod, I announced that our diocese was going into "evangelism" mode and that we would soon be appointing a director of evangelism to assist us in opening our doors to the world around us.

The director has been appointed, and he has been working diligently to give us the tools we need to open some of those rusty doors to anyone who wishes to journey in faith with us. But tools are only good to those who are willing to use them. In that same charge, I said the following:

"Right now, we see about 1 per cent of the general population in our churches on an average Sunday. Are we prepared to see that figure double? It's an awesome challenge. It would mean a church where the majority of our members will have been raised outside the Anglican Church, where most of the people will have been baptized in the last five years..."

Pentecost

That was in 2001 and this is 2005. I cannot help but think that now is the time to begin to take up this challenge; to use the tools we have and to open our hearts and our doors to many people that could both benefit from our community and contribute to its life.

So, I want to issue a very hopeful challenge. In a few weeks we will celebrate Pentecost Sunday, often seen as the day that gave birth to the Christian Church. What would it be like if we filled our

churches on this day when we celebrate the aliveness of God's Spirit in our midst.

What a wonderful thought. Let's not leave it as a thought. It's not a difficult thing to do – it just means each of us has a few weeks to invite someone to join us at our parish on Pentecost Sunday.

I am asking rectors and parish staffs to prepare for this day. Open our parish doors with marvelous celebrations and welcoming homilies. Make certain our hospitality is the best it has ever been.

I am asking our parishioners to do the evangelizing. Invite your son, daughter, mother, aunt, neighbour, friend or even someone who is difficult to join us for this special celebration.

A few will turn us down, but many will not. Welcome them with open hearts and show them the best of Anglicanism. What a day this could be in our local church!

This is a serious challenge. It's based on my faith in a Risen Lord, in this Church and my hope that life abounds and that God will not ever abandon us.

It is based on the love that I have for you and this world around us, and the love that I know you have for your Church and your neighbour.

Rectors, staffs, and people of Niagara – let's do it. Let's take the evangelism challenge and begin to open our doors and hearts to those who need us and want to be one with us. What a glorious spring, what a glorious Easter and what a glorious Pentecost we will have this year.

+Ralph
Bishop of Niagara

Letters to the Editor

Synod council 'blew it' for men's ministry

I'm reminded of the Joe Bazooka cartoon of the little boy desperate to earn a merit badge for helping others in the recent Synod Council approval to changes in the Cannon 4.6.1.

Some parishes may in fact need the help of both the FAC and the BACCB to develop a vision for their parish that includes statements of requirements, conceptual plans, final plans, specifications and the tendering process. Some parishes have been blessed by God with a volunteer ministry team that has the professional skills and abilities to develop these requirements without the assistance of good, but in my opinion, misguided third parties. These third parties really have no personal investment in the life of any parish other than maybe their own.

In 2003 our parish council struck a Visioning Committee for our short-term future that included financial, physical and spiritual components. At our 2004 Financial Vestry Meeting our Vestry approved the Vision present by this committee.

This was a five-year vision that would address some immediate physical asset concerns (facilities maintenance) and the five-year time period to raise the capital for these needs. Our vision went beyond just facilities maintenance to include a new kitchen, so our bi-weekly Soup and Sandwich outreach program to our community can grow and so we can meet current health regulations.

A parish wishing to invest in its own future should be supported by the diocese, not regu-

lated to the point of bureaucratic confusion or even worse, to a point of 'forced' exclusion of mainly male-oriented ministry opportunities for the men of the parish family.

Yes, men are good at fixing things and building things. With this proposed regulated tendering process, the BACCB has in fact forced our men into an inactive state.

We have gentlemen, some retired, others that are professional engineers, craftsmen, tradesmen and contractors all willing to lend a hand to help reduce cost so we can do more with less.

We have qualified electricians willing to complete the electrical requirements for our kitchen expansion plan, we have a master cabinetmaker willing to build our new kitchen cabinets at cost, yet now, with a swipe of the pen Synod Council has made a serious mistake and should make provisions to ensure the men of the Diocese of Niagara do not have their ministry opportunities taken away by a disconnected diocesan volunteer staff eager to do "good".

Our parish is a case in point; we have been faithful to the call of Bishop Ralph to use the training tools provided by the diocese to develop our vision and the financial vehicle to achieve our vision. The information required in the cannon change reported by the Niagara Anglican can be provided, but at what cost?

This change is the most discouraging action Synod Council could ever take when it comes to ministry for men. As a scientist and statistician I've conducted repeated studies of male to

female attendance ratio in church and the numbers are always the same – there are three times more women in church than men. It's sad to see Synod Council taking action to further reduce that ratio.

A final separate point, I'm pretty sure the diocese received a strong message from Synod this past January concerning financial waste. This action taken by Synod Council is wasteful to the point of selfishness.

Should our parish be 'forced' to not use our mostly male volunteers on our kitchen project by complying to this proposed tendering process, I respectfully request the diocese or its volunteers on the FAC or BACCB chip in the additional money we will now have to raise to complete our parish vision.

Any volunteers? I didn't think so.

As to our financial vision, it was completed in one year.

We have work to do for the Lord Jesus Christ in our community. If you can't help or if your help isn't needed, get out of the way. Don't make it more difficult to serve God or to find ministry opportunities for the men in the parishes of the Diocese of Niagara.

Believe it or not Synod Council, you blew it this time.

Yours, a servant of Christ Jesus

Keith Milks
People's Warden
St. Paul's, Dunnville



Editor

Diana Hutton
(905) 573-0962
dihutton@mountaincable.net

Director of Marketing

Ted Manning
(905) 680-0615
advertising@niagara.anglican.ca

Mailing Address:

Cathedral Place
252 James Street North
Hamilton, Ontario, Canada
L8R 2L3

Diocesan Website:
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The Bishop's Publishing Advisory Board includes:

Pam Claridge
(519) 941-6804
John Janisse
(905) 312-8444 x102
The Rev. Canon Charles Stirling
(905) 383-1088
Carol Summers
(905) 772-5641
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(905) 527-3505

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Viewpoints

A pivotal point in Church life

What was, what will be

This is certainly my favourite time of year for all the obvious reasons. The warming weather, increased sunshine, the greening of the landscape and the prospect of heading back to the cottage all enliven one's soul.

Change can be a very good thing! However for many of us, it can also be very difficult with adjustments to make and old habits to break. Sometimes we succeed in adjusting to change and more often than we may admit, we fail.

We know that change or setting a new course for our lives is difficult. The road of good intention is wide and long.

So it is also for the life in the Church.

Change is difficult

Change is difficult, old habits die hard; we cling to that which is safe and well-worn. Yet, as Bishop Ralph Spence stated in his charge to Synod last November, we are facing some of the greatest challenges the Church has ever known.

Loren Mead, author of *"The Once and Future Church"* wrote, "We are at the front edges of the greatest transformation of the Church that has occurred in 1600 years.

"It is by far the greatest challenge that the Churches of North America have experienced; it may eventually make the Reformation of the 16th Century look like a ripple in a pond."

Canadian theologian Alan Roxburgh adds, "Make no mistake about it, every church leader must understand what has ended and be prepared for what is emerging if they are to lead God's people into and in the new century."

In many ways, however, the Church continues with business as usual, making plans as if we could will the 1950s back into existence.

Loren Mead also observed, "We find many of our colleagues going on as they always have; we see people and institutions making plans for tomorrow as if it will be a replica of yesterday. Where do we see energy for facing difficulties, we find little sense of urgency. We get the sense that people hope that it will all go away if we just keep our heads down and keep putting one foot ahead of the other."

So in the face of the immense challenges before us, we can either brace ourselves and circle the wagons against the forces of change or we can embrace the opportunities that change provides.

In the Gospel of John 5:2-12, we hear a story of an invalid who spent years by the pool at Bethesda, waiting for the exact moment when a healing angel would come down to touch the waters. Meanwhile, he asked for contributions from passersby to maintain himself.

Jesus approached the man and asked him, "Do you want to be healed?" Without hesitation, the man said yes, and was healed.

Richard Southern in his book *"Cracking Your Congregations Code"* uses this parable as a model for how we might deal with change. He queries of the invalid, "suppose he had answered Jesus differently?"

Southern observed that this invalid had grown up with his illness and spent years by the pool. People knew him, and he was used to his lifestyle. He could have retreated into the safety net and said, "No thanks, I'll stay

the way I am.'" By saying yes to the question, he changed the course of his life.

Southern suggests that our congregations, like the man at the pool, also need to answer the question, "Do you want to be healed?"

Our renewal, growth, and spiritual health, in all their dimensions, are possible only for those who take Jesus' question seriously.

Are our congregations willing to embrace change in our post modern society in order to be relevant and vibrant spiritual communities?

Are we ready and able to take a hard look at what we do and what we might become? We can easily retreat to the comfort of the known and answer, "No thanks, we'll stay the way we are."

However, we believe that God is calling our parishes and our diocese to engage in renewal and growth. If we say yes to God's call, we embark on a lifelong journey into areas previously unexplored as we meet the challenges this new age presents to us.

The good news, amidst the chaos, is that interest in religion and spirituality is at an all time high. Sociologist Reginald Bibby reports that 75 to 80 per cent of all Canadians believe in God and consider themselves to be in touch with their spirituality. Even a casual glance at the shelves of your local bookstore reveals growing interest in religion, spirituality and self-help.

Religious themes are often the focus of magazine articles and feature stories in newspapers. No one can deny the rabid interest in things religious recently as evidenced by the mainstream debate over the film *Passion of the Christ*, and books like Brown's *"The DaVinci Code"* and Harpur's *"The Pagan Christ."*

The question for us within the Church as we say yes to God's call is to ask whether or not we are willing to pay the price for renewal and growth.

Can we let go of some of the time-honoured traditions and values we hold dear? Do we have a language and community ready to meet people of the post-modern age where they are at?

Change of mindset

Jill Hudson, author of *"When Better Isn't Enough"*, suggests it is more than just another new program and tinkering with congregational life that is necessary. It's a change of mindset, which is the pivotal point between what was and what could be.

Hudson warns that in the 21st Century we have to let go of the notion that we have a favoured place in the mainstream of culture. Congregations will be challenged to give up such concepts as:

- If we build it, they will come
- New members join because of the clergy
- If we reach children, they will bring their parents
- The rector is the leader of the congregation
- Adding a worship service will destroy our community feeling

The list could go on. We could try to sit back and wait for something to happen, trusting in practices, programs and structures that no longer seem to be working. Or, as Alan Roxburgh encourages, we can "help form genuine communities that are shaped by the distinctive practices of Christian identity" where people find a place where they 'belong' unconditionally and where their hearts and souls are fed by God and by the people they encounter.

Regardless of what we choose to be or do, things will never be the same. We can only pray that God will bless us in our efforts.



The Rev. Canon Michael Patterson
Director of Evangelism
m.patterson@niagara.anglican.ca

Learning from, with Lutheran colleagues

One of the real privileges in my life currently is spending time with members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada. We are lucky here at Cathedral Place to have close ties with the Eastern Synod offices in Kitchener, and many close partnerships with congregations throughout our diocese.

Each year for several years now, we have been the guests of Bishop Michael Pryse, who invites clergy of Niagara to join with him and clergy of his Synod in Retreat at Mount Carmel in Niagara Falls.

Again this year, over 20 Anglican clergy joined with almost 30 Lutheran pastors for three days together, with both Bishop Pryse and Bishop Ralph Spence leading in our many and wonderful worship services. We were particularly honoured here at the Cathedral last year when Bishop Spence appointed The Rev. Susan Johnson, assistant to Bishop Pryse, as a Canon of our Cathedral!

I also am blessed by being the partner to their National Church Council. As an elected member of the Council of General Synod, I was elected, last June, as the CoGS partner to the ELCIC



The Very Reverend Peter Wall, Dean

National Church Council which meets twice a year in Winnipeg, the location of their national offices.

As partner churches in full-communion, we each appoint a partner to each other's national bodies and also welcome partners to our national conventions, synods, etc. These outward and visible signs of our partnership are significant symbols of the depth of affection which we hold for each other.

I have now been lucky enough to be at my first two meetings of National Church Council (NCC) and am looking forward to the biannual convention, to be held also in Winnipeg in July.

The next convention will be in 2007, the same year as our next General Synod, and those two bodies will meet concurrently, also in Winnipeg, and will have joint sessions; the first since the signing of the historic Waterloo Agreement in 2001.



ANGLICAN AND LUTHERAN clergy celebrate their common bond during a retreat at Mount Carmel, Niagara Falls, recently. The Evangelical Lutheran Church each year invites Anglican clergy to join them on this retreat.

NCC is, like our Council of General Synod, a representative body, with elected representatives from all five Synods (dioceses) of the ELCIC, as well as the National Bishop and other officers. All five of their Synodical Bishops are also present at each meeting, so it brings the whole church together in a most interesting way.

Like our church meetings, their agenda includes many of the concerns and issues which we also deal with: resources, official docu-

ments, worship matters, reports from divisions and committees, and, like us, the very important issues of how the church deals appropriately and pastorally, and always with justice, with matters of human sexuality.

Many times, if I close my eyes, I could be sitting at any number of Anglican meetings which I have attended. The members of NCC, and particularly its bishops, have made me very welcome and I feel like I am very much a part of their

family. They ask me at each meeting's conclusion to offer reflections on what I have heard and experienced. It is an honour, indeed, to represent the Anglican Church of Canada at NCC.

I also want to commend to you the rich resources of Lutheran worship. Our liturgies are very, very similar, and the ELCIC, with its sister church, The Evangelical Lutheran Church of America, has some superb worship materials.

Beyond the realm of sheer coincidence

"Many false prophets will arise, and will mislead many, and as lawlessness spreads, men's love for one another will grow cold..." Matthew 24:11-12

It was a perfectly ordinary blue air mail envelope, complete with red and blue hash marks around the outside edges. It was correctly addressed to me, in an uneven handwriting, as though the language was strange to the writer.

But what immediately caught my eye were the two stamps. A small one depicting a Dogherty Bush Shrike (a yellow breasted, green bird with a red face and throat), and a much larger one showing the smiling face of a young girl, beside which was a red label with white lettering saying "Straight TALK Foundation". Below the label, in large black print were the words "PIONEERS IN ADOLESCENT HEALTH COMMUNICATION".

The postmark and stamps indicated that the letter had come from Uganda, in east central Africa.

Inside were two documents. The first, written in the same hand that addressed the envelope, was on lined foolscap, with the standard red margin line down the left hand side – typical school paper. The second was

neatly typed, complete with reference number, on coloured church letterhead, and signed by a chaplain.

It was perhaps no surprise that the first letter was a request for financial assistance. It contained the name of the writer, a return address, and an e-mail address. The author presented herself as "an 18-year-old orphan" whose father died of AIDS, and "mother is also HIV positive and bed ridden", and the writer was the "oldest in a family of four children, all below 14 years."

Request

The request was for 600 pounds for each of the next two years, to enable her to complete her education as a "professional teacher".

The supporting document was in the form of a "To Whom it May Concern" verification of the identity, circumstances, and request of the writer. It assured me that she was a faithful Christian, and an active member of the choir. Although neatly typed, it contained several grammatical and syntactical errors.

My first reaction was one of suspicion –



Signs & Wonders

The Rev. Canon William C. Thomas
wthomas@interlynx.net

the e-mail addresses were both on the "yahoo.com" server, and there were those clumsy constructions and use of language. And the internet has been full of scams originating in Africa.

The second reaction I'm even less proud of – a mean spirited 'oh yeah - they threaten ex-communication over our attitudes toward gay people, but they welcome our financial support.'

In fact, I don't know either of the people who wrote to me, nor do I know the stance of their bishop and diocese. So I set about trying to find out.

The Anglican Communion web site, which lists all the members of the communion, was off-line – apparently deluged by heavy traffic.

Curiously enough, the Google link to the Anglican news item of the day at the same time was very slow, indicating a flood of interest in an article in "the Guardian - Mar 2nd" commenting on the fact that one of the conservative bishops at the recent Primate's gathering in Ireland had immediately violated the agreement by flying to New Westminster to address a gathering spon-

sored by the Anglican Essentials Movement, a clear violation of the injunction against interfering in the jurisdiction of another bishop.

A secondary site, "Anglicans On Line" was available, and did provide some listings of dioceses and parishes in Uganda, but they were incomplete or not available. But I did find it fascinating how many African diocesan sites that were available were hosted by conservative or reactionary U.S. agencies or networks. I'm not a conspiracy theorist, but some connections go well beyond the realm of sheer coincidence.

Possibilities

There is the very real possibility that the request for help that I received is a genuine, if irregular, one. If so, I'll be repenting of my suspicions and uncharitable thoughts, and turning my energies towards raising support.

And if it isn't a legitimate request, I'll be doing everything I can to shut it down. I intend to stick with the investigation, and would welcome comments from anyone who's received similar requests. Stay tuned To be continued...

"...be wary as serpents, innocent as doves." Matthew 10:16b

Closure services were immensely sensitive

In recent months several parish churches have closed permanently in the Diocese of Niagara.

The closing of a church is a little like the death of someone we love. And the service for the disestablishment of a parish is a little like a funeral service. It's a time when we can join in the worship of God with those who share our sorrow. It's an opportunity to express to God and to one another our gratitude for the life lived, our sense of loss, and our hope in Christ.



The Itinerant Churchgoer
The Reverend Alan L. Hayes

was different in the two churches, but essentially we thanked God for the sacrament of the font, and remembered all those "who have here passed through the water of baptism."

Similarly, in turn, at the lectern, pulpit, and Lord's table, those who had served in each place were invited forward, and an appropriate prayer was said.

At both churches, as you can imagine, the crowd overflowed the pews. Many clergy and parishioners from earlier years attended.

Rich memories

How rich the history of each church was! (Coincidentally, both St. James and St. Margaret opened in 1909 and closed in 2004.) It must have been bittersweet for those who attended to share their memories.

At St. James, parishioners wrote some of their remembrances on newspaper sheets which they posted in the basement. In World War I, 84 men from the church died in action. One weekend in World War II, the young people's association visited a synagogue. In the late 1950s, the parish list included 1,400 families.

During the service, when the font was decommissioned, I was moved to see 55 faithful people of all ages gathering around it, all baptized there.

At St. Margaret, the preacher was the bishop, who in 1963, as a student at McMaster (a few blocks away), had come here to worship.

In a memorable and effective way he wove together anecdotes from the church's history, the theme of grateful celebration, the note of sadness, and the good news of

Christ. He particularly highlighted the church's long record of service to the poor.

A fine parish history

St. Margaret's leaves a really first-class parish history, David Jardine's West Hamilton, a Village and a Church (1989).

The research is stunning, the text is warm-hearted and thoroughly readable, and the photographs, maps, and reproductions of newspaper articles and advertisements are absolutely engaging.

Probably the outstanding priest was A.N. Barclay (1916-1925). An 85-year-old parishioner told Jardine, "He influenced me personally more than any other person in my life."

The present church was built in his period, and some in the congregation were inspired to become priests themselves.

But another rector (1955-1961), young and strong-willed, provoked a split in the congregation, and many left. I'm not sure the church ever quite recovered, although several able clergy followed. (This rector later became a bishop in a western diocese, where he earned a national reputation for his refusal to ordain women.)

Authentic worship

Let's be frank; Sunday morning worship can sometimes feel a little routine. But these two special services felt deeply authentic.

At the confession, I think we were all remembering with contrite hearts things done and left undone. At the intercession, we had a particular sense of our human insufficiency and our dependence on God. At the peace, what in some cases may have been a final opportunity for reconciliation must have seemed particularly precious.

And in giving thanks to God, many must have offered up memories of their congrega-

tion's faithful labour, devotion to Christ, and fellowship – and also of conflicts, human failures, and difficulties, since in these, too, our sovereign and loving God somehow works to good.

During the communion and during the final hymn at both churches, I saw tears in many eyes. Many, I'm sure, were feeling the heartsickness that Abraham and Sarah must have known when they left their home in Ur, and Ruth her home in Moab, and so many others when they "went out in faith." But thanks be to God, who called each of them for a purpose, and calls each of us for a purpose, according to the plan of redemption which is both hidden and revealed in Christ.

Learning from, with colleagues

Continued from page 5

From forms for Morning and Evening Prayer, through Compline, through excellent eucharistic liturgies, they are wonderful and should be both studied and used. The ELCA and the ELCC are currently hard at work developing a whole new resource for the Church, which they hope to publish in 2006-2007.

This project is called 'Renewing Worship' and all of the materials can be both seen and downloaded from the web site www.worship.ca. For a limited time, through Dec. 31, 2005, these materials can be used by congregations free of charge, with the only request being that a reaction and feedback form is completed and submitted.

Bishop Spence has given his permission for these materials to be used on an occasional basis, citing his authorization. I strongly encourage people to take a look. Remember that these are still in the development stage, and, of course, must be properly credited when being used.

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Worldwide Anglicans postpone their schism

In a classic Anglican manoeuvre, the primates of the international Anglican Church have bought some time in the face of the threat of a major split over the issue of homosexuality.

At the conclusion of a crisis meeting held in Northern Ireland (in February), the leaders asked the American and Canadian Anglican churches to withdraw from full participation in world Anglicanism for the next three years.

They have agreed. The intention is that there will be further discussion on the issues during the breathing space.

Postpone the inevitable

But make no mistake, (this) compromise has only postponed the inevitable. Unless the Americans and Canadians decide to abandon the cause of gay clergy and same-sex marriages by 2008 – and please God they won't – the threatened split will still happen.

The traditionalists, championed from the sidelines by Sydney's Anglican Archbishop Peter Jensen, have had a major victory.

Dr. Jensen has issued a statement "cautiously welcoming" the temporary dismissal of the two North American churches, describing it as "disciplinary action" for "transgressing scriptural teaching".

Some media reports have suggested that the leading traditionalist primate at the Northern Ireland meeting, Nigerian Archbishop Peter Akinola, went even further, holding a celebratory dinner as the primates' statement was being finalized.

All this dramatic posturing has come about mainly because, in 2003, one American diocese chose a gay priest, in an

open long-term same-sex partnership, as its bishop.

It was no maverick act; New Hampshire's decision to consecrate Gene Robinson was ratified by the whole Episcopal Church of the U.S. through complex and demanding constitutional processes.

At the same time, the Diocese of New Westminster, British Columbia, after decades of careful consideration, decided it should offer church blessings for same-sex partnerships.

The real tragedy is the failure of more reasonable and inclusive church leaders.

Both these churches were legally and constitutionally entitled to make their decisions.

The worldwide Anglican Communion is not an international church like the (Roman) Catholic Church.

Rather, it comprises 38 separate, autonomous churches loosely linked by their historic relationship to the mother Church of England.

Canterbury

Their strongest connection is that they are all in communion with the Archbishop of Canterbury, who is a "first among equals", not a pope.

But the issue of homosexuality has become the rallying point for conservatives in a determined campaign to impose their views on the rest of the Church.

Traditionalist Anglican churches in Africa, Asia and South America, financed by shadowy right-wing American religious

Guest columnist

Dr. Muriel Porter,
The Age, Melbourne

groups and supported by conservative dioceses such as Sydney, have made homosexuality the "line in the sand". Over a period of a decade and more, they have worked solidly and deliberately towards last week's decision.

Under the influence of this coalition, known as the "Global South", a headline anti-gay stance was forced at the 1998 Lambeth Conference, the 10-yearly meeting of the world's Anglican bishops.

In one of the most bitter debates in its history, the conference resolved that homosexual practice was "incompatible with Scripture", and condemned both same-sex blessing services and the ordination of gay people in same-sex partnerships.

No jurisdiction

The Lambeth Conference, though influential, has no jurisdiction over the independent churches of the Anglican Communion. It can only advise.

The real tragedy in the humiliating dismissal of the North American churches is not the behaviour of the Global South bullies.

It is the failure of more reasonable and inclusive church leaders, of whom there are significant numbers in the Western church at least, to stand up to them, to refuse to give way so readily in the name of preserving church unity.

The fragile unity left to the Anglican Communion is no unity at all.

It is an unworthy appeasement, bought at the price of the many gay people who are

faithful, worshipping Anglicans.

Numbers of them are priests, and some are even bishops; Gene Robinson is certainly not alone, though he is the only gay bishop to have declared he is not celibate.

While some traditionalists, such as the primate of Nigeria, may be celebrating, these vulnerable people are in deep dismay.

Marginalized

Like all gays, they are in constant danger of being marginalized and even attacked for their sexual preferences.

In the Anglican Church, once tolerant and generous, they now fear personal public rejection. But few will hear their pain, because they dare not speak.

So moderate church leaders should speak out on their behalf.

They should vehemently reject the Global South's claim that adherence to the authority of the Bible is centred in one particular interpretation of its (limited) references to homosexuality.

Since when has sexual practice been the supreme test of Christian orthodoxy?

It is a pity they have not instead publicly named the conservatives' power trip as a form of abuse, and their bullying as a failure of Christian compassion and a form of judgementalism, against which Jesus specifically preached.

This is the scriptural teaching to which they should require Anglican allegiance.

As the saying goes, evil things happen only when good people do nothing.

Dr. Muriel Porter, an Anglican laywoman, writes regularly for The Age, Melbourne, Australia, on religion.

Appreciation for Canon Doran

St. Paul's, Westdale, Hamilton, will hold an Appreciation Dinner April 3 for the Reverend Canon Patrick Doran. The Sunday Supper begins at 5 p.m.

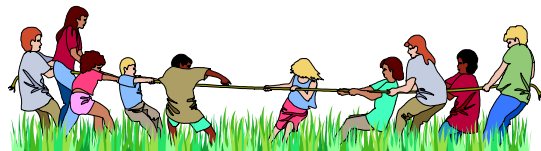
The dinner is being held to honour the ministry of Canon Patrick Doran who is retiring. The meal will be served family style in the parish hall.

Tickets are \$15 for adults and \$5 for children 12 and under. To reserve tickets, please call the church at 528-3724.

St. Luke's, Hamilton, will celebrate shipping season

St. Luke's, Hamilton, will Harbour' on April 3, 7 p.m. with A reception will be held after proclamation the 'Opening of the an Evensong. The church will be wards in the Burn's Hall. Shipping Season of Hamilton 'dressed' in a full array of flags. Everyone is welcome.

Could you reach out to help make a real difference in a child's life this summer?



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For more information contact
Elizabeth Elliott - 905-935-3266 or
Beth Kerley - 905-685-1286

Greater Wellington Region
Saturday, May 7, 2005

St. John's, Elora
Henderson St. & Smith St.

For more information contact
Judy-Anne Chapman - 519-579-2996



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A brief history of Christian beliefs about sex

(A lecture at St. Christopher's Burlington and St. George's Guelph, in 2004)

By BISHOP JOHN BOTHWELL

This address is about sex, politics and religion. Please note the plural "beliefs" is used in the headline and might cause some Christians to protest.

They might argue that Christian sexual standards never change because they were revealed by God long ago, and "God is the same, yesterday, today and forever".

People however, grow and change, and so do their beliefs, both within each lifetime and in each new generation. Different attitudes towards sex are evident even in the New Testament and differences continued in sub-apostolic times, and indeed, ever since.

So the debate about Christian sexual standards today is nothing new.

This brief history has three sections and a brief conclusion:

1. Biblical and other beliefs about sex up to 400 B.C.
2. The influential teachings of St. Augustine of Hippo and St. Thomas Aquinas.

3. The modern challenge to traditional views.

The concluding section is a comment on "Blessing Gay Unions."

Inevitably, a brief history like this is more anecdotal than exhaustive, but I believe it is accurate and demonstrates clearly that conflicting views about sex have always posed a challenge for Christian people.

BIBLICAL AND OTHER CHRISTIAN BELIEFS UNTIL 400 C.E.

(a) In the Old Testament, pagan sexual practices included a spectrum of activities, including prostitution (male and female), abortion, contraception, infanticide and homosexual acts.

But Judaism itself had much higher standards. The clear purpose of sexuality was procreation.

Ancient Jews treated God's command "be fruitful and multiply" (Gen. 1:22) very seriously.

For Jews therefore, prostitution, abortion, infanticide and homosexuality were all taboo.

However, Jewish patriarchy like Abraham, David and Solomon did practice both polygamy and divorce, although only males could initiate these because males alone were considered chiefly responsible for procreation.

Notwithstanding this Jewish emphasis on procreation, the Old Testament book "Song of Solomon" celebrates physical love for its own sake; and since the Hebrew Canon of Scripture was edited by rabbis as a means of edifying and regulating Jewish life, this is surprising.

Apparently the rabbis regarded

the sensual poems in "Song of Songs" as an allegory of the relationship between Yahweh and Israel.

Later, Christian theologians followed their example by regarding Jesus Christ as "the lover" and His "loved one" as the Church.

(b) The two Old Testament texts most quoted against homosexuality deserve special attention because of our present controversies.

GENESIS 19 tells the story of Lot being visited by two strangers, and how "the men of Sodom" surrounded the house and demanded the strangers be brought out "so that we may know them". Obviously, this is the origin of the word "Sodomy".

Apparently, it was to be non-consensual sex, i.e. rape, and incredibly, Lot offered his two virgin daughters as substitutes – an offer that was declined.

In the ensuing tussle, the attackers were struck blind and the strangers warned Lot and his family to flee because God would destroy the city. They did flee and Sodom was destroyed.

Was homosexuality the cause of Sodom's destruction?

Echo

Many people believe so but alternatively, many scholars say that this incident is really "an echo" of the Noah story a few chapters earlier, and that Sodom was destroyed because of general sinfulness, not just for sexual reasons.

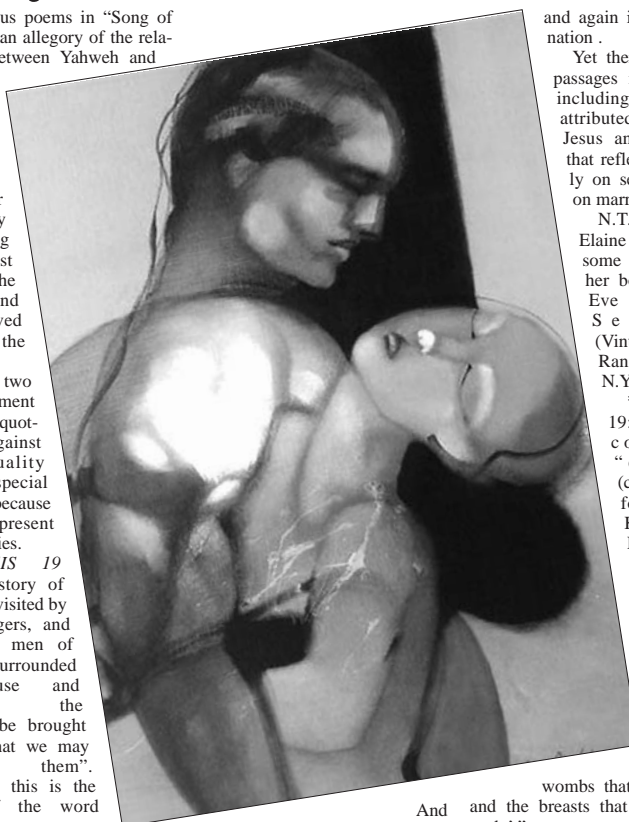
II Peter 2:5-9, in the New Testament seems to support this view by citing the Sodom and Noah stories together as an example of "what is coming to the ungodly day after day by their lawless deeds."

LEVITICUS 18:22

however, condemns homosexual acts very explicitly. It reads, "you shall not lie with a male as with a woman".

Biblical scholars identify this verse as part of the "Holiness Code" which enunciates some important moral principles alongside others that were important in Biblical days but appear more like cultural taboos from our modern perspective.

For example, "...you shall love thy neighbour as yourself", the words quoted by Jesus as the Second Great Commandment, occur in Leviticus 19:18.



And they are followed in the very next verse (vs.19) by the order that forbids "the sowing of two different kinds of seed in a field, and wearing a garment made of two different materials."

But since few modern people treat these latter injunctions seriously, might not the order "not to lie with a man as with a woman" be regarded as questionable too?

(c) Identifying beliefs about sexuality in the New Testament is more difficult than you might imagine.

Certainly, the New Testament writers rejected the lax standards of pagans – both those of the Old Testament "fertility cults" and those of the more sophisticated pagans in the Roman Empire.

Imperial Rome's paganism was quite different from the OT kind because it was deeply influenced by "Hellenism", the culture that the Roman Empire inherited from Greece.

Moral freedom

And while some Greek philosophies stressed the control of human passions, others encouraged greater moral freedom.

So Christians continued to believe that strict sexual standards were important, but also continued to debate just how strict they should be.

The N.T. as a whole emphasizes "the Incarnation", the belief that in Jesus Christ, God entered human life and experienced every aspect of it.

This means that our human bodies and all their normal functions, including sex, have been doubly blessed – first in Creation

and again in the incarnation.

Yet there are some passages in the N.T., including words attributed to both Jesus and St. Paul, that reflect negatively on sex and even on marriage.

N.T. scholar Elaine Pagels gives some examples in her book "Adam, Eve and the Serpent" (Vintage Books: Random House N.Y. 1988.)

* In St. Matt 19:12 Jesus comments "eunuchs (celibate men) for the Kingdom of Heavens sake". And in Luke 23:29 Jesus says "the days are coming when they shall say 'blessed are the

wombs that never bore and the breasts that never gave suck.'"

Negative tone

Some scholars suggest that the negative tone of verses like these simply reflect Jesus' conviction that the "New Age", the end of time, would soon come rather than a negative view of sex. Still, they are puzzling!

* But in St. Matt. 19, Jesus seems to contradict himself on the matter of divorce. He surely must have known that divorce was permitted for Jewish males. Still in Chapter 19, verse 6 he prohibits it completely. Then in verse 9, he reverses himself and says males can divorce if the wife is unchaste.

* Interestingly however, in the N.T. Jesus never utters a single word about homosexuality. Some Christians claim that as a Jew, he just assumed that it was unacceptable: but if it really is the major sin that some claim it to be, why did Jesus apparently, completely ignore it?

Move on then to St. Paul's N.T. epistles. In his earlier letters (e.g. I Cor. 7:1-20 & 25-31) Paul suggests that sexual activity, and even marriage, diminishes the ability of both partners "to devote their energies to the Lord".

St. Paul

Further, he expresses the wish that everyone could be a voluntary celibate "for the sake of the Kingdom of Heaven", like he was.

This suggests that sex is not really bad, only distracting. Was this because Paul, like Jesus, con-

sidered "the end of all things" to be close at hand?

Yet in his later letters (perhaps written by Paul's followers and attributed to him, e.g. I Timothy), family ties for both men and women are encouraged.

But Paul did clearly condemn homosexuals (Romans 1:27, I Corinthians 6:9, and I Timothy 1:8-10). The New English Bible even uses the word "homosexual" instead of "effeminate abusers" in the Revised Standard Version.

Jesus' teaching ignored homosexual acts, while St. Paul condemned them. But Paul also said "women should be silent in the churches ... they are not permitted to speak, but should be subordinate..." (I Cor. 14:34).

If we no longer treat this latter advice as binding, in the light of modern knowledge, is St. Paul's attitude to homosexuals not questionable too?

(d) The conflicting attitudes towards sexuality in the N.T. continued among bishops and theologians throughout the first four centuries.

About 270 C.E., St. Anthony renounced the wealthy life he had inherited to establish monasticism, which in these early days was particularly ascetic and hermit-like.

A very large number of Christians, for the sake of their spiritual development, followed Anthony into a rigorous life of loneliness and self-deprivation in the North African desert, with no company, no sex and as little food as possible.

For example, St. Simon of Syria in order to prove his devotion and chastity wore a spiked girdle and lived on top of a pillar for thirty years. Many others could be cited too.

In this same period "the ever-virgin mother of Jesus" began, as did "clergy celibacy", although canonical compulsion in this was not imposed until medieval times.

On the other hand, Clement of Alexandria, circa 150-225 C.E. took "a more liberal, urbane and sophisticated view, and "denounced celibates and beggars who claimed to imitate the Lord." (Pagels, P.21)

Clement even dared to suggest that Jesus' commendation of "eunuchs for the Kingdom of Heaven's sake" was puzzling, and refused to treat it seriously.

Clearly therefore, while all Christians in the early centuries wanted firm sexual standards, some sought greater strictness than others.

In Summary

* In the N.T. and all through the early centuries, there were debates and disagreements about sexuality, just as there are now. Everyone agreed that standards should be high, but just how high was matter of contention.

* There is not even complete agreement between Jesus and St. Paul in the N.T. And very early, St. Clement found some of Jesus' word in the N.T. to be confusing.

See A BRIEF / page 9



ST. THOMAS AQUINAS



RICHARD HOOKER



ST. AUGUSTINE

A brief history of Christian beliefs about sex

Continued from page 8

* Although not mentioned above, many early Christians who held negative attitudes to sex justified their stand by insisting that in the Genesis story, Adam's "Original Sin" was sexual.

But there were also those who insisted "Adam's Sin" was disobeying God, not sex. And this argument continued through all the centuries that followed.

Nevertheless, virtually all ancient Jews and early Christians did agree that the chief purpose of sex was procreation, and condemned homosexual acts.

THE TEACHING OF SAINT AUGUSTINE OF HIPPO AND SAINT THOMAS ACQUINAS.

(a) First, some background. When the Roman Empire adopted Christianity as its official religion circa 324 C.E., the Church passed from persecution to privilege. And because Emperor Constantine expected this new religion to provide the "cultural glue" that would bind together his far-flung empire, bishops began to expect greater conformity and unity in their flocks. So a new era of the theological and ethical definition began.

Christians known as "Gnostics" insisted that special knowledge or "Gnosis" attained through mystical experiences was essential, in addition to baptism, in order to be truly Christian.

But gradually, they and many other believers with special teaching, including special sexual teaching, were accused of heresy and condemned. The Church's structure was hardening, although there was still lots of debate.

Robert Markus, an English professor of Medieval studies suggests that Christian attitudes to sexuality were becoming less polarized about 400 C.E.

Marriage as "a partnership of equals" was being suggested and monasticism was becoming much less rigorous.

However, a formerly prolific pagan named Aurelius Augustine came along to reinforce Christian distrust of sexuality.

(b) In 395 C.E., Augustine became Bishop of Hippo in North Africa and one of the most influential Christian theologians of all time.

His most important teaching for our purposes was aimed at refuting an English monk named Pelagius who taught that although the Grace of God is essential for salvation, personal moral effort is important too.

Augustine contradicted this in his "Confessions", by recalling his own overwhelming sexual passion earlier in his life, and insisting that God's Grace alone can overcome such powerful desires.

Further, he identified uncontrollable sexual desire as the "Original Sin" and taught that it is transmitted to every newborn person through the male semen at the moment of conception. Thus, sexual intercourse is sinful, except for the purpose of procreation, and even then it should be as dispassionate as possible.

Notwithstanding the fact that

much of Augustine's other theology was positive and creative, his sexual theology has been proven erroneous by modern scientific studies. I will say more about this later.

(c) In the 13th Century, Augustine's view was powerfully reinforced by St. Thomas Aquinas (1225-74).

On the basis of the philosophy of the ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle, Aquinas developed a great new system of Medieval theology which is still widely respected today.

But as Dr. Hans Kung points out (in his book "The Catholic Church: A Short History") Aquinas assumed, as Aristotle had done, that the male is the sole active procreating partner in sexual intercourse, and that the female "is exclusively receptive and passive." (The existence of the ovum, woman's reproductive cell, was not demonstrated until 1829).

So St. Thomas, who was so brilliant in many ways, described women as "defective" and "failed men".

Aquinas also developed the doctrine of "Natural Law", by which he meant those parts of God's Law which are known through human reason, and dare not be disobeyed.

Clearly, this is the origin of the still very common belief that homosexual acts are "unnatural".

It was assumed right up until modern times that animal sex is exclusively for procreation, and therefore that procreation must be its sole Divine purpose for humans as well.

Some modern evidence to the contrary however, was summarized in an article in the Globe and Mail on April 24, 2004. I will outline it later.

Like Augustine, there is no doubt that Aquinas made an important contribution to Christian theology.

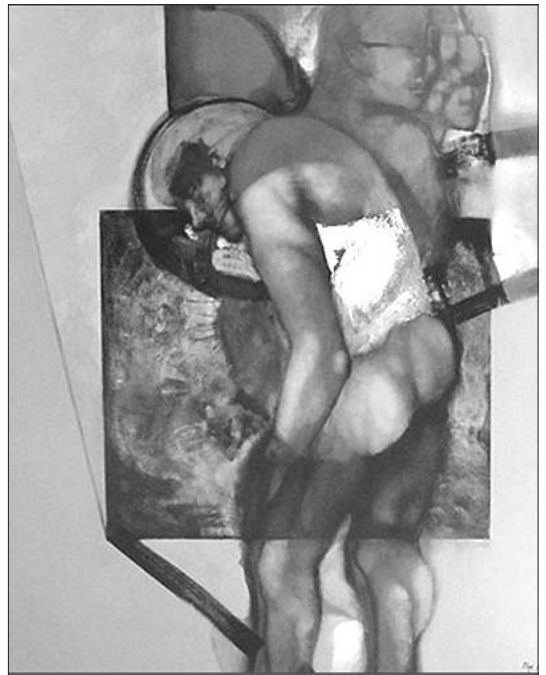
But their sexual theology is seriously outdated today, because they did not know what modern science would discover many centuries later. God never changes - but people and circumstances do!

(d) Since the 16th Century, many Protestant Christians and secular thinkers have been critical of the Augustine/Aquinas teaching about sexuality. But the Vatican still honours them and exerts constant pressure in support of them. Different views are held by many Roman Catholics outside the Vatican.

For the discovery of the female ovum in 1829, and more recently that there is homosexuality amongst animals, together with other scientific discoveries have changed everything and intensified controversy, as we shall see.

MODERN CHALLENGE

(a) It began in earnest during



the "Enlightenment" in 18th Century Europe, that time when human reason and freedom began to be emphasized in a manner that challenged traditional wisdom.

The "scientific method" was developed and demanded "empirical" (tangible, measurable data) as the foundation for human reason and study, rather than just personal opinions or traditional beliefs.

Thus, "Divine Revelation" was questioned for not being provable scientifically: and this produced a "crisis of faith" for some religious people. This was happening just as empirical science was beginning to transform and enrich human life enormously.

(b) Many Christians embraced modernity and came to regard religious faith and scientific knowledge as important in the quest for answers to life's mysteries.

Archbishop William Temple of Canterbury in the 1940s, articulated their view in these famous words: "The theologian who quarrels with science on its own ground is a presumptuous fool. But the scientist who quarrels with theology on its own ground, is no better! If there is mutual respect and a common reverence for truth in all its forms, there still may be divergence (of opinion) but there will be no quarrel."

Other Christians however, and people of other faiths too, simply could not accept a religion/science partnership. Many still can't.

Most of these respect science and welcome its benefits, but still insist that when scientific discoveries conflict with religious dogma as defined in the Bible, the Koran or by some other "infallible authority", then religious truth must have the final word.

In other words, religious truth always trumps scientific discoveries, in their opinion.

Therefore Christians (and believers of other faiths) often disagree amongst themselves. i.e.

* On one side are those who believe in the doctrine of "Sola

Scriptura", that the Bible is the sole authority in matters of faith, even when science and reason question some of its teaching.

* And on the other side are those who insist that Scripture, Tradition and Reason are all essential authorities.

(c) Since the time of Richard Hooker (1554-1600 C.E.) Classical Anglicanism has embraced the latter view. Although there have been dissenters of course, usually Anglicanism has sought a reasonable "via media" between conscientious conflicting opinions, as Hooker recommended.

In Reformation times it was between Rome and Protestantism: and later when modern science arose, between scientists and those who hold Sola Scriptura beliefs.

This is the reason for the three very different types of believers that Anglicanism embraces:-

* High Church people who love Catholic theology & worship;

* Low church members who prefer Protestant ideas;

* And Broad church folks with concern for religion & science.

In my view, these three distinct "church parties" are not a problem that needs solving, but a helpful reminder that even devout and serious Church people have divergent understandings of our common beliefs.

Like all humans, we Christians are "pilgrims and sojourners" here on earth, and absolute certainty is not available to us here and now.

As St. Paul wrote, "...now we see in a mirror dimly..." (I Cor. 13:12); and again, "... we walk by faith not sight (ie, certainty)." (II Cor.5:7)

Serious debates are inevitable amongst us, and tradition and reason are important tools in understanding Holy Scripture, so that we are not guided by personal feelings or group pressure as we struggle to cope with "the changes

and chances of this mortal life."

(d) In this spirit and in keeping with a long Christian tradition, Canadian Anglicans have changed our beliefs and practices about sexuality in several ways in recent years. Here are just a few examples:

• Even in the old Book of Common Prayer, the Marriage Service declares that marriage is for "mutual society, help and comfort" as well as for "the procreation of children". Saints Augustine and Aquinas would not agree with that!

• In the 1958 Lambeth Conference Report, it is stated that "family planning ought to be the result of thoughtful and prayerful Christian decision", an explicit statement condoning responsible birth control.

• As a result, The Book of Alternative Services' Marriage Rite goes further than the B.C.P. by saying that "man and wife may know each other with delight and tenderness in acts of love." So sex can be enjoyed!

Augustine and Aquinas must be turning over in their graves!

• Further, in spite of St. Paul's explicit prohibition, women today do not "keep silent in church". They may be lay readers, church wardens, priests and bishops, - thank God!

• Responsible marriage after divorce is recognized too, despite the N.T. words from Jesus Himself that forbids it, or at least limits it to males with "unfaithful wives".

SOME THOUGHTS ON BLESSING GAY UNIONS.

Some people still regard homosexuality as "unnatural"; some Christians regard it as a sin; and others imagine, with no real evidence, that gays are especially likely to be to sexual predators.

Even amongst those who are more accepting, many feel uncertain about whether "gay unions"

Going 'round in circles

Labyrinth Prayer Path Ministry in Niagara

By THE REVEREND
CANON ELAINE HOOKER

A lot has happened in the last few years that has made the Labyrinth ministry popular.

Our world is beginning to value things of the imagination. The circles and spirals of the natural world are more interesting as metaphor for our lives than straight lines and squares.

I delight in leading labyrinth walks for spiritual seekers as well as those who walk as regular spiritual disciplines.

It is thanks to a Survive and Thrive grant that I was able to finish my training at Grace Cathedral in San Francisco, becoming a Veriditas Facilitator.

St. Paul's, Hamilton

The Reverend Cheryl Fricker also finished her training at the same time. We lead walks at St. Paul's in Westdale, Hamilton, at 7:30 p.m. on the third Sunday of each month. This is with the permanent full size Chartre's on the

hall floor.

The Reverend Canon Paddy Doran brought the labyrinth to this diocese and with patience, skill and wisdom created this beautiful replica.

I lead walks in a number of churches in the diocese with a full size Chartre's heavy canvas labyrinth. It belongs to my home parish, St. George's, St. Catharines.

Survive and Thrive grant

The Survive and Thrive grant also made possible the purchase of two 18-foot canvas labyrinths.

One is a smaller Chartre's, one piece, light canvas labyrinth that fits most smaller parish halls and is easy to carry. The other is the Creation spiral labyrinth that has become popular with young folk (adults enjoy it, too.). This is the work of artist Mary Jo Gordon, of Guelph and is a beautiful treasure.

There are several parish walks coming up, so watch your church bulletin.

If your parish would like to use



LABYRINTH WALKERS MAKE their way around the labyrinth under the watchful eye of Canon Elaine Hooker. On April 9, St. George's, St. Catharines, hosts a springtime walk.

the Creation labyrinth or the smaller Chartre's, please call Jane Stewart in the Diocesan Program Department at (905) 527-1316 ext. 420.

Are you interested in learning more about labyrinths, perhaps

lead them yourself? A springtime walk will be held April 9 at St. George's, 83 Church St., St. Catharines. The program will include a walk in the morning from 9 until noon. A workshop will be held from 1-3 p.m.

Please register in advance for the afternoon workshop with Canon Hooker (905) 643-7095 or ladyelaine2@hotmail.com.

A donation to the breakfast program at St. George's is most appreciated.

Brief history of Christian views about sex

Continued from page 9

should be blessed in church or described as "marriage".

Most doubters are certainly sincere, but they are more numerous amongst people over 50 and those without post-secondary education, so this may be a "generational problem".

However, Dr. Ian Hay, a retired Burlington physician who was skeptical about homosexuality, now reports that his Internet search produced recent biological and genetic evidence indicating that homosexuality in insects and rats is caused by hormonal and genetic differences. These findings are not yet finally proven pending further studies amongst humans, but they are strong enough to convince Dr. Hay to change his mind.

Further data appeared in an

article entitled "*The Gay Wild Kingdom*" in the *Globe and Mail*, (April 24, 2004).

It reported that studies at a sheep station in Dubois, Iowa, found that about 8-10 per cent of rams shun willing females in preference for other males; and that sexual preference is biologically determined, possibly before birth.

The *Globe* article also claimed that gay rams are not alone because Prof. Perkins, chair of the Psychology Department at Carroll College in Montana, has noted that "there is homosexual behaviour throughout the animal kingdom documented all over the place, ranging from lesbian macaque monkeys in the forests of Japan, to gay penguins at Central Park Zoo in New York."

Author Karen Armstrong pointed out at this year's

"Couching Conference" that "religion must have an ethical component ... (but that) religion is a human activity, and like sex, it's hard to get it right."

Still, historical and scientific evidence, together with modern Biblical studies, have led many of us to the conviction that the continuing rejection of homosexual acts is rooted in fear, misinformation, and/or "Sola Scriptura" beliefs which though sincere, seem to me unreasonable.

Inclusive

However, lack of respect for other people's conscientious convictions, even if they seem mistaken, is unacceptable in an inclusive community like the Church.

We Christians, like Jews and Muslims, affirm the ancient O.T. Law "... love your neighbour as yourself" (Lev.19:18) as God's Second Great Commandment.

Therefore, in my opinion, amongst Christians both homophobia and too ready dismissal of the sincere convictions of Biblical literalists are equally unacceptable, especially those in the Third World. Most "Third World" Christians may have a less sophisticated understanding of both the Bible and modern science than we, due to the normal, inevitable "culture lag".

That is why I am convinced that Canadian governments and the Anglican Church should endorse "Gay Unions" now, (as the

United Church has already done).

We should also make sure that there is a "conscience clause" for dissenters, (at least for a few years), just as we did for those who opposed Ordination of Women nearly three decades ago.

Because "change takes time", and requiring immediate change would condemn those who are slow for conscientious reasons - or because, in all sincerity, they simply don't understand. This would be especially true in the "younger churches" of the Third World, where most Christians still hold Sola Scriptura views for valid historical and cultural reasons.

Special care must be taken also, to assure dissenters that we

do not want them to "break Communion" with us; and if they do, that our fellowship and altars still remain to be open to them.

For as we say so often in the Eucharist: "We, being many, are One Body"; not because we always agree. "We are One Body" because in our Baptism, we are all joined to Jesus Christ.

And according to St. John, Jesus said, "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you" (St. John 15:12)

Making appropriate changes in the light of Scripture, tradition and reason and doing all we can to preserve mutual respect and one fellowship are both Christian imperatives!

13th Annual Niagara AWARE

A women s weekend away

Whom Have I But You.

Ps. 73:25

April 29, 30 to May 1, 2005

Guelph Bible Conference Centre

Guest speaker is Nancy Revie

For registration information contact Sharon Jenkins at 905-849-6627 or email sharon.jenkins@coogeco.ca. Cost is \$215. Early bird special

Come travel with women of the Bible and discover their relationship with God.



Moon and Back



JUDY STEERS IS program director of Ask and Imagine, and a licensed layworker at the Church of the Transfiguration, St. Catharines.

Judy Steers' quick, compassionate mind, bubbling humour and vibrant enthusiasm are all essentials in her busy life as program director of "Ask and Imagine".

She's also a licensed Lay worker for the Diocese of Niagara at the Church of the Transfiguration, St. Catharines.

Based at Huron College, the Anglican theological college at the University of Western Ontario, "Ask and Imagine" is a program offering Anglican youth opportunities to explore, develop and integrate theology, personal spiritual formation, community building, leadership skills, and a personal worldview.

Partnered but not funded by the Anglican Church of Canada, the program offers two 10-day sessions to transform and focus young lives. There is one for people aged 18 - 24, and another for high school students, at Huron College and Niagara's Canterbury Hills.

Beyond Sunday School

In 1998, invited by the Lilly Endowment Corporation (LEC) to consider experimenting with theological programs for high school students and to apply for a grant for that purpose, Huron College posed the question: "What if we open up the seminary to young students, making available to them the type of inquiry available to seminarians, going beyond Sunday School level questions to explore deeper faith, world issues, and the encounter of faith with real life?"

Asked how she got involved, Judy's eyes sparkle: "I heard through the grapevine that Huron had applied for the grant. I thought I had all the skillset, a combination of... my formation and experience. So I applied!"

Her application arrived three days after the grant was awarded.

"In the interview process, it seemed like a good fit..."

Given the grant proposal, Judy was told, "Pull people together from Huron College, the Anglican Diocese of Huron, parish ministry and young people themselves. Then ask the question, 'If we could do anything, what is the best thing we could do to engage youth?'"

Developing a vision and creating a name for the program, "We toyed with various ideas, song titles..."

'Leapt out'

"Programs in the Diocese of Toronto have taken many titles from our liturgy. 'Ask and Imagine' just leapt out of the doxology!"

"It represents deep questions of faith at the same time as dreams and visions for the Church and the world..."

"Those words stick with me because I remember all I have done and learned." (For information, call 519-438-7224 ext 251, or www.askandimagine.org.)

In the first months of hectic activity, "we had our first meetings in Feb. 1999, to put on a program in August, to come up with the name and a brochure!"

The hard work paid off for seventeen youth from across Ontario and two from Nunavut, in what Judy happily calls a "phenomenal success!" She's still in touch with several participants. Two are mentors this year.

An article on "Ask and Imagine" in CCS's quarterly publication, Tapestry, began with the words "Judy Steers has a dream job."

Judy herself says, "My real passion is to mentor and accompany youth on their journey to adult-

A passion for learning, teaching

hood, so they can find a place in the faith community. It's amazing to be involved in a job like that!"

"Ask and Imagine" complements her work as co-ordinator of Christian Education at the Church of the Transfiguration, St. Catharines. She's been there since March 1, 2002.

Judy's energy, creativity and enthusiasm enliven her "really firm commitment to seeing liturgy as an opportunity for transformation by the way Scripture and history are communicated... for learning as well as for prayer ...

"It's wonderful to be in a parish where there are a lot of creative people and energy and desire to draw on the gifts of the whole community and invite people to be part of ... telling the story.

"They're always wonderful! People's experience and reflections are a vital part of the story."

Special programs

The parish gets involved in special programs for festivals, especially Holy Week when presentations develop awareness of the meaning of Christ's passion in today's broken world.

"Each year we do something different... (to) relate (themes of the Passion) to who we are."

Judy comments on contemporary exploration of Scripture: "It's not so much the stories, but how we read Scripture. The stories are trying to tell us about our relationship with God, where we came from, why we're here."

She asks a pointed question: "What are we teaching our six-year-olds that they don't have to unlearn when they're 16?"

Adult education too "has to be part of a piece, not trying to promote unlearning, but to teach people not to be afraid to ask for questions, look for what holds water."

Judy's passion for learning opportunities includes interfaith connections, helping people to "see parallels between Christianity and other traditions. It actually reinforces (our) faith (to see) how much (we) have in common with other religions."

'Multiplicity of pies'

Grinning, Judy admits to "a multiplicity of pies in which I find my fingers."

She is working with other volunteers through the Primate's Office to nurture the Primate's Youth Initiative, part of Archbishop Andrew Hutchison's commitment to develop a framework of Youth Ministry Initiatives.

One of those is Anglican Young People Online, AYOPO, which "brings the old AYPAs into a 21st Century context."

AYOPO connects "groups of five kids of similar age and interests across Canada." Judy explains,

"Eighty percent of the Anglican Church is rural. Many young people feel isolated, so this is a way for them to connect."

Youth are welcome and

Getting to Know You

The Rev. Canon Fran Darlington

encouraged to sign up on AYOPO at www.askandimagine.org/aypo.

Other pies? Judy is a member of the Candidates Committee for the Diocese of Niagara (part of the discernment process for ordinations), and very involved with Canterbury Hills Camp program.

She teaches a module in Team Ministry Formation for the Diocese of Michigan's education program, which is run by Huron College.

Involved in congregational development, group formation and team building within and beyond the diocese, Judy comments, eyes sparkling, "I'm really excited about doing experiential education with groups. I think I've learned from young people how transformational experiential education really is!"

Judy proclaims "my big passion is science and theology," an area she teaches in parish programs, at "Ask and Imagine," and at Newman Theological College in Edmonton.

Anglican family

Judy comes from a committed Anglican family. From five to 23, Judy was a member of St. Philip's, Montreal West. Her parents, now members of St. Jude's, Oakville, were "part of the mass Anglophone exodus from Quebec in the early 1980s."

Judy joined the military reserves at 16, went to college to study music, left to travel Europe, lived in England for a time, and came back to Canada to do a diploma in Engineering Technology.

She joined the military full-

time as an Aircraft Systems Engineer. Promoted to Captain, Judy served with Search and Rescue on P.E.I. as Maintenance Officer, before being posted to Ottawa to work on systems engineering in anti-submarine warfare.

"About that time, I thought, 'I could be doing something to be more of a help to the world, to use my gifts in a more creative and life-giving way.'"

Judy left the military to go to university, "definitely responding to an emerging sense of call."

At university in Ottawa, working towards her BA in theology and psychology, Judy attended a vocations conference in Niagara, and heard about the Centre for Christian Studies in Toronto.

"I thought, 'Great! This is what I want to do!'"

L'Arche

Graduating from CCS, Judy joined the staff at Richmond Hill's L'Arche community, a worldwide sheltered program created by Jean Vanier for developmentally challenged people. She has been in Niagara since 2000, and lives in Fonthill with her children, Emily, 8, and William 6, her partner and two cats.

In her busy life, Judy knows the importance of play, saying, "I do a little bit of a lot of things. I'm a stand-up comic" with "an ambition to do stand-up comedy at 75!"

She's going to learn to scuba-dive in the Caribbean, "a birthday present to myself."

Judy skates and swims with her children. She reads, skis, and is a "highly enthusiastic participant in the high ropes course at 'Ask and Imagine.'"

Our youth, our diocese, and our national Church are enriched with Judy's energy, enthusiasm and creativity, not to mention her sense of humour and all the lively questions and exclamation marks she puts before us!

CALLING YOUTH OF THE DIOCESE!



CHILI CHOWDOWN & YOUTH PRAISE SERVICE

Saturday, April 23rd at St. John the Divine, 37 Ottawa St. N., Cayuga. Event begins at 5 p.m. in the church hall downstairs with a Chili Supper followed by a Youth Praise Service, in the Church, from 7 to 8:30 p.m. with snacks to follow. Please call to RSVP the church office with approximate numbers: (905) 772 - 5077.

Directions: Take Hwy #6 south (near Hamilton airport) through Caledonia. Turn left at centre of town onto Hwy #54. Follow to Cayuga. Turn right on Bibo St. just past the Town Office Buildings, short block, turn left onto Ottawa St., Church on your right.



Family Retreat

Numerous families from across the diocese enjoyed a winter family retreat at Canterbury Hills Feb 4-6. Families played, prayed and worshiped together and enjoyed an uplifting Eucharist based on "God's Paintbrush" by Sandy Eisenberg Sasso. The event was sponsored by Niagara Children's Ministry. Also very popular were the puppetry shows, wonderful meals, and beautiful facilities, Family Cabaret, high and low ropes initiatives, children & youth programs, relationship workshop, scrapbooking workshop, family ritual workshops and much more were all enjoyed. Thanks to all who helped out especially to leaders Rev. Vicki Edgeworth-Pitcher, Rev. Owen Ash, Jane Stewart, Lindsay Stewart, Heather Grant and Marc Jenkins.

'Partnership Sunday' proclaimed May 1

At its annual Synod in 1998, the Diocese of Niagara began a journey with the Diocese of Cuba – the Iglesia Episcopal de Cuba.

It has been a journey of prayer, learning and mutual support.

In November 2003, the partnership with Cuba was extended until December this year.

Throughout the life of the partnership, the two dioceses have had the opportunity to work together as partners in many different ways.

The Dioceses of Cuba and Niagara have joined to annually declare the first Sunday in May "Partnership Sunday". It is a time to celebrate similarities and gifts.

On May 1, churches throughout Niagara and Cuba will join in worship to celebrate this wonderful partnership.

One of the goals of "Partnership Sunday" is to raise awareness of our partnership and facilitate the process of learning about life and worship in Cuba.

"Partnership Sunday" materi-

als will be sent to parish Partners in Mission's representatives after Easter.

The companion diocese program is coordinated by the Partners In Mission committee, which operates within the Division of Outreach.

If you would like to know more about Partners in Mission, please contact Karen Nowicki at the Synod office 905-527-1316 ext. 380 or visit our website at <http://www.niagara.anglican.ca/outreachanglican.htm>

Cathedral Shoppe importing from Bethlehem

The Cathedral Shoppe now carries devotional and gift items, mostly in olive wood, from Bethlehem.

Retired teacher Bob Bridgemen, who lives in Pickering, Ontario, has a dedicated interest in promoting these goods to support Palestinian Christian carvers and artisans.

He contacted the Shoppe about

selling the goods.

Troubles in the area have contributed to a decline in tourism as well as a decline in the numbers of Native Christians. Crafters and carvers have had a difficult time making a living, often selling below a fair price. Profits from the Shoppe are directed to outreach and the sale of these goods, of itself, is an outreach project.

The principle supplier is a 13th generation Arab Christian operating from a location in Manger Square. He employs a number of carvers, who depend on him for their living.

Olive wood

The olive wood used for carving does not threaten producing trees, but is gleaned from the trimming and pruning, necessary to keep the trees productive.

Two brands of Fair Trade coffee beans have also been introduced, and are available at the Shoppe.

The Shoppe has been enjoying a steadily growing business since opening at Easter 2004.

Purchases can be made from inventory or ordered from the Anglican Book Centre.

Altar, credence, lectern & book stand



Altar, credence, lectern & book stand, suitable for chapel, mission or side altar. Designed by an engineer and built by a blacksmith. Five foot wooden mensa 1½" thick with inserted stone, steel pedestal base. Lectern & book stand all steel; credence wooden top, steel base. Free to Anglican, Lutheran, Orthodox or Catholic with most worthy need. Photographs available. 1½" brass candlesticks, linens and dust cover available. No cross or crucifix. Will need a van, truck or car with large trunk. Base 130lb, mensa 45lb, lectern 50lb. Location : Niagara-on-the-lake, Ontario.

Evensong is alive and well

By CHRISTINE PRIESTMAN

Evensong is alive and well. Some people would think that was an oxymoron, but nothing could be further from the truth as was soon realized at All Saints Church in Erin on Feb. 6.

Like a mighty giant roused from slumber, 110 faithful rose in one motion while the rush of angel wings fill the air as any dusty notion of having the doldrums is swept from the sanctuary.

This is a traditional BCP Evensong but the people's hearts were attuned to the truth of the opening sentence and the surge of emotion was unanimous as the Reverend Amy Cousineau put voice to why we have all come.

'I was glad when they said unto me, let us go into the house of the LORD'. Psalm 122.1.

The presence of God has come to be with us. The spirits of those who have handed the tradition down from generation to generation are finally satisfied that Evensong will do what it was meant to do.

Hymns

The words of the hymns are poured out from prayerful hearts as people turn their thoughts toward God, seeking comfort and consolation at the end of the day.

Scriptures are read and prayers are prayed with passion and authority by clergy. The, "amen" that follows is heartfelt and sure.

The cantor rings out the words of the Psalm and the response is repeated again and again, each time resounding in agreement.

The 30-voice choir takes us to the quiet, healing waters edge as they sing the beautiful 23 Psalm and then later, petition the Lord on behalf of us all in prayerful melody with, Lead Me, Lead Me, Lord.

We hear the life-giving message which God has sent to us through Archdeacon Marion Vincett.

Her words comfort and yet strengthen the same time. They fill us with renewed hope that we

will indeed be able to face the challenges of a new day when morning has broken again.

The service is ended and we leave the sanctuary in the same quiet manner in which we entered.

But we are not the same.

Something ancient has rekindled our hearts, making them fresh and new once more. It is that old-fashioned blessing from God and from being with one another. And all this from an ancient BCP Evensong.

When people dust off their old-fashioned, traditional longing and

love for God and let it move them in sundry places once more, something is bound to happen.

Evensong is an ancient, traditional Anglican service which was experienced more frequently in days long ago. The setting is in the Book of Common Prayer. It's purpose is to bring people together to worship God at the end of the day.

It is a service to assist people to leave behind the cares of the day in exchange for God's peace and assurance that all shall be well.

In Niagara Diocese there are five parishes that get together three times through the year to offer Evensong.

It is circulated over a two-year period between these five parishes and the priests of these parishes do a wonderful job of organizing it. Each priest may invite a guest preacher for the evening they host Evensong. There are choir representatives from each of these parishes and as a result the choir can range in number from 30 to 45 voices at any service.

The parish which hosts the Evensong puts on a lovely luncheon following the service where, tea, coffee, wine, and juice are offered. Plates of assorted sandwiches and sweets along with platters of cheese and crackers, and fruit and veggies are also generously offered.

Five years

It has now been five years that we have enjoyed this traditional service together and it has become one of the highlights in the Church calendar year for each of these communities.

The parishes involved in this traditional Anglican Evensong are All Saints, Erin, where The Reverend Amy Cousineau is priest. St. Mark's, Orangeville, where The Rev. Peter Scott is Priest. St. Alban's on the Hill, Grand Valley, where The Rev. Susan Wilson is Priest. St. Paul's, Shelburne where The Rev. Richard Moore is Priest. And the Anglican Parish of Mono where The Rev. Barbara Hammond is Priest.

Christine Priestman is a parishioner of All Saints Church, Erin.



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Ontario Home Care Association helping folks stay home longer

Home care has evolved by responding to changes that have occurred in the hospital sector. There have been bed closures, increases in ambulatory care clinics, and day surgeries.

Long-term care facilities were also subjected to change which resulted in waiting lists for beds, with limited availability.



SUSAN VANDERBENT
Executive Director
Ontario Home Care Association

As a result, home care has emerged as an integral component of Canada's health-care system and essential to its sustainability.

Home and community care comprises 4.25 per cent of overall spending on health-care within provincial budgets.

Maximizing individual health requires many inter-related services including illness prevention, health promotion and protection, diagnosis, treatment / cure, rehabilitation, support and maintenance, palliation, and social adaptation and integration.

Home-care programs provide components of all these services by integrating health-care delivery services in home settings with community services like Meals on Wheels, respite care, volunteer services, etc.

Home care functions as a bridge between the various settings of care, including acute care hospitals, emergency rooms, supportive living, long-term care facilities, hospices, and the physician's office.

These linkages enable home-care programs to meet patients needs in an individualized and comprehensive manner. This goes beyond physical and mental health care to social supports as well.

Home and community care goals include health promotion and teaching, curative intervention, end-of-life care, informal caregiver support, provision of service to support, independence and optimize functioning, and social adaptation and integration.

Home-care programs across Canada are trying to stretch limited health-care resources to provide health and social support services to patients in need of assistance to remain at home.

In Ontario, publicly funded home care services are co-ordinated by Community Care Access Centres (CCACs), which are publicly funded agencies that provide information about care options.

CCACs were established by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care in 1996. There are 43 CCACs throughout Ontario.

In addition to government funded care, people wanting to stay at home may access services by purchasing services privately or accessing private insurance or benefit plans (e.g. private health insurance).

While it is generally accepted that home and community services enhance quality of life, are cost-effective and prevent unnecessary hospitalization, emergency room admissions and premature institutionalization, funding of the sector is not a priority.

However, pressures to increase resources in this area will continue due to:

- Growing expenditures as a result of consumer preferences and acuity changes, growing reliance on the sector, an aging population and health care reform
- Changing profile of users in many provinces/territories
- Increasing acuity/complexity of client caseload as

changes in delivery allow more treatment interventions at home versus in hospital

- Continued movement from facility-based to home and community-based care
- Changing public-private mix and increasing availability of private services
- Changing and growing human resource pressures
- Expanding use of in-home medical technology to improve service delivery
- Strengthening data and information systems for program planning an evaluation.

OHCA

The Ontario Home Care Association is an organization of home health and social care service providers.

OHCA members deliver nursing care, home support services, personal care, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, social work.

Executive director of the OHCA is Susan (Sue) D. VanderBent, B.A., BSW, MSW, MHSc, CHE.

A Hamilton native and "enthusiastic member" of the Church of the Ascension in Hamilton, Ms. VanderBent currently represents the OHCA on numerous Ministry of Health committees, the Ontario Health Providers Alliance, the Alliance for Community Care and the Ontario Community Services Research and Evaluation Network.

She has a distinguished background in health-care. Prior to joining the OHCA, Ms. VanderBent was the Director of Rehabilitation Services and Social Work at St. Joseph's Hospital, Hamilton, Ontario.

As part of that role, she managed the St. Joseph's Centre for Acute Injury Rehabilitation, a business of the St. Joseph's Health Centre Corporation.

Ms. VanderBent was a member of the Sub-Care Task Force for the Health Services Restructuring Commission and is intimate with the long-term care system in Ontario. She co-chaired the Hamilton



Wentworth Quick Response Project, a successful project which included several innovative design features unique to Ontario.

Ms. VanderBent is particularly interested in the area of continuity of care, systems management and transition planning which supports integrated care delivery.

"I believe with a truly integrated support system, a person can choose to live at home for as long as he/she wishes," Ms. VanderBent said. "We certainly have all the supports available to assist a person wanting to stay home for as long as possible."

Ms. VanderBent, a Certified Health Executive, is on faculty at McMaster University, Faculty of Health Sciences, a guest lecturer at the University of Toronto, Department of Health Administration and is an accomplished speaker.

She has spoken to many groups, both provincially and federally, regarding long-term and community care, continuity of care, communication skills management, integrated care delivery systems for patients and the role and value of the private sector in home health and social care provision.

For more information about home health-care services or providers, contact the Ontario Home Care Association, 19 Melrose Avenue South, Hamilton, Ontario L8M 2Y4. Telephone (905) 543-9474. Fax: (905) 545-1568 or Email : info@homecareontario.ca
From the website www.homecareontario.ca

Road to recovery

Home health-care allowed Dolores to convalesce in the comforts of home

By DIANA HUTTON
Editor

Home health-care allowed Dolores Janisse, 71, to convalesce at home from a serious staff infection. After spending three weeks in hospital in January, Dolores was able to return to the home she shares with her husband, Raymond, 81, knowing a health-care worker would look in on her and give her a hand every day.

Son John Janisse, a member of the Publishers Advisory Board of the Niagara Anglican, said he and his brothers were grateful for the professional support the family received during that difficult time.

"Mom was afraid of going home," John said. "She was not at all sure she could manage with just dad to help out."

The drama began just after Christmas, when Dolores began to experience severe pain in her hip, unlike the pain to which she was accustomed. Scheduled for hip replacement surgery, her condition was deteriorating.

"Things got worse and all of a sudden, the pain just went over the top and an ambulance was called," said John.

Admitted to Hotel Dieu, in Windsor, doctors' first job was to try to control the pain. That took several days. "She was in agony," John said.



DOLORES JANISSE

Medical tests

Once the pain was better controlled, doctors ordered tests to see what was causing the pain. In the mean time, to the horror of her family, Dolores was diagnosed with malnutrition.

"That really frightened us because mom has always eaten well and was still eating," he said. "We knew something was wrong." Days later, Dolores was diagnosed with a staff infection in her deteriorating hip. She was began a course of antibiotic treatment.

As treatment dragged on in hospital, however, Dolores seemed to be getting worse emotionally. The family rallied to her bedside, taking turns to keep her spirits up.

John was convinced his mother would recover more quickly and comfortably at home.

But Dolores was still afraid to leave the hospital.

"She didn't understand what homecare could look like," John said. The oldest of four Janisse sons, John lives with his partner, Chris Grabiec, in Hamilton, only two brothers live nearby in Windsor. The other lives in Toronto. The family couldn't provide the help their mother was going to need. And she knew it.

Home health-care

John began to investigate home health-care as an option. The Community Care Action Centre (CCAC) determined Dolores did need some assistance but not as much as John believed was necessary. The family decided on home visits once a day for an hour and a half.

"We figured the worker could come in, help mom bathe and prepare a good breakfast," John said. "We knew dad could handle the rest."

In a matter of days, Dolores began to improve. With the assistance of some "wonderful" workers, life took on a more optimistic view.

"I think people get better faster when they're home instead of in a hospital," John said. "Obviously there are times when people need to be in the hospital. But after a long hospital stay, I think home is better when you're convalescing."

That can only happen, however, if supports are in place to assist an ailing person at home. John is a big fan of home health-care for obvious reasons.

John said his mother is doing "very well" these days. While her hip replacement surgery was postponed to allow for the infection to clear completely, she is able to accomplish most things on her own.

And when mom's doing well, so is the family.

Next month, an inspiring interview with Sue VanderBent, executive director of the Ontario Home Care Association

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Small churches: A question of attitude?

By CAROL SUMMERS

*"We are only a small parish"
"We can't do ministries
because we don't have enough
people"
"We can't offer all the
Church-of-the-Huge-Budget
offers so people won't want to
come here"*

Do any of these phrases pass your lips or ears? Do you belong to a small parish? Do you feel you should try to follow the large, successful, urban church model and failing miserably, feel inadequate and wonder if you should give up the seemingly endless struggle?

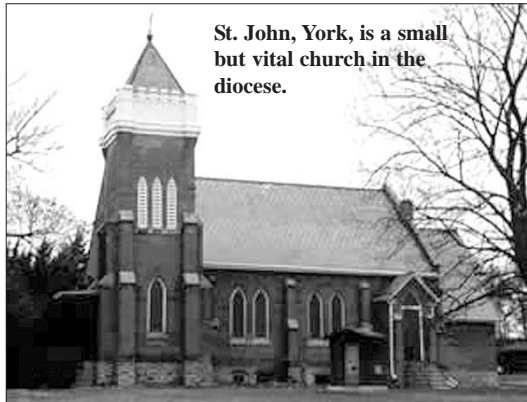
I heard some good news recently for my parish and me and maybe for you. We need an attitude adjustment.

Rural Evangelism

In October, I participated in a workshop led by Susan Baldwin, an ordained Anglican priest. The Reverend Susan is director of Field Education at the Anglican seminary at Huron University College.

It was an excellent workshop on Rural Evangelism. For the first time I saw my parish – or what looked exactly like my parish – used as a positive model.

We live in a culture in which bigger is better, in education, healthcare, cities, corporate conglomerates, and even our fast food!



St. John, York, is a small but vital church in the diocese.

This attitude has set a standard for success in our churches. But, we are beginning to see that large size does not always equal success nor should it be the only measure of health.

Andrew Irvine wrote in *"Small Churches - Being True to Who We Are"*: "The small church needs an attitude adjustment. It is not simply a miniature version of a large church or a church that hasn't grown up yet."

Radically different

"It is radically different. It can do things and offer value that the large church cannot. And it can do those things well. It can offer to the broader church family a unique ministry that no one else can."

"Imagine saying one family is

healthy because it has seven children and another family is unhealthy or weak because it has only two children.

"It is ridiculous to assess the health of a biological family on its size.

"So, too, with the family of God. Both large and small churches can be healthy or unhealthy."

A church is healthy when it knows who it is and what its role is in the wider community. It should be a witness to the community wherever God has placed it.

In his book *"The Big Small Church"* David Ray defined 26 characteristics of a small church, some of them are:

- A small church is the common expectations of its members
- Everyone knows everyone

or almost everyone.

- Beyond knowing one another, there's a sense of "family".

- Almost everyone feels (and is) important and needed.

- Organizational functioning is simple rather than complex and communication is rapid (!)

- Small churches are known by their personalities.

- Mission is understood in personal and immediate terms.

- The minister is expected to be a pastor, friend and generalist.

- The small church is the biblical model.

- People oriented
- More likely to laugh and cry than large churches.

- Primary activity is worship.
- Operates on fluid people time (seasonal)

- Most parishioners would rather give what is needed, when it is needed and in private.

- Lay people are more important than the clergy.

- Small churches are often harder to get into and harder to get out of.

- They are tough
- They'd rather do it their way
- They are more effective than efficient

- Better at events than programs and meeting immediate needs than long-range planning.

I have included this list here because I think it gives an excellent picture of what the small church is really about. That picture will help us to see what might work and what is unlikely to

work.

In a small church everyone is known by name and has an identity within the community. People are missed if they are not in their place on a Sunday. Close bonds are more important than numbers.

Large churches draw people from great distances but small churches draw from their surrounding community, one they know well.

This intimate relationship gives the church the ideal opportunity to provide what the community needs.

Insight

The small church has an insight into the well-being and the soul of the area of which it is a part. We should take a look at our resources, the community and ourselves and see if there is a ministry we can do well.

Many people live meaningful, spiritual lives in the midst of a small church. They can find personal satisfaction in the value placed on them by a small congregation and where relationships are paramount.

God seems to like variety in all things so let us rejoice in the value of the small church.

Who knows what a small church could do if it felt confident and secure that it is God's will that it should be there!

Carol Summers is a member of St. John's, York and a member of the Publisher's Advisory Board

Synod council approves sale of 2 church buildings

Christ Church, St. Catharines and St. James, Dundalk, have been sold.

Elim Christian Fellowship Church purchased the Christ Church property and parking lot for \$310,000.

They had been appraised at approximately \$290,000. The closing date was March 21.

Conditions

Conditions included in the sale were standard and some exclusions are mentioned in the agreement of sale: memorial items, stained glass, the organ, and the memorial garden in remembrance of Peter McKenzie.

The financing is in place and the engineer's report has been received.

Synod council approved the sale at its March meeting.

St. James, Dundalk was sold to Maple Valley Acres Ltd., operating as Southgate Community Church for \$110,000.

The closing date was March 25. The deal was signed with the agreement that the parish may rent the facility for \$50 per use.

St. James had been offered to the dioceses of Huron and Toronto and neither wanted to assume the responsibility of the parish.

The property was appraised at \$100,000 if used as a church or \$120,000 for a residence.

A parishioner of St. James offered \$110,000 to buy the church and rent it back to the parish for \$50 per use.

The deed/covenant states if the parish is sold, the stained glass would be removed and returned to the diocese.

This will still be part of the three-point parish of Shelburne, Dundalk, and Whitfield with the current rector.

St. James will pay \$2,600 annually for rent of the building and will be required to pay DM&M (which will change dra-



ST. JAMES, DUNDALK (pictured) and Christ Church, St. Catharines, have been sold. All Saints, Niagara Falls is still on the market.

matically) and its share of the rector's salary. St. James has a debt of about \$28,000 to the diocese which will be recovered from the proceeds of the sale and the bal-

ance will be held in trust for St. James by Synod.

Though an electronic vote, Dec. 16, synod council members voted that proceeds from All

Saints', Niagara Falls, be used by the treasurer to recover all debts related to the property. The debts include unpaid personnel expenses, unpaid DM&M to the end of 2004, unpaid residential school commitment, and exceptional personnel expenses related to the disestablishments.

The property has not yet sold. Clergy in Transition at the end of 2004, was in a deficit amount and the diocese was able to absorb these costs within the 2004 financial statements.

The Reverend Dr. Steve Hopkins told synod council members in the future, when All Saints, Niagara Falls sells, proceeds from the sale cannot be used for Clergy in Transition.

Diocesan Treasurer Bob McKinnell said investment funds of the diocese were doing well and the DM&M was able to absorb the cost of Clergy in Transition for 2004.

Understanding suicide: a challenge to ministry

The Singles Group at St. Christopher's Church, Burlington, presents Walter Mulkech speaking on Understanding Suicide: A

Challenge to Ministry.

The event is on April 27, 7 p.m.

Whether or not you have had personal experience with a friend

or family member taking his or her life, it is a topic for which we all should be prepared to offer support and spiritual sustenance.

Each year 4,000 Canadians die by suicide, leaving many thousands more as survivors of suicide.

Why do people choose to end their own lives?

Can suicides be prevented?

How do we help survivors of

suicide who are grieving the loss of their loved ones and suffering the guilt imposed?

Walter Mulkech will address these questions as well as explore common myths about suicide.

As a former mayor of Burlington and a survivor of his wife's suicide, he is a facilitator of a Survivors of Suicide support group for the Burlington Bereavement Council.

Come early for the pie sale

The Ladies Guild of St. Stephen's, Hornby, advise folks to show up early for the annual Pie

Sale on May 1. The sale begins at 8 a.m. with a wide range of delicious selections.

Letters to the Editor Policy

The Niagara Anglican welcomes submissions from readers as Letters to the Editor. All submissions must include a name, telephone number, e-mail address or physical address of the author for verification purposes.

Powerful signs for passersby

By ANDREW CLINKARD

A common sight throughout the Lenten season in the United States – particularly the South – are three wooden crosses on church lawns.

A year ago, friends and I traveled to Myrtle Beach, South Carolina for March Break.

We saw three crosses on the lawn of every Methodist, Baptist, and African Methodist Episcopal (AME) church.

From majestic Methodist churches in the city, to the humblest AME church in the country, the message the crosses gave was the same.

The Scripture that came to mind was Luke 23:

39 One of the criminals who hung there hurled insults at him: "Aren't you the Christ? Save yourself and us!"

40 But the other criminal rebuked him. "Don't you fear God," he said, "since you are under the same sentence? 41 We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong."

42 Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.[f]"

43 Jesus answered him, "I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise."

As we encountered church after church with those crosses, we were struck by the fact no other symbol shows God's love for all people more than those three crosses.

Level at the Cross

The ground is level at the cross. We thought having three crosses on our lawn at the Church of the Resurrection would be a powerful tool of evangelism.

Perhaps a few of the approximately 25,000 people who travel past our church every day would take a few seconds to think why three crosses were there during Lent.

Upon returning to Hamilton, I approached Nancy Clause, rector's warden, and Archdeacon Rick Jones, our minister, with the idea.

Both thought it a good idea, and so I researched the three crosses a bit further by contacting the First United Methodist Church in Myrtle Beach.

First United Methodist did not know how many years they had been putting up three Lenten crosses, just that it was that



LENTEN CROSSES ADORN the front lawn of the Church of the Resurrection, Hamilton. During the Triduum, the front cross was draped in black and on Easter Sunday, it was adorned with flowers, representing life.

they always did for the Lenten season.

Their centre cross was a foot taller than the side ones and prior to Easter they draped the centre cross with a purple cloth.

That changed on Good Friday to a black one, and then for Easter Sunday the cross would be covered in chicken wire and short flower ends pushed into it resulting in a floral cross for Easter Sunday.

Some churches instead use a white cloth on Easter Sunday. The size of our crosses is patterned after theirs. Many we saw down South were larger.

Lenten church lawn crosses are not limited to just the Methodist, Baptist, and AME churches.

I have read of a few Episcopal churches as well who observe this custom.

The tradition also extends outside of the American South to as far north as Albany, New York, and Columbus, Ohio.

Many Roman Catholic churches, including ones in Canada, put numerous small crosses on their lawns during Lent.

In three well-known incidents, the Lenten crosses have been a thorn in the side of our secular society. In an oft quoted broadcast of *The Lutheran Hour* the following story is relayed: "Some years ago the

pastor of a North Carolina Catholic congregation placed an array of Lenten crosses on the front lawn of his little church. It wasn't long before he received a call from the Chamber of Commerce. He was told, 'Look preacher, we've been getting complaints about those crosses in your church yard. Inside the church, who cares? But out front, where everybody can see them, those crosses are offensive. The retired people don't like them, they find them depressing. The tourists probably won't like it, either. It'll be bad for business. People come down here to get happy, not depressed.' No, the world doesn't want you to hear about the cross of Christ."

Excerpt from *The Lutheran Hour* broadcast of: March 23, 2003: "At Reynoldsburg United Methodist Church in Ohio, the church found itself at odds with the city during the Lenten season of 1996. They erected a 12-foot tall cross constructed from auto fenders, wheel covers and bumpers with a sign that said 'Christ Repairs Wrecks Here'. A city building official, after receiving a complaint, said the church lacked a permit to erect the cross, and said it could blow over onto the road, and he ordered it removed. The pastor refused, and after a

front-page story and photo in the *Columbus Dispatch*, the city agreed to allow the cross to stay up after it was securely anchored.

"At dawn on Easter, the auto parts sculpture had been replaced with a white cross and the sign: 'He Lives.' The following year, the church observed Lent with three white crosses far back from the road, adorned with 2,000 tiny white lights."

The third well known case is in Newport Kentucky very close to Cincinnati, Ohio.

After the 2002 Lenten season had ended, Trinity Baptist Church chose to keep their 20-foot crosses erected and covered with black cloths. An official with the planning department paid two visits in June and July and demanded the crosses be removed. Those visits were followed with a letter stating the city considered the crosses to be "signs" requiring prior approval by the city and subject to a fee.

In August 2002, the church and its pastor sued the city in U.S. District Court. It charged the city with violating the First and Fourteenth Amendments to the

U.S. Constitution and RLUIPA.

Along with the complaint, the church filed a motion for a temporary restraining order enjoining the city from enforcing the sign ordinance.

The city soon decided to settle the case, and on August 30, 2002 a settlement was reached which allowed the church to keep the crosses erected year-round as long as permanent holders or footers were installed.

Strong message of love

Let's hope and pray our Lenten crosses at the Church of the Resurrection send forth a strong message of God's love for all.

The Lenten crosses are not a familiar sight in Southern Ontario and so I believe their impact will be great.

"The message of the cross is the power of God" - 1 Corinthians 1:18

Perhaps a few people passing by our church will be struck by the message that God loves us all, and the ground is level at the cross.

I hope and pray a few come in our doors this Easter so we can do our best to assist them find God's love.

Andrew Clinkard is People's Warden of Church of the Resurrection, Hamilton



Assistant treasurer?

DIOCESAN TREASURER BOB MCKINNEL, hard at work, enjoys some sanguine vibes from CC (Cathedral Cat). With warm sunlight spilling into Bob's office, CC made herself at home on his immense stack of papers. While she basked in the sun's rays, Bob worked on, perhaps calmed by her presence. CC is a resident of the Resource Centre and can be seen taking full advantage of her preferred status. She wanders freely throughout both the Cathedral and the Resource Centre.

Bereavement workshop

Ann-Marie Primeau, co-ordinator of Bereavement for VON Halton, will lead a workshop on bereavement on April 11.

The workshop is being held at St. Matthew on-the-Plains, Burlington, 7-9 p.m.

A general talk and educational

workshop regarding all types of bereavement, the workshop is open to anyone who is bereaved or knows someone who is bereaved.

People interested in attending are asked to call the church office at (905) 632-1233

Fire restoration fundraiser

A Fire Restoration Fundraising concert is being held April 10 at St. John the Evangelist, Thorold. The concert, featuring the tal-

ents of The Anglican Singers, under the direction of Dianne Williams, begins at 7 p.m. There will be a free will offering.

Photo by Jane Stewart

Nancekivell named director of Transitional Ministry

The Reverend Canon Marni Nancekivell submitted her resignation as rector of St. Aidan's, Oakville, effective April 3. Marni has accepted the position of director of Transitional Ministry effective Sept. 1. (Canon Nancekivell will work in training after April 3 with Canon William Thomas.

DeForest at Incarnation

The Reverend Canon Terry DeForest was appointed interim pastor at Church of the Incarnation, Oakville, for the month of April. Canon Marni Nancekivell will assume the role of Interim Pastor at Incarnation May 1.

Ranger interim in Shelburne, Dundalk, Whitfield

The Reverend Mary Ranger was appointed interim pastor March 1 at Shelburne, Dundalk and Whitfield, during the absence of the rector.

Turner heads West

The Reverend Ann Turner, deacon at Christ's Church Cathedral, and co-ordinator of Fresh Start, has submitted her resignation from these positions. We wish Ann well as she continues her journey in Western Canada.

Halchuk in Europe

The Reverend Michael Halchuk has been transferred to the Diocese of Europe, working under the direction of the Bishop of Gibraltar in Europe. He is currently ministering in Zagreb, Croatia.

Retirements

Canon Bill Thomas

The Reverend Canon William Thomas submitted his intention to retire from full-time ministry effective Aug. 31.

Ven. Fred Gosse

The Venerable Fred Gosse, rector of St. Christopher's, Burlington, and Archdeacon of Trafalgar, submitted his intention to retire from full-time ministry July 31.

Canon Paddy Doran

The Reverend Canon Paddy Doran's last Sunday at St. Paul's, Hamilton, was March 6. Canon Doran officiated at the service and the parish hosted a celebration after the service to honour his ministry. A parish dinner is planned for April 3 to thank Paddy

People In the News

Alison D Attri

for his ministry at St. Paul's.

Happy Anniversary

Hogarth's
Congratulations to Joy and Gordon Hogarth, faithful members of St. Stephen's, Hornby, who celebrated their 62nd Wedding Anniversary on March 20.

Appointments

Sykes is honorary assistant

The Reverend Dr. Barbara Sykes was issued a Bishop's Permission as honorary assistant at St. George's, Guelph, under the direction of the rector, effective Feb. 1.

Mason is honorary assistant

The Reverend Frank Mason was issued a Bishop's Permission as honorary assistant at St. Alban the Martyr, Glen Williams, Feb. 20.

Administering the chalice

Doug Hicks, Sue Hicks and Doug Robertson were given permission to administer the chalice March 1 at Holy Trinity, Niagara Falls, under the direction of the rector.

Passings

Rev. Paul Moore

The Reverend Paul Moore, retired priest residing in St. Catharines, died March 1. He was ordained deacon in 1952 and priest in 1953. Rev. Moore ministered in Niagara Diocese at St. Columba, St. Catharines; Christ's Church Cathedral, Hamilton; St. Augustine's, Hamilton; St. George's, Lowville and St. John's, Nassagaweya; Christ Church, Wainfleet and All Saints, Dain City; St. James, Port Colborne; St. Luke's Burlington; St. George's, St. Catharines; St. John the Evangelist, Niagara Falls. A Memorial Service was held at St. George's March 21.

Jack Brown

Jack Brown, former Synod delegate from All Saints, Hamilton, passed away in early March. The funeral service was held at Christ Church, Flamborough March 8.

Jean Bamford

Jean Bamford, retired member of

the finance staff at the Synod Office, died Feb. 17. The funeral was held at Christ's Church Cathedral, Hamilton, Feb. 22.

Cyril Smith

Cyril Smith, O.N., long time faithful member of St. Alban's, Beamsville, died Feb. 15. Our sympathy to his wife, Betty, and their family.

Margaret Jones

Our deepest sympathy is extended to Archdeacon Richard Jones and family on the death of his mother, Margaret, on Feb. 20.

Olive Patterson

Olive Patterson passed away on March 8. Mrs. Paterson was pre-deceased by her husband, the Reverend John Paterson. The funeral service was from Holy Trinity, Fonthill, on March 11.

Bishop Derwyn Jones

Bishop Derwyn Jones', retired from Huron, died on March 8. Bishop Jones was ordained in 1946 and served in a number of parishes across Canada. The funeral service was from St. Paul's Cathedral in London, Ontario, on March 11.

Give your troubles to God

Therefore I bid you put away anxious thoughts about food and drink...and clothes.... Surely life is more than food, the body more than clothes.... Birds of the air, they do not sow and reap and store in barns, yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Is there a man among you who by anxious thought can add a foot to his height. Consider how the lilies grow...., they do not work, they do not spin, and yet.... Solomon in all his splendor was not attired like one of these. But if that is how God clothes the grass in the fields.... Will He not all the more clothe you.... Do not ask anxiously 'what are we to eat, what are we to drink, what shall we wear?'... All these are not for you, because your heavenly Father knows that you need them all....

'So do not be anxious about tomorrow; tomorrow will look after itself. Each day has troubles enough of its own.'

— Matthew Ch.6 v25-34.

The world is changing so fast these days, it seems that life and its expectations are moving more towards life and its necessities.

Our pursuit of happiness seems to be changing into a drive to succeed, and along the way we are collecting a lot of unwanted unease which directly affects the quality of our lives.

It is becoming more and more difficult to try and look at things in isolation, because with the passage of time, there seems to be interconnecting elements. They cannot be ignored and they intrude into the way we think and act.

The more we try to accommodate these, the more anxious we are likely to become, especially when problems and situations become more personal, and the

Bishop's Itinerary

April 2005

April 3, 10 a.m., St. Mary's, Hamilton, parish visit and dedication

April 3, 4 p.m., St. James the Apostle, Guelph, Greater Wellington Confirmation

April 5, 5 p.m., Meeting of Synod Council

April 6, 7 p.m., Christ Church, Niagara Falls, meeting with Brock Regional Council

April 7, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., Cathedral Place, meeting of Regional Deans

April 7, evening, Niagara Falls, Fresh Start

April 10, 10 a.m., All Saints, Erin, parish visit

April 10 to 12, 7 p.m., Toronto, Provincial House of Bishops and Provincial Executive

April 13, 6:30 p.m., St. George's Church, St. Catharines, Brotherhood of the Anglican Churchmen

April 14, 7 p.m., St. Paul's Church, Shelburne, congregational meeting

April 17, 10:30 a.m., All Saints Church, Hamilton, Parish Visit

April 17, 3 p.m., St. Jude's Church, Oakville, Trafalgar Confirmation

April 19, 6:30 p.m., Cathedral Place, meeting of Sexual Abuse Task Force

April 20, 10 a.m. thru day, Mount Forest visit

April 21, 7:30 p.m., Christ's Church Cathedral, Ordination of Deacons (Vocational)

April 25 to May 1, House of Bishops Meetings in Windsor

Anglican Fellowship of Prayer

By Roger Harris

future looks uncertain.

Whatever the problems may be, Jesus is telling us to see them through His eyes and to focus on the Father's needs for us. 'Set your mind on God's kingdom and His justice before everything else'. He is saying, 'and all the rest will come to you as well'. One day at a time.

Troubles

'Come unto me all who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest.'

'Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you shall find rest for your souls.'

'For my yoke is easy, and my load is light.'

— Matthew Ch.11 v28-30.

Can there be any more uplifting words for the burdened traveler?

When anxiety becomes a burden, we want to relieve ourselves of the weight that we carry, and cast around for answers to what we alone can do to resolve it.

Times takes toll

Sometimes we are successful, but there are times when this does not happen, and time takes its toll in personal hardship and the vision of an empty future.

Once more Jesus is reaching out to us, and inviting us to place our burdens on His shoulders, so that He is able to give us the answers to all that we are unable to cope with, and to show us the way ahead.

He wants us to lean on Him and learn, and by accepting His offer, we will become stronger, for as Paul said in hardship and frustration, 'For when I am weak, then I am strong.'

Prayer

'But when you pray, go into a room by yourself, shut the door, and pray to your Father who is there in the secret place, and your Father who sees what is secret will reward you.'

— Matthew Ch. 6 v6.

'Ask and you will receive, seek and you will find, knock and the door will be opened to you.'

— Matthew Ch.7 v7

'And whatever you pray for in faith you will receive.'

— Matthew Ch. 27 v22.

Jesus opened the avenue of prayer for us, and showed us through His relationship with the Father, how accessible God is to us, and how close we can be to Him by making prayer an important part and place in our lives.

Prayer is communication

Prayer is our only way of communication with the Father and through our faith and His grace we can be sure that as with Jesus, our prayers will be answered.

Jesus prayed for us too while He was among us (John Ch. 17 v20-23), and it is comforting to know that even though He is with the Father, His spirit is among us continuing the work He started.

The message that He has given us is one of hope, and that through prayer we can take all the anxiety and trouble that a world full of turmoil is able to throw at us, and place them in the hands of a loving Father and Son

What else do we need, where else should we go?



Cycle of Prayer

HAS MOVED

onto the Diocesan Web site

www.niagara.anglican.ca

Resources
Spirituality and Prayer

Churches are encouraged to copy it for use in their parish.