



Niagara Anglican

NEWS • PERSPECTIVE • REFLECTION • FOR A GROWING CHURCH • NOVEMBER 2005



Bishop Ralph Spence gets "cheek to jowl" with Fritz, a long haired toy dachshund, being held by owner Jan Duncan.

Animals Offer Us Their Blessing

INTRODUCTION

During this past month, some of our parishes celebrated the Blessing of Animals in memory of St. Francis of Assisi who said:

"Be conscious, O man, of the wondrous state in which God placed you, for he created you and formed you in the image of his beloved Son - and yet all the creatures under heaven, each according to its nature, serve, know, and obey their creator better than you."

We have such a tragic history with the animals of this world. Every species of animal carries within its collective consciousness the memory of centuries of abuse at the hands of cruel and insensitive human beings. In light of this, animals must have great courage in their every day existence. Knowing how humans have treated them and abused them in the past, they continue to struggle to exist, unless of course, we have wiped them from the face of the earth - as we have done with so many species.

The abuse of animals has been going on since humanity decided that we had dominion over them, adding horror upon horror to the animal collective memory. Even animals who are well cared for, often exhibit a fear of the humanity that assumes dominion and power over their very existence.

Generations ago our aboriginal brothers and sisters tried to tell us of the respect that the Creator asked us to have for the creatures of this earth. In our minds we knew so much more than these honourable people knew. We even tried to rob them of their beliefs. When they hunted for food, they gave thanks to the creator and to the animal for having given its life so that they could continue to live on earth. No life was taken for granted and no life was taken unnecessarily. If an animal were to give its life, there would be no waste; the whole carcass would be used.

Today in the church many of us who choose to bless animals want to reverse what has been done - and allow our co-creatures to exist in peace and with-

out fear. In turn our animals will exercise a healing ministry toward us. Modern medicine tells us of the affect that our pets can have upon our blood pressure and mood disorders. We know that animals bring great happiness to senior residences and to those with terminal illnesses. Psychologists speak of the value of relationship between children and their pets. Children's hospitals involve loving animals in their therapy programs. Animals offer us unconditional love, which is very hard to turn down.

It's true that we bless animals - but perhaps we need to realize that they can also bless us. They bless us with companionship, entertainment, love and warmth. Feeling that we as humans had dominion over the animals of the earth, was just wrong. Today we know that God has given them their place and their role on earth and we and they are called to co-exist with one another. This month we feature the story of someone whose journey has brought her to care about animals who are abused and who have no home. A final thought:

"If man is not to stifle his human feelings, he must practise kindness towards animals, for he who is cruel to animals becomes hard also in his dealings with men. We can judge the heart of a man by his treatment of animals." - Immanuel Kant

WANDA BAILEY

You never know where life is going to lead you. You never know when chance will interfere and your life will take an unusual turn. My journey involves my community and it all came about because of my love for animals.

There's a huge soft spot in my heart for animals. As a child I was always keen to have a dog and for a time we did. While dogs bring great joy and fun into my life the unalterable reality is that I'm seriously allergic to most dogs and many cats. I was young

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Niagara Falls Team Ministry... A Bird's Eye View!

LYNN CORFIELD

"Thus says the LORD: In a time of favour I have answered you, on a day of salvation I have helped you; I have kept you and given you as a covenant to the people, to establish the land, to apportion the desolate heritages; Sing for joy, O heavens, and exult, O earth; break forth, O mountains, into singing! For the LORD has comforted his people, and will have compassion on his suffering ones. Can a woman forget her nursing child, or show no compassion for the child of her womb? Even these may forget, yet I will not forget you. See, I have inscribed you on the palms of my hands; your walls are continually before me." - Isaiah 49: 8, 13, 15, 16



Lynn Corfield

was sky high and that we (the Diocese) were in big trouble. It was a crisis and a scary time for us all. Crises can also be times of growing and learning and this particular crisis caused us to regroup and take a good look at ourselves and what we needed to be doing differently. Fortunately for us, in and around that same time Bishop Ralph had the vision and drive to create our Survive and Thrive campaign. With lots of great leadership and a phenomenal response from the pews it was a big success. So while we were in a tail spin about our finances there was lots of positive energy and enthusiasm generated about how we could do things differently in the future. You might think that money is the root of all evil (or the lack thereof) but in this case it has given us a much needed kick in the seat of the pants!

Even before this financial crisis came to light some great ideas had been put into action. Archdeacon Fred Gosse was asked by Bishop Ralph to do a study of the Niagara Falls area and to make some recommendations for the future ministry. Another project was a pilot study

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Shouting Stones: Images from Iona

STEPHEN MURRAY

"If Christ's disciples keep silent; These stones would shout aloud." - Iona Abbey Worship Book

The Island

Who knew barrenness could be so beautiful? There is something about Iona. It's a tiny island of unassuming houses and rocky ruins. Yet somehow it inspires incredible beauty, poetry, art and music. It's not written on a neon sign, but it's plain to see that this place is filled with the Spirit.

Iona is a tiny island off the west coast of Scotland. Legend has it that on a clear day you can see Ireland (although locals say it's never happened in their lifetime). It's covered in grass and marsh, and you can get directions in relation to "the tree." There are white beaches, and small mountains to explore for adventurous



souls. The main residents of the island are the hundreds of sheep that keep the grass well kept. Many people walk with their head down seeming to be in pious,

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PARISH NEWS

Historic Plaque in Glanford Remembers RAF

"They slipped the surly bonds of earth."

Paraphrasing John McGee's poem "High Flight", this is the heading on the newest historical plaque in Glanbrook, unveiled last Sunday at St. Paul's Glanford Anglican church, Mount Hope. The special guests who did the official unveiling were three visitors from England. John Hill and Derek Rowe were RAF members who served at Mount Hope in the later stages of WWII; Isobel Wilson, Dorset, England, is an avid historian who has researched and contacted the relatives of the 14 airmen buried at St. Paul's.

The day's programme began with a standing-room-only church service conducted by Reverend Patricia Lucy, her second week as the new minister at St. Paul's. Ceremonies, hosted by Glanbrook Heritage Society, were transferred outside for the unveiling of the RAF commemorative plaque. The plaque was one approved by the Joint Plaquing Sub-com-

mittee of the Hamilton Historical Board and Hamilton LACAC and financed by the City of Hamilton. The activities finished with laying of flowers by members of 779 Air Cadet squadron and tributes by 447 Wing, RCAFA, Mount Hope. Divine intervention was declared as the threatening rain clouds stayed away and a single-engine Boeing Stearman from the Canadian Warplane Heritage museum flew overhead during a minute of silence in the closing moments of the ceremony.

Navy blazers, brilliant red poppies and glistening medals were prominent among the gathered assembly to honour those who died away from home but will always be remembered, near and far. To finish the day, quoting Reverend Lucy, "In the spirit of true Anglicanism, refreshments are being served in the parish hall."

"At the going down of the sun and in the morning, we will remember them." - From The Fallen, a poem by Laurence Binyon, 1914.



From Left: Derek Rowe - RAF (ret.), Reverend Patricia Lucy, and John Hill - RAF (ret.)



Ministry Sunday at the Church of the Ascension, Hamilton took place on Sunday, September 11th. All groups who shared a Ministry in the parish were encouraged to prepare a display highlighting their particular group. The displays were set up in the church proper and during the service everyone was invited to walk around and view the displays. It was a great opportunity to focus our attention on the many ways which our parishioners share their time and talents to further the work of Christ in the church and beyond.

Cathedral to Welcome Liberians

Advent One, the New Year's Day of the Church and a season of new beginning and of hope, will see Christ's Church Cathedral open its doors and offer its hospitality to more than 20 families from Liberia, who are making their home in Canada.

The Cathedral parish, through its Outreach Committee, works with SISO, the Settlement and Integration Services Organization, with offices in the Liuna Station building, and is inviting these families to the cathedral at any time, but specifically for the 10.30 liturgy on Sunday, November 27, with lunch following at 11.45 a.m. The families have the option of coming only for the lunch.

There will be the opportunity to have one of the visitors speak to the congregation or to read a lesson. With 50 or 60 extra people, parishioners will rally, as they have done in the past, to provide food for, what might be called, the second annual SISO pot luck lunch event

The Reverend D. Linda Corry

B.A., B.Th., Dip.Min., OACCPP
Psychotherapist

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905-634-7858

A safe place to become...

CBC's Reading of A Christmas Carol

On December 4th at 7:30 p.m., St. Paul's Anglican Church in Westdale is hosting a reading of Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* for the third time. Matt Hayes, Connie Smith and Jim Witter are some of our celebrity readers this year. Ticket prices are the same as last year - \$20.00, or two for \$35.00. All proceeds go to St. Matthew's House.

In the last two years, the Rev. Canon Wendy Roy of St. Matthew's House has attended the evening, and talked to us about the importance of its work after the reading. This year, we will have an opportunity to make further donations to St.

Matthew's House at the end of the evening.

The Harlequin Singers will be both entertaining us, and leading us in holiday songs and carols again this year. And when you leave the church, there will be hot cider and cookies available at the parish hall reception, at no extra cost. This is your chance to greet the celebrity readers.

Our previous events have been sell-out performances. You can order tickets by calling the church office at 905-528-3724, or e-mailing us at stpauls-westdale.ca@bellnet.ca. Call early for tickets, and come early for the reading, because there are no reserved seats.

St. Simon's Christmas Market

St. Simon's Anglican Church in Oakville welcomes everyone to attend their Christmas Market and Craft sale, Saturday Nov 26th 2005 from 9am to 2pm. Everything from Pies, Doggie Treats, Jams, Crafts and a whole lot more are available for purchase.

Please come and help St. Simon's celebrate their 50th anniversary at our Market or help support our float in The Oakville Santa Claus Parade on November 19th 2005. We would love to see you there!

For information on how to get to us, please call 905-845-8351 or email admin.stsimons@bellnet.ca.



St. Christopher's Church Choir travelled to Newfoundland this summer and sang, among other places, at All Saints' Church in Foxtrap.

Diocesan Golf Tournament



Elaine Hooker and John Ripley

ROBERT MCKINNELL

The 4th annual diocesan golf tournament was held on Friday September 30th at Chippewa Creek Golf & Country Club in Mount Hope. The weather was great with the sun shining and a temperature of 18

degrees Celsius. A group of 66 golfers gathered around 11:00 a.m. with a best ball format and a shotgun tee off at 12:00 noon.

This year the tournament became a fund raiser for the Bishop's Company Endowment Fund held by the Anglican Church Ministries Foundation, Niagara.

These funds are maintained in perpetuity with only the interest being used each year. This will ensure our Bishop's have a source of funds to assist clergy and their families in need. The income earned will be in addition to the approximate \$80,000 currently raised by the Bishop's Company annual dinner.

Bishop Ralph Spence greeted the golfers prior to tee off time and wished us all the best. For the more challenged golfers, like myself, we had the opportunity to purchase mulligans for \$5.00 each or three for \$10.00. I bought six and needed them all.

After an exciting round of golf, we enjoyed a wonderful steak dinner with a baked potato, caesar salad, noodle salad, bun and pie for desert. Following dinner prizes were awarded.

The lowest team score of 61 was achieved by David Aquin, Roger Petro, David Murray and Bill Kerr. The closest to the hole for men went to Billy Kerr and unfortunately there was no ladies winner. This year there was a closest to the line contest. The men's winner was Don Hughes and the lady's was Wendy Duncan. The putting contest winner was Tim Dudka and Dave Roberts was second. All participating golfers received a prize. A special thanks to the many corporate suppliers and service providers that donated prizes for golfers.

Many people contributed time and tal-

ents to make this tournament so successful. The co-organizers, Wendy Duncan our Controller and David Murray our Cathedral Place Property Manager did a great job in organizing the tournament and obtaining prizes and sponsors. Staff in the Diocesan Finance area were on hand to register golfers, hand out information packages and take team pictures, plus action shots. Others joined in and helped as necessary. Thanks to all of you. Also a special thank you to my friend Barry Coe from Mission Services who successfully contacted the media for prizes and provided advice on hole sponsorship signs.

Yes, this year we sought out both companies and parishes to sponsor holes for a contribution of \$150.00. The response was overwhelming with 26 corporate sponsors and one parish. Next year, we hope more parishes will participate given the good cause this tournament is supporting. All 27 sponsors are listed below.

By the end of the day we had raised almost \$6,000.00 for the Bishop's Company Endowment Fund.

We have already booked Chippewa Creek for next year. The 5th Annual Diocesan Golf Tournament will be held on Friday September 22nd with the same format as this year. Mark it in your calendars now to make sure you don't miss it.

Sponsors

Event Sponsors

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Russell Investment Group

2006 Diocesan Operating Budget

ROBERT MCKINNELL
DIOCESAN TREASURER & CFO

The 2006 Operating Budget has been completed by the Finance/Budget Sub-Committee, approved by the Financial Advisory Committee (FAC) and reviewed by Synod Council. The challenge this year was to produce an operating budget that met the needs of all existing service areas while still achieving some reduction in the DM&M percentage charged on parish incomes.

At last year's fall Synod, we looked at a number of budget scenarios based on the results of the New Niagara process and the financial constraints placed upon us because of limited resources. It was evident that all the activities included in previous budgets had some degree of support throughout the Diocese. This was reinforced when no budget alternative presented, received the necessary votes to pass. The Finance/Budget Sub-Committee had anticipated that Synod would determine the

best choice. With no consensus at that time, the budget was returned to the Financial Advisory Committee for further review.

Synod met again in January of this year to pass a budget for 2005. This time only one budget was presented. Included in the budget was a new initiative and a

2% reduction in the DM&M formula that saw it drop from 33.835% to 33.158% of the three year rolling average. The new initiative was the inclusion of the Evangelism position within the operating budget. This was



Robert McKinnell

identified by Bishop Ralph Spence as a priority within the Diocese. This budget received strong support from Synod and was easily passed. However, the FAC felt there was an expectation at that Synod to produce further cuts in the DM&M. The Bishop also set up a task force to look at the current level of DM&M.

As the Finance/Budget Sub-Committee worked through the spring and summer to produce a budget, it became evident there

was no clear cut method to determine what activities should be eliminated. Meetings were held with Bishop Spence to seek advice and guidance. He outlined the importance of the three legged stool: Leadership, Evangelism and Stewardship. It was evident that Bishop Spence has a clear vision of where the Diocese is heading during the balance of his episcopacy. Parish growth is paramount and we need to continue to build on that. As an example he cited the many parish building projects underway in the Diocese. In addition the overall income of parishes has grown in the past few years. This is reflected in the fact our DM&M receipts are higher now than in 1998 even though we have fewer parishes.

In view of the above, the Proposed 2006 Operating Budget reflects a small cut of 1% in the DM&M calculation (dropping from 33.158% to 32.83%) while allowing for some new costs. Our commitment to the Louisa Parke Fund has increased by almost \$50,000, additional Episcopal Assistance has been built into the budget, monies have been allocated to Regional Youth Ministries and more funds have been set aside for hydro and heating costs

at Cathedral Place. Investment revenues have risen, interest costs reduced as loan principal payments are made and the budget for Personnel Transition and Severance costs has been reduced by \$50,000. This latter item is one that does fluctuate considerably depending on the needs of parishes. The Survive & Thrive

Campaign allocated resources to this area over the five years of the campaign and further support comes from the Bishop's Company which assists clergy and their families.

The 2006 Operating Budget is balanced and reflects both financial constraint and the vision of our Bishop.



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 Ultraya) in your region, or attend one of our educational events. Dates and locations can be found on our website under *Ultrayas* 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 ◆

Getting to Know You

The Reverend Dr. Stephen Hopkins

- Secretary of Synod of the Diocese of Niagara
- Rector of the Church of St. John the Evangelist, Hamilton

FRAN DARLINGTON

To his work as Secretary of Synod of the Diocese of Niagara, the Reverend Dr. Stephen Hopkins brings considerable study and wide experience, as well as energy, humility and commitment.

In January, 1993, Steve came to Niagara from the Diocese of Toronto, becoming our Programme Director. On his first day here, "Bishop Walter said, 'Come upstairs after dinner and we'll have a chat.' I went (expecting) fifteen minutes and out, but we talked for an hour and a half!"

He remembers wondering "how to do Diocesan ministry with the resources here, but I've learned we don't have to be rich to be faithful. There are incredible assets and relationships here."

When Canon Judy Dodman retired in 2001 as Secretary of Synod, Synod Council moved to approve Steve as her successor. Steve says, "The way I understand the role is to help Synod meet legal and canonical commitments... with integrity..., requirements expressed within the law of the land and canon law. I'm not a rules and regulations type of guy, but I know they have to be fulfilled."

Canons are Commitments

He explains, "The Canons (are) not rules, but commitments we've made to each other, to Synod, the Diocese as a whole in community (through the representatives)... a community of discernment at its best. When we're at our best, trying to sort out the most effective way to advance God's mission in this little part of the world, (we are) faithful, effective, life-giving!" Steve has become very familiar with our Diocesan Canons, but also the Canons of the Anglican Church of Canada.

One primary responsibility is for Synod meetings, gatherings of "the representatives of the parishes, licensed clergy and some Episcopal appointments." The Bishop chooses the speaker, and Steve quickly points out, "The Bishop is president of Synod, it's all his call, but it's my responsibility to make it happen: location, catering, agenda, preparing the convening circular (many pages of reports, financial records, lists, motions, etc.), motions, elections, record-keeping, all for as little money as possible."

Supporting Steve's responsibility for recording Synod's meetings, journals and minutes, and following up on Synod actions, Karen Nowicki is Steve's 'right hand': "She's invaluable! We manage to pull it off!"

Exercising Conscience

Between meetings of Synod itself, Synod Council, composed of selected members of Synod, meets regularly to continue the work of Synod as a whole. Again, scheduling meetings, agendas, record-keeping, etc. are all Steve's (and Karen's) responsibilities, and again, "The Bishop is chair." Steve explains, "The Bishop can't do the job by micro-managing, but needs to trust folks hired or appointed to do (it)... he/she can step in when necessary," adding a vital clarification: "It is also true that we are synodically governed, but episcopally led."

He continues, "Once gathered (in

Synod), we need to exercise our own consciences in order to discern the mind of the Church." Steve clarifies: "Everybody comes from somewhere, but they're not bound by where they come from. We can't work both ways, especially on hot-button issues. What we need (Synod representatives) to do is to wrestle with issues in their own minds, and make a conscientious decision for the good of the Church and its mission."

Communication

Another facet of Steve's work is advising parishes "pre-Vestry: what needs a decision, what doesn't, so they don't end up with messes." Sadly, "that's important today, when people are so litigious; we don't want decisions called into question." Steve also advises on decisions Vestry may or may not make, such as replacing wardens. If necessary, Steve calls the Diocesan Chancellor for clarification and wording of motions: "I want to protect the Chancellor from calls from parishes. We need him to have a highly specialized understanding of the law." Acknowledging the importance of such communication and recent changes at the Diocesan Resource Centre, Steve adds, "One of the implications in the reduction of staff at the Synod Office is that there just isn't time to do some of the things that need to be done!"

Occasionally Steve attends meetings of "various committees related to the Synod job. The last one was the Task Force on 'Options for conducting Diocesan meetings.'" He also does "some work facilitating clergy groups on Fresh Start and training." He was on the Planning Committee for the General Synods of 2001 and 2004, to which he had "committed before coming here, but I'm not doing anything national now."

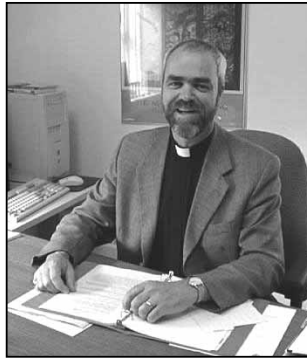
With no office at Cathedral Place, Steve works from his office at St. John's Church, Hamilton, where he is Rector, and meets monthly with Synod Council's coordinating team to prepare for monthly meetings. Occasionally, Steve attends meetings of senior staff at the Diocesan Resource Centre.

Montreal Born

Born and raised in Montreal, Steve earned a B.A. in Religious Studies at McGill University there, and came to Toronto "temporarily" to do his M.A. at St. Michael's University at U. of T. He worked for five years with Toronto's homeless. Fostering his interest "in how organisations do and don't learn and change, and how adults learn," Steve earned an M.Ed. at the Ontario Institute in Studies in Education.

During his studies, the Diocese of Toronto posted a job opening for a Programme Consultant. Steve grins, "What they were posting and what I offered were pretty close, but I wasn't sure they'd hire a lay person. Elizabeth (Steve's wife) said I'd never know if I didn't try. So I applied... and worked (there) for seven years. I really cut my teeth on Congregational Development there - I loved that job! I lost count of how many congregations I worked with, but at least over a hundred! I learned an awful lot; it was great fun."

Next, Steve "felt a need to ground my ministry theologically and theoretically, so I began a D.Min. at Toronto School of Theology (the umbrella organisation for all theological institutions at the U. of T.), (concentrating on) how my work in congregational development could nurture the ministry of the baptised in daily life." He examined "the interests of institutional survival" versus "what I thought was most important about the mission of the Church. Part of what I learned is that functioning clergy leadership is absolutely critical in congregational renewal and revitalisation. I'm not saying it's all up to the clergy, but clergy are in a powerful position to shape how things happen in a parish... I would say that most of that influence is about



The Reverend Dr. Stephen Hopkins

how we are as much as about anything we do or say."

Life About Ministry

Completing his D. Min. after moving to Niagara, Steve followed his heart's prompting. "From undergrad days I was pretty sure my life was supposed to be about ministry, but not sure about ordained ministry. I set out as a lay person... hired for jobs I loved. I was incredibly lucky. But my heart started to change in the late 1980s, early 1990s" (as) "I noticed parishes with strong lay leadership had strong clergy leading the way." Steve was "already doing administrative stuff clergy get to do, but (there was) a tug to sacramental and parish ministry." He also recognised a "credibility gap or integrity gap, how I felt inside myself. With clergy in the trenches I needed to get directly involved in getting parishes to change and grow."

Following conversations with Bishops Walter Asbil and Ralph Spence, Steve was ordained Deacon in 2000 and Priest in 2001. With his transition to St. John's, in

2003, Steve relinquished his work as Director of Programme for the Diocese.

Now, Steve says, "I don't regard the work I do as Secretary of Synod as vital to the future of the Church - there are way more important things to worry about! But, if we can tie off those organisational things simply, then we have more time and energy for the really important things, like making disciples and equipping the people of God for ministry." He smiles, "the people of St. John's know about discipleship and ministry; there's tons of lay commitment."

Steve and his wife, Elizabeth Wensley, the Director of Organisational Development for Joseph Brant Hospital, Burlington, have two daughters, Clare, now beginning university studies, and Rosemary, in Grade 6, and a mini-Schnauzer named Holly.

Harry Potter

Admitting that he read the latest Harry Potter book, and reads "for work all the time," Steve is currently enjoying Terry Waite's book about his work with Robert Runcie, a former Archbishop of Canterbury. Having enjoyed books on medieval architecture while on vacation, he's now reading about medieval art. After taking a summer course in watercolours, "I've dabbled, but had no time since. It's lots of fun."

Steve also plays the piano well. He admits "there are times when I think the most healthy thing I could do for my soul is join the choir, but there's no time. I'd love to do more musically."

Naming a computer game to build livable cities, Steve confesses "I'm a Sim City addict!" Steve enjoys crossword puzzles, and "gardening in the spring - but maintenance is boring!"

Steve invites people to contact him with their concerns, at 905-522-0602 or by e-mail at rectorrockonlocke@bellnet.ca. Grinning, he says, "I'm a parish priest so I'm a moving target!" Who can predict where he'll be, or what he'll get up to next, but leave a message and Steve Hopkins will get back to you! Our Secretary of Synod is committed to God, to the ministry and health of the Diocese and its people.

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NEWS • PERSPECTIVE • REFLECTION • FOR A GROWING CHURCH • NOVEMBER 2005

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The Iona Community



Cloistered Walk Face Carving

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prayerful contemplation when in fact they're just trying to avoid the piles of sheep droppings.

The island has been home to spiritual communities such as the Druids, and other peoples for thousands of years. Iona became a Christian landmark when St. Columba founded a monastic community in 563 C.E. after leaving Ireland in controversy. The ministry of St. Columba's Celtic Church extended across Scotland and Northern England, and it became renowned as a place of learning and worship. Kings from Scotland, Ireland and Norway are buried on its grounds. Unfortunately, its fame also attracted the Vikings who would visit regularly for money and resources. One of the more significant locations on the island is known as Martyr's Bay where monks that set to defend the island were slaughtered by the Vikings. St. Columba's Celtic Church dwindled and fell into disrepair, but by 1200 the Roman Catholic Church built a Benedictine Abbey and a Nunnery for the Order of Black Nuns. The Reformation saw the Abbey and Nunnery fall into ruins until the turn of the 20th Century. The spiritual life of the island imitated the ebb and flow of the ocean tide around it.

In 1938, the Rev. George MacLeod spearheaded an ecumenical movement to restore the Abbey and establish a community that is, "committed to seeking new ways of living the gospel of Jesus Christ in today's world." There are a number of resident staff and volunteers who live this mission by offering weekly stays for guests to become a part of the community and to experience the gifts of the island.

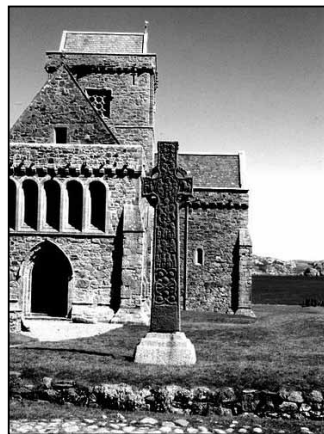
The Iona Community lives, works, eats, plays, sings, and worships together. Staff are quick to explain that it's not a conference or retreat centre; they are a community which means taking turns doing daily chores as one of the many ways to worship God. I was part of the "breakfast team" (not the most sought after meal because of the early mornings) and got to help prepare the rest of the days meals in the kitchen (cutting onions was a very therapeutic experience). There are workshops to attend each day, but the content of the program is secondary to life 'in community.' Of course, the rhythm of the day (and week) is grounded in worship.

Big & Wee Sings

People were constantly asking, "It's a long way to come to Iona. What brought you here?" They were surprised to learn that

the music and liturgies of the Iona Community have become popular in Canada. In seeking an experience of community I was drawn to the incredible 4-part harmonies and justice-centred liturgies coming out of Iona, and drawn to find out, 'what is going on in this place that such incredible expressions of faith are speaking to my soul?' It did not disappoint.

Each day there were singing sessions with their resident musician, Tim, a brilliant student from Cambridge taking a sabbatical from his PhD. I never understood the difference between a 'Big' or 'Wee Sing' but made sure never to miss one. Layering each line of harmony upon another we put our ragged voices together and filled the Abbey with song. The music is heavily weighted with material from John Bell, and greatly



Abbey and Cross

influenced by melodies from Africa and South America. As tourists would wander the Abbey they were graced with beautiful songs of praise that seemed to shout forth from the stones.

The Hermit's Cell

Each week there is a Pilgrimage that walks the entire expanse of the island. On a foggy Tuesday morning, around 75 of us 'pilgrims' set out across the rocks and marsh stopping occasionally for readings, reflection and song. The conversation along the Pilgrimage is as important as the walk itself as I had the opportunity to meet people from all walks of life and from across the globe. By late afternoon we were nearing the last stop of the journey - the Hermit's Cell. We descended from one of the highest points into a rare island valley. The sound of thunder rolled overhead as though God

was speaking directly to our pilgrim caravan. Everyone walked in silence. A sure sign of a holy place is when there are no words to describe it. The Hermit's Cell was nothing more than a tiny pile of rocky ruins that outlined where a building once stood. No beautiful stone carvings. No music. No words. As we sat there in silence, the stones truly did shout aloud with the footsteps, prayers and songs of centuries of Christ's followers, and we were in awe.

Abbey and Nunnery

The 13th Century Abbey has been restored to preserve generations of artists offering their work to the glory of God. Imagine if Christ's Church Cathedral were turned inside out so that the high walls and vaulted ceilings were made of stone. Intricate carvings, ancient effigies, and secret passageways combine to make Iona Abbey spiritually hallowed ground. When I found myself with free time I would rush to sit in the choir stalls to pray and play guitar.

Down the Street (there is only 1 street on the island) are the ruins of the Nunnery. The crumbling walls have a timeless beau-

ty as moss and flowers grow out of the cracks. Walking through the Nunnery requires imagination to find where the altar once stood, or where the nuns would eat their meals together. The nuns were essential to the operations of the religious communities, but largely ignored. Today, the Abbey has been restored while the Nunnery left in ruins. It seems that the Abbey and Nunnery stand as symbols for the Church's outlook on the relationships between men and women, and even the stones are crying.

Iona is a wonderful place for personal reflection and rejuvenation. The rocks and stones sing and speak volumes, but the effects of transformation happen through the interactions and experiences with other people. We were definitely not silent - the stories, laughter, dances and songs often lasted into the wee hours of the morning. I'm honoured to have met new friends from around the world. Most importantly, Iona is a sacred space where God's people gather to celebrate our blessings and support one another as we strive for God's vision of justice and peace, and carry God's message of Good News out into the world.

Diakonia World Assembly 2005

Johnny, Judith and St. Drithelm

ANNE CRAWFORD

Anne Crawford is the deacon at St. Luke's Church, Burlington and is the Chair of the College of Deacons in Niagara.

It would have been hard to miss Johnny, even without the large placard he held up with the word DIAKONIA written across it. In the thirty years that I have been returning to England, this was the first time I had been met on my arrival. It felt good! It was early morning at Manchester airport and the Meet and Greet team for the World Assembly of Deacons was on hand.

Johnny's first words to me, in a broad Lancastrian accent were

"Hello, I'm Johnny and I'm an American from Pittsburgh." Johnny's Dad was a GI who returned to the States after the war. Johnny found him after a twenty-seven year search. They spent twelve weeks together just before his father died. He said how much he loved him.

Johnny lived in Blackpool and had been up since 5:30 that morning in order to join the small team who were meeting over one hundred deacons flying into Manchester that day. He expected to be home around midnight. His job was to take us to the airport chaplain's quarters for a rest if needed, and then to escort each one of us to either a bus or train bound for Durham.

He was wearing jeans and an eye-catching leather vest. A different accent and he could have stepped right out of a John Wayne movie. The next thing he said as he took charge of my suitcase and began walking towards the train station was "You should know that I'm not a deacon, I'm just a parishioner"

Johnny found me an ATM machine, the ticket office and a friendly porter to guide the way to the right platform. And he stayed to wave goodbye as the train left the station.

You're not just a parishioner Johnny, any more than I am just a deacon. We are both part of the body of Christ, which comprises all who are baptized and that means all of us. We all have the power to make a difference. These thoughts I kept to myself as I

tried to keep up with this lanky Christian.

It was several days later in that I first met Sister Judith from Cameroon, the Prioress of the Sisterhood of Emmanuel. Judith with the most radiant smile imaginable. The Sisterhood is in the process of building a bakery. They already have livestock to supply their own needs and the needs of those around them. Soon they hope to be baking bread for the same reasons. Prayer and meditation are at the heart of their life and work.

Judith, who had had polio as a child, had borrowed a motorized wheelchair especially for this journey. It was quite old and had been damaged en route - a factor that had been upsetting for her. Someone fixed it as best they could and it kept going throughout the week.

We in the small group of St. Drithelm had the opportunity to hear more of her story during our daily meetings. There were nine of us - from Australia, Holland, Sweden, America, Canada and Cameroon. As we heard a little of Judith's life we wondered how we might help her and her sisters in some concrete way. We felt particular concern regarding her borrowed wheelchair.

We were not the only ones. She had also arrived at Manchester airport and was also met by Johnny. At that time the wheelchair was barely usable. After making sure that she arrived safely in Durham, and learning that her wheelchair in fact belonged to someone else, Johnny went home and ordered a brand-new one. He and some friends then began fund-raising. They contacted local supermarkets and stores and appealed through local radio.

A week later, during the closing session of the conference, Judith got the surprise of her life when she was presented with the new wheelchair.

St. Drithelm? He was a married layman, just a parishioner if you will who had a near death experience that changed his life forever. He got to see heaven and hell during his short time 'dead' and when revived, shared his wealth between his family and the poor before becoming a monk at Melrose. You can read more about him from the Venerable Bede.

Johnny, Judith and St. Drithelm seem to be connected in more ways than one and I am privileged to have known them all.

Arbourlife Counselling Services



From Left: Burlington Mayor Robert MacIsaac, the Reverend Mabel Cambell, and Bishop Ralph Spence

While floral arrangements and best wishes as far away as Edmonton, Alberta arrived throughout the day, on March 31, Arbourlife Counselling Services officially opened its doors to Halton region and Hamilton. With a gala ribbon cutting ceremony, The Right Reverend Ralph D. Spence, Bishop of Niagara, and Mayor Robert MacIsaac of Burlington invited friends, neighbours, colleagues and supporters who gathered to celebrate the beginning of this Pastoral Counselling Ministry in Halton Region into the newly renovated offices.

Arbourlife is a counselling service committed and dedicated to serving people of all ages whose lives have been traumatized by the accidents of life that have created emotional, psychological and mental pain. Accidents of life such as the loss

of a spouse early in marriage, the loss of a parent at a tender age; abandonment and neglect whether through death, divorce, illness or injury; the loss of status or identity through financial or political hardship, all have effected people of every socio-economic strata, in every faith group and in our communities.

This pain continues to effect more and more lives in the challenges of the contemporary world that sometimes feels like it is whirling out of control as it is pushed to its limits with the stress created by environmental and human catastrophes.

The proprietor and director of Arbourlife is a member of St. Jude's Anglican Church in Oakville and a graduate of Trinity College as well as a Certified Specialist in Pastoral Counselling with the Canadian Association of Pastoral Practise and Education.

She has over twenty years of clinical practise in churches, hospitals and counselling agencies while serving as a volunteer, priest and therapist in the communities in which she lived.

While providing a range of educational and therapeutic experiences in a safe, comfortable, hospitable and caring environment, Arbourlife's mission is to partner with medical and mental health professionals as well as spiritual care professionals who are pastorally sensitive and certified in psychotherapeutic processes.

At the present time, the Reverend Mabel Campbell is seeking out professionals who will honour the mission of Arbourlife and are committed to serving as an Advisory Body to explore and develop its mission. Arbourlife's vision is "to enable its clients to become rooted in Life, grounded in self-understanding and growing into meaningful, healthy and life giving relationships while experiencing the love of God in a safe, comforting and healing environment where autonomy and confidentiality are respected and protected.

Mabel is warm and personable with a great sense of humour and would be pleased to hear from you. For further information, you may contact her by email at director@arbourlifecounselling.com or visit the website that is under construction at www.arbourlifecounselling.com.

Bishop's Company Dinner



Guest speaker Judy Maddren

The annual Bishop's company dinner was a huge success. The Bishop's Company is a discretionary fund to assist clergy members and their family was begun by Bishop Walter Bagnall in January, 1951. Through time, it has become known as the Bishop's Company. This year's record-breaking dinner had more than 300 people in attendance at the Burlington Convention Centre.

The guest speaker was Judy Maddren. Her voice has been heard on CBC Radio and Television since 1972. She began her career as a Consumer Information reporter, and then in 1974 became a staff announcer. She has hosted many radio and television shows, including the Midday News; What's New, a television news program for kids; Sunday Magazine; Tapestry; the World at Six; and of course World Report, CBC's flagship radio newscast of the day, which brings national and international news to Canadians every morning. We are thankful to Judy for eloquent and humorous presentation.



Attendance at this year's dinner was up 20% over last year's.

After Fire, Thorold Church Shows Energy and Vision

ALAN L. HAYES
THE ITINERANT CHURCHGOER

Lots of us were shocked last November when St. John's, Thorold, suffered a major fire. I remember my own sadness when I saw the news on the diocesan website, and then the coverage in the *Niagara Anglican*. Our hearts went out to that community, and our prayers went up, even if we had never seen the church or met its people. After all, our diocese is family, even the distant cousins we seldom see.

Terrible Spin?

Has the fire sent the congregation into a terrible tailspin? Not at all, as I discovered when I attended worship there recently. In fact, it's hard to imagine a more vigorous place.

As I drove up to the church, the burned-out frame of the parish hall stood out very conspicuously. And as I entered the church, I could still detect the odour of smoke, although at this point it's actually rather pleasant, like a whiff of campfire under the pines.

Folks at St. John's told me that although the church proper wasn't burned that day, thanks to a favourable wind and closed fire doors, the smoke and water damage was terrible. But you can't tell that now. The floors have been replaced, the ceiling and walls scrubbed and repainted, the stained glass repaired, the pews taken out and treated and put back in, and the service books scrapped and new ones purchased.

When I visited St. John's, the plans for the new parish hall hadn't yet been approved. Aesthetically, the old one is irreplaceable. It was a solid and richly constructed building with lovely cathedral ceilings. However, the new building may end up serving current needs better.

The extremely hospitable folks at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church up the block accommodated the congregation until St. John's was ready for occupancy again last March. St. Andrew's still houses the parish staff.



Alan L. Hayes

An old parish history from Thorold tells an interesting story about how St. John's came to be built. The first rector, Thomas Brock Fuller, who arrived in 1840, had married into money. (This isn't a bad idea for those on a clergy salary.) In 1853 he advanced over £2000 as a loan for the building. This amount, covered most of the costs. In 1862, when he moved on to another church, he forgave the loan. Fuller later became the first bishop of Niagara.

All in a Name

The sign on the church when it was built said "St. John's Church." It wasn't until years later, when someone found a pew deed dated 1856, that people discovered that it was properly called "St. John the Evangelist Church", which is how it's officially known now.

Fuller was an evangelical, but soon the Victorian liturgical quarrels gathered

momentum, and the rector from 1886 to 1899, Percival Spencer, was a bit of a ritualist. And he met resistance. He introduced a cross on the Lord's table, but one day it went missing. He directed the congregation to stand for the offertory, but for a long time the only people who did so were his own family.

Spencer also won a prize of \$200 for naming Westdale, the new subdivision in Hamilton. But I see that I've digressed.

Active and Visionary Ministry

Needless to say, the aftermath of the fire at St. John's has required vast amounts of time from many people. You might predict that they would have little time left for anything else. But I found a very active and visionary ministry and outreach. There are bible studies, discussion groups, discipleship workshops, programs for spiritual growth, and educational events. These are tied into the excellent preaching, too. The church supports programs for the homeless and hungry. There's a busy youth ministry. There are youth and adult choirs, and there's a great organist. Members are attending the diocesan "magnetic church" conferences.

I was particularly struck by a very promising new service of worship. It's called "God's café," and it's billed "for the young and the young at heart." Since last May, on the last Sunday of the month, it has featured a light lunch at 11:45, a very informal Eucharist at 12:10, and then more food and fellowship. It meets in the church, not in a hall, where, people worried, it might have felt a bit second-tier.

St. John's decided not to advertise this new service widely until they could try it a few times and iron out any kinks. But simply through word of mouth, and a low-key announcement on the parish page of the diocesan website, it has already been attracting well over 50 people, several of them newcomers. When I was there, probably about half were more "young at heart" than "young," which gave it a very appealing intergenerational quality.

Upbeat and Accessible

There's upbeat music, displayed on a screen. The liturgical language is direct and accessible. When I attended, there was no sermon; instead, a group of younger and older members mounted a funny but telling skit. It showed John the Baptist's preaching of repentance, and the different responses from discouraged sinners, on the one hand, and the religious establishment, on the other. There was some updating; the religious establishment was represented as a couple of church leaders who might almost have been Anglicans. You could tell that the actors enjoyed doing it, and the congregation enjoyed watching it. But it also made you re-examine what repentance involves.

It would have been too bad, though understandable, if the fire at St. John's had distracted it from the weightier tasks of ministry and mission. But even as property matters are ably attended to, the church is worshipping and ministering and witnessing God's love and hospitality with an impressive energy, vision, and morale.

Living on the Corner of Sunset and Sunrise

MICHAEL THOMPSON

On November 13, 2001, we buried my father's body in the cemetery at Clandeboye where his father and mother, and their fathers and mothers, are also buried. The stone was ready with his name, though not, of course, with the dates. My mother's name is on that stone as well. Her mother is buried in another cemetery, her sister in still another.

On November 13, 2005, the Revised Common Lectionary offers (admittedly as an alternative to Psalm 123) Psalm 90. And whether we use it or not, it will be in my mind on that day, a day that is for most of the church a certain Sunday after Pentecost, but which is for the handful who remember, the day of Clinton Thompson's funeral:

You turn us back to dust, and say, "Turn back, you mortals."

For a thousand years in your sight are like yesterday when it is past, or like a watch in the night.

You sweep them away; they are like a dream, like grass that is renewed in the morning;

in the morning it flourishes and is renewed; in the evening it fades and withers.

And so we can wonder why, why, as the psalmist so urgently reminds us:

"The days of our life are seventy years, or perhaps eighty, if we are strong; even then their span is only toil and trouble; they are soon gone, and we fly away."

Not so different, really from Macbeth's soliloquy after the death of his wife:

*"Tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day
To the last syllable of recorded time,
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
The way to dusty death."*

I suppose we need to hear these things. We

all, I think, entertain them privately and hope that something will come along to dislodge them, and the dread they provoke in the middle of the night. I suppose we need to hear them out loud and in public, need to say them together with others, no matter how perfunctorily. I don't imagine the words mean to harm us, but to begin our healing. But it's easy to slip into a kind of artful nonchalance in the face of these words. We feign a kind of stoic indifference to the approaching fact of our own obliteration, but nobody, least of all we ourselves, is fooled in the middle of the night.



Michael Thompson

Near where I live in Oakville, two streets meet - "Sunset" and "Sunrise". I'm not kidding. There are two homes whose residents must often say, giving directions, "At the corner of Sunrise and Sunset." That's, of course, where we all live. We live every day in the place where beginnings and endings intersect, where eventually (for sure) and (perhaps) even as early as today, the lights go out. And if we can't do anything about that except exile awareness of it to the farthest shore of mind, we can at least try to do something about the second bit, the description of our lives as "a span of toil and trouble" with words like these, perhaps: "We're here for a good time, not a long time."

It's not a bad survival mechanism, if a word like survival means anything that isn't absurd at the corner of Sunrise and Sunset. It's okay as far as it goes, but it doesn't linger around the obvious question, "What do you mean by 'good'?"

In his plaintive song (really the only kind he sings), "A Good Time", John Prine starts leading us back out of the swamp and onto the road home:

*"Time was once just a clock to me
And life was just a book a biography*

*Success was something you just had to be
And I would spend myself unknowingly
And you know that I could have me a
million more friends*

*And all I'd have to change is my point of view
But I had no idea what a good time
would cost*

Till last night when I sat and talked with you."

Hearing that song for the first time as a young adult, I was introduced to the idea that a good time is costly, not in terms of cover charges and price tags, but of how we spend ourselves, and with whom, and for what.

So the Gospel for the fourth anniversary of my father's funeral (some Sunday after Pentecost for everybody else) speaks of spending, investing, and risk. It makes me wonder...

I wonder, for example, if the third slave knew what he was burying wasn't just a bit of silver, but himself. I wonder if the question of how to invest was just too complex or novel or intimidating to him. I wonder how many people cross whatever boundaries they cross into our communities without a clue that high human calling is to invest their lives deliberately, not just "spend themselves unknowingly." For the third slave, anxiety is held at bay, perhaps, by routine, by the unknowing spending of days - "Tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow - while a great treasure lies buried, waiting to be decided about, risked, invested in something that matters.

I wonder if we could develop a life-giving sense of these rhythms of life and death, and of the short meantime in which we weigh into history. Might Tevye and Golda, for example, teach us these gentle rhythms from their own intersection of Sunrise, Sunset in *Fiddler on the Roof*:

*"Sunrise, Sunset, Sunrise, Sunset,
Swiftly flow the years,
One season following another,
Laden with happiness and tears."*

Here, unlike Macbeth's bitter characteriza-

tion of time as "a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing, Golda and Tevye touch the hem of time with humility and sad wonder as they reflect on its passing at their daughter's wedding.

Their own encounters with time are not without cost and harm and awkward jutting questions that have no satisfactory answers. *Fiddler on the Roof* isn't a fairy tale, a romance, or a comedy, though it has elements of all three. In the end, there is a journey on which they cannot accompany their youngest - a marriage with a gentile that Tevye cannot stretch his soul to embrace. In the end, Tevye knows the cost of "a good time", a good life, of the good itself.

Even in his decision, Tevye seems to know that the real cost was that of investing without certainty. He could not finally know that he was choosing the good, investing well. Something in him won't allow self-righteousness to replace the deliberate, thoughtful and loving uncertainty in the midst of which he must still - somehow - decide.

This is, I think, where Jesus meets us - in the costly call to decide before certainty is possible. In the Incarnation that will take some of its shape from Mary and Joseph, some from shepherds, some from the wonderful wandering magi, and some from the hissing fear of Herod and the violent whippers that fill Jerusalem thirty years later. Choosing Peter while he was still Simon, choosing Judas as friend - a mistake or just submitting to the necessity of choosing, of investing? A life lived deliberately, and not by chance, but subject as are all our lives to what the prayer book calls "the changes and chances of this fleeting world."

And, in this meantime between our birth and our death, living as we do at the corner of Sunrise and Sunset, remembering our fathers and mothers, dreaming of children and children's children, we sing together, "Teach us to count our days that we may gain a wise heart."

The Season is Coming...

PETER WALL

I hope that, in many parishes throughout the Diocese, there will ring out later this month, on November 27, the exultant shouts of "Happy New Year". For, as we keep the beginning of Advent, we also mark the beginning of the Christian year of 2006. Advent Sunday begins a new year, marks the transition, in our lectionary, from Year "A" to Year "B", and starts again the annual cycle of the telling of the stories of our salvation.

Although it's a much longer season in the Eastern tradition than we have in the West, Advent has been since the latter half of the sixth century, always beginning on the Sunday closest to St. Andrew's Day, and continuing through four Sundays until Christmas. Many of us remember Advent (from our childhood) as a season which was very similar to

Lent in its strictness and somberness. Recent years have lightened that feeling, however, to a season which is imbued with its sense of "preparation" - both for the coming of Christmas but also for the second coming of Christ at the last day. Indeed, we keep the Feast of the Reign of Christ as the last Sunday of the previous year (this year on November 20) with its themes of restoration and unity in Christ.

Joy, Learning, Anticipation

The season of Advent should be a special one for us all (how disappointing to hear some say: "oh, we don't have Advent in our parish", whatever that means!) and can be a time of joy, learning, and anticipation. The use of blue as a liturgical colour has become quite popular as a somewhat more joyful rendering than the purple or violet of Lent. One can even live flamboyantly and have Rose

or Pink vestments on the Third Sunday of advent - Gaudete Sunday! The four weeks of Advent provide wonderful opportunities for teaching, bible study, or book study around the various themes articulated in the readings.

There is a particularly richness this year in the OT readings for Advent, from the clarion call of Isaiah for justice and peace through to the great Covenant with King David in 2 Samuel. The use of An Advent Wreath can incorporate the quadruplet of love, peace, hope, and joy, and can also provide a superb opportunity for the participation in the liturgy by children and/or families. As well, the Book of Alternative Services makes use of the Ancient "O" Antiphons in Litany #12, and these magnificent antiphons can also be used, either eucharisticaly or in the Divine Office, beginning on December 17.

Slowing Down the Frenzy

Advent also provides us with a chance to slow down the frenzy which accompanies Christmas in our society. How often we all lament the fact that, once Labour Day is behind us, Christmas deco-

rations and "gift suggestions" begin to appear in our stores. How often do people say: "I can't possibly do anything in December - it's just too busy." Yes, all of that is true, and how wonderful it is that a Christian festival should continue to find itself so much in the centre of things, but we can also wait until it actually happens! Christmas has its own "season" in the Church (going at least through Epiphany; some would argue right through the Feast of the Presentation, on February 2) and we have ample opportunity to celebrate the birth of Jesus and the

Incarnation of the Word. We don't have to do it all in November and December, so that by December 25 it is all behind us; rather on December 25 it is all just beginning. Advent gives us that gift of time - time to prepare, time to wait, time to reflect.

So, on November 27 (Advent One) lets remember to wish each other Happy New Year. Let us keep both the beginning of a new year and this delightful season of Advent as we prepare ourselves and our world for "the birth in time of the timeless Son of God!" Happy New Year!



Peter Wall

St. Stephen-on-the-Mount

Hamilton, presents

Winterwonderland

Saturday, November 19, 2005

10 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.

Featuring

Crafts For Everyone
Lunch
Bakery
Preserves

Raffle: Quilt, Multi gifts
Tabitha-Cambodia crafts
Used Book Table

St. Stephen-on-the-Mount is located at 625 Concession Street
Next to Henderson Hospital, Hamilton.



So What's the Word?

MICHAEL PATTERSON

For those of us who are or have been in business, we all know the quandary about how, when and if to spend money on advertising to get the 'word' out. We also know that when we advertise our business or service, we had better be able to deliver on the promises we are making. Why? Because we also know that the most effective means of advertising and marketing is 'word of mouth'; what people experience had better be what we promise or the word will not be a good one! The theatre, the movie industry, restaurants, all businesses live and die through word of mouth. Which one of us have not recommended a good book, a fine wine or warned people about a bad restaurant experience? And so it goes with the Church!

Over the last couple of decades, the church has experienced a trend away from automatic church attendance as part of the regular routine of life. People today are far more discriminating and will shop and listen for a community where their particular needs are being met. People today seek out a faith community where they:

1. Believe that life is meaningful and has a purpose
2. Have a sense of community & deeper relationship with God and each other
3. Feel appreciated and respected
4. Are heard and listened to
5. Feel that they are growing in faith
6. Find practical spiritual help in developing a mature faith

Where these elements of faith are present in a community, there is vitality and growth and the word will spread; where these elements do not exist, there is spiritual malaise and decline and so too the word will spread. It does not take long for the word to get out and in many of our parishes, we are completely unaware of how we might stack up to this



Michael Patterson

type of scrutiny; what would people say about us?

It is probably safe to say that the word on the street in Canada regarding the state of the church is not a particularly good one because the most rapidly growing religious affiliation, according to Statistics Canada, is the category "No Religious Affiliation". Those who claim no religious affiliation have grown from 2% of the population in the 1950's to 11% in 1990 and as of 2001 is at 17% of the population, second only Roman Catholicism

This rapidly growing number of people who have no religious affiliation derive most of their impressions of Christianity from what they see on television and from what they read in newspapers. In recent years, television evangelists and certain Christian groups have allied themselves with political causes. The result being that the use of the word "Christian" has become an adjective that suggests

a reactionary political position and the use of the word "evangelism" is associated with a particular religious agenda. Needless to say, most news of the Church these days has not been of a positive nature!

In a recent national survey, responses to the question, "What is your opinion of the church in Canada today?", the majority of answers ranged from 'out of touch' and 'irrelevant' to 'hypocritical' and 'legalistic'. It is not hard then to understand why less than 12% of the Canadian population attends church with any regularity. Yet over 75% of Canadians believe in God and consider spirituality very important, according to Reginald Bibby in his book "Restless Churches".

It seems we have some work to

do to get 'the word' out; it is time we began to share the word of how important the Christian community is in our society.

Jesus himself leaves little doubt about what we are required to do with this gift of faith, this Body we call Church, which is so abundantly and freely given to each of us.

Why are we so reluctant to share the good word about our parishes and communities? Is it fear of rejection, embarrassment, or concern about being pigeon holed as one of those Christians that have an agenda? Whatever it is, we need to get over it and understand that people will only come to know God more fully in our church communities when we learn to share the word with others; when we invite our friends and neighbours to come and share in our church communities. We need to learn to talk about our events, our outreach, our worship, our ministries; our care for each other and the hope that are lives are given by belonging to a Christian community.

We must ensure that when

guests and visitors accept our invitations to attend an event or worship, they are cared for, listened to, respected and appreciated and come away knowing that their life has meaning and

purpose all grounded in a deeper relationship with God.

Evangelism happens and the word is shared when people are so convinced that God has enriched their lives through their participation in the life of a faith community that they want to include other people in what they have found to be valuable and life giving to them.

Great things can happen when the word is shared! This Advent, share the word and invite someone to church- you'll never know whose listening!

"No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lamp stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven"
- Mt 5:15,16

ing plates of sweets.

Telling the Story

A common issue tends to emerge within almost every parish. It's the need to document and tell the parish story in a meaningful way. That story should include the history of the parish, detailed descriptions of its ministries, the financials expressed in easy to read graphics, plans for the future, and parish contact information. It's the parish budget, but it's all dressed up in a story. That's why it's called a narrative budget.

I bring a sample narrative budget to every parish meeting, and when I hand it out, it always elicits the same responses: "This is great!" "We should do this!" "We could take this on our parishioner visits!" "We could hand this out at Vestry!" "Let's do

A Scathing Outlook on Fundamental Theology

IAN DINGWALL



Ian Dingwall

The other day I had a chance meeting with two friends: the esteemed Editors of the Niagara Anglican.

We exchanged pleasantries. Briefly. Then a couple of queries.

"What do you find in today's news that makes want to respond in a scathing manner?" and, "Would you write some words about it for the next issue?"

Before doing anything else, I looked up the word in the dictionary which confirmed my own definition that "scathing" means to be harshly critical or denunciatory.

Well now, what is in the news? How scathing could I be about the Vatican Synod that Pope Benedict has convened for two weeks in October? It seems that the Vatican's attention is to be directed towards folk like our Prime Minister and his erring ways in favouring Gay Rights and Same Sex Unions. Sorry: I cannot get too scathing about that. I'm just not that distressed. Certainly I do think that the Vatican's intention to excommunicate political leaders for their actions may warrant some scathing remarks. But my personal reaction is one simply of sheer pity over that pathetic stance. Perhaps as they discuss the issue their minds might change but I doubt it. Then in three or four hundred years they will discover their mistake and issue an apology (as happened with poor old Galileo).

Naivete

So what about that other Fundamentalist lot in the U.S.A. who recently judged the disaster of Hurricane Katrina as God's judgement against gay and lesbian people and those who harbour concern for them? God, they claimed, was simply punishing the people of New Orleans and Louisiana for sinful behaviour. I could get quite scathing about that. On the other hand, instead, I experience an incredible wonderment at the accusers naivete. I am absolutely dumbfounded at the simplistic quality of their theology and of their downright pharisaism.

I haven't got to anything scathing yet. But I don't have to look far - not to the Vatican or to Southern Fundamentalists.

How about our own church? I can be harshly critical of our Anglican inability to be inclusive of all people.

I am scathing in response to our ability to sit on the fence. We're so often Mugwumps - sitting on the fence with our mugs on one side and wumps on the other.

Angry and Sad

Our constant articulation of the status quo (in parish, diocese and elsewhere) often makes me angry and sad.

And that articulation is so very often euphemistically phrased in order to make things a little foggy and less apparent for critical analysis. We'd rather talk of "poverty" than "poor people" because it keeps matters at a convenient, non-threatening distance where we don't have to get our hands dirty.

We would rather talk about problems elsewhere, and ignore needs on our own doorstep. We would rather "bandaid" needs with so called charity rather than become politically involved to force our political leaders to detect the root causes that result in unemployed, hungry and homeless people. Yes we have our food banks (and they are essential!) but in removing ourselves from the political arena we simply allow the problems to continue and increase.

Yes, I can be harsh and I am harshly critical of anything that appears to be blind indifference. How ecstatic and joyful it would be if our Synods would not just "talk the talk" but begin to "walk the walk". Being retired Synods are events in my past. Perhaps others will pick up the gauntlet. I hope so.

a sense of well being. And by focusing on parish strengths and assets it begins to change parish culture from one of scarcity to one of abundance. Sounds like a really good investment of a little time, doesn't it?

To invite Jim to your next Stewardship meeting, contact him at jim.newman@niagara.anglican.ca or (905) 527-1316 ex. 360;

Or meet Jim at a Regional Stewardship Workshop (8:30 a.m. to noon) on November 5 at St. John the Evangelist, Niagara Falls, or on November 12, 2005 at St. James the Apostle, Guelph.

To register contact Karen Nowicki by Tuesday, November 1st at karen.nowicki@niagara.anglican.ca or via phone at 905-527-1316, extension 380

Come alone, bring a friend, or bring a team.

The Power of Story

JIM NEWMAN

DIRECTOR OF STEWARDSHIP AND FINANCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Though I've been Director of Stewardship and Financial Development only a few weeks I'm already working with close to a dozen parishes and groups in Niagara. Their needs vary considerably. Sometimes I'm helping rekindle a faltering year-round stewardship program. At other times we're planning the details of a capital campaign, or considering the benefits of a Planned Giving program.

I really enjoy parish meetings. There's a warm greeting at the door, cheerful people, prompt offerings of hot coffee or tea, and overflowing plates of sweets. Ah, there's nothing quite like those overflow-

this!" "Can you help us with the graphics?" (Yes, and I can reduce your narrative budget development time by several hours!)

Labours of Love

A significant number of parishes in Niagara have developed truly excellent narrative budgets, and they update them regularly. They've included photos of people and activities, parishioner profiles, details about ministries, planned giving information, stories of outreach, extensive graphics, and much more. They're more than narrative budgets; they're labours of love.

I can't stress enough the importance of creating a narrative budget. It's the foundation for a strong year-round stewardship program. It informs and motivates both new and long time parishioners. It builds community, and promotes enthusiasm and

Where Are We Now?

PETER WALL

Peter Wall is the Niagara member on the Council of General Synod, is a member of national Faith Worship & Ministry, and is Chair of the General Synod 2007 Planning Committee.

As we prepare for Diocesan Synod later this month, we remember last year's emotional and difficult discussion about Same-Sex Unions. We also recall that a resolution was passed which would have provided for a local option, but that our Bishop, acting consistently with House of Bishops agreements and guidelines, withheld his consent to that action. In both actions, resolution, and non-consent, Niagara again

showed that it can deal honestly and respectfully with difficult issues in the Church; that it provides leadership to the wider Church both by the quality of its debate and discussion and that it holds the unity of the Church in very high regard.

In concert with our Canadian Anglican brothers and sisters, we are now waiting until General Synod 2007 for our church in Canada to deal with this issue again. Since we met in Synod last year, some significant things have happened, and while we are in a waiting mode, we must also be in a listening and learning, reflecting and discerning mood.

The Canadian House of Bishops, meeting in April 2005, issued a statement which reiterated its unity as a House, and

committed themselves to honouring the time between now and 2007 as a time to learn and talk, not a time to act. The Primate's Theological Commission, reporting a year ahead of schedule reported to the Council of General Synod in May with The St. Michael Report, which posits the opinion that the Blessing of Same Sex Unions is a matter of doctrine, but not core or credal doctrine, and that the matter should not be viewed as a communion breaking issue. In June of this year, the Anglican Consultative Council met for its regular triennial meeting in Nottingham, England. The council members from both the Anglican Church of Canada and The Episcopal Church USA were there as observers and not as participants, honouring the request made by the Primates when they

met in Dromantine, Ireland.

Finally, a meeting is being held in Alexandria, Egypt, in October of this year (just as this is being written) involving many Anglicans from the global south, with a rather inflammatory agenda of trying to separate themselves (representing a majority of Anglicans round the world) from the see of Canterbury. All heads and in many ways disturbing and in other ways comforting stuff.

In the midst of all of this one hopes that parishes and communities throughout the Diocese are readings, learning, talking, and reflecting. The church has been asked to reflect on the St. Michael Report; the Faith, Worship, and Ministry Committee of General Synod will be making recommendations in 2007 about accepting the report, or not. Work will be done as General Synod prepares to deal

with the matter deferred from 2004 until 2007. Our House of Bishops, the meetings of Primates, those preparing for another Lambeth Conference in 2008, and study and prayer groups throughout the church continue to meet.

Meanwhile, it must be acknowledged that another group waits: those gay and lesbian members of our parishes and communities who continue to wait for full inclusion into the body. Irrespective of how one feels about the specifics of the issues, no matter how passionate we can be on who's right and who's wrong, and regardless of how probing out theological discourse can be, there are still people amongst us who are feeling left out and alienated. All else will be pointless if we do not welcome, embrace, and reach out to all we call friends.

Synod - A Way Together

BILL MOUS

With our Thanksgiving festivities finished, some of the energy in the diocese is quickly turned toward the business of Synod. First there are the regional pre-synod meetings at which all clergy and parishioners are invited to come together to discuss the budget, the topics on the Synod agenda, and reflect on the challenges and opportunities we face in realizing Bishop Ralph's vision for stewardship, evangelism, and leadership development. Then, before we know it, the actual meeting of Synod is upon us.



Bill Mous

But what is a synod and why do we have them? This is one of the tidbits of information that one learns at seminary. According to one professor, synods are representative assemblies of the Church that were historically called to solve a problem within the church, and generally followed this same basic model: a problem was presented; there was a cordial exchange of the pros and cons of the possible solutions to the problem; and action was taken to resolve the problem. It is also noteworthy to mention that graciousness and geniality were shown both during and after the discussion towards both sides on

any given issue.

I think last year's synod and the discussion around both the budget and the issue of same sex blessings followed this model very well, and is something for which we should strive to achieve in our future synods. Interestingly enough, the word synod derives its meaning from two Greek words which put together means 'a way (or a going) together'. Thus, despite the differences which one may bring to a synod, this model aims, by its very nature, to bring us to a resolution on a topic in which we live by until, at the very least, the next synod.

Yet, there is another component to synods which I think is equally as important as resolving issues and problems within our church, and that is building relationships. Recently, I attended a General Synod committee meeting in Winnipeg, and in our discussions about why we undertake partnerships with other Anglican churches throughout the world a consistent theme emerged: building relationships, through our differences and diversity, together in the unity of Christ.

Simply put, synods bring people together to share in our common purpose. They differentiate us from congregational churches

by uniting us at the local, diocesan, provincial, national and international levels. For example, at our upcoming Synod, we will elect clergy and lay delegates from our diocese to represent us at the Provincial Synod of Ontario in 2006.

Two of the challenges that come along with the synod model are accessibility and representation. Given these challenges, we need to continually ask ourselves two questions: Is Synod accessible for the maximum number of

people possible to attend? And also: Is the body of synod itself (and the delegates of your parish), representative of the demographic in the diocese (and in your parish). Think in terms of age, sex, ethnicity, theology et cetera. If the answer is no, then we need to ask ourselves: how can we find 'a way together' if we are not truly all together, and lacking a representative voice of the people?

Synods, as with any representative system, come with their inherent challenges, but they also have many strengths in that they allows us to not only do the business of our church, but also to

share our stories and faith journeys and discuss the issues that we find challenging and present in our lives. My hope is that our synods will always strive to be accessible to all clergy and parishioners and representative of our parishes and that at this upcoming synod we will uphold the model for synod which we followed last year; one of respect and graciousness.

Ray David Glenn, a divinity student and Director of Family Ministries at St. George's Lowville and St. John's Nassagaweya, will be next month's columnist.

Pre-Synod Meetings

There are still two pre-synod meetings to which everyone is invited:

- **Wednesday, November 2, 7:00 p.m.**
St. Christopher, Burlington
- **Wednesday, November 9, 7:00 p.m.**
St. Matthias, Guelph

The purpose of these meetings is to ensure that Synod members are better prepared to participate in the Synod and to enable parish leaders (including Wardens and Treasurers) to understand the 2006 budget of the Diocese.

Spiritual Spa

A Nurturing, Networking and Nourishing Event!

Sunday November 13, 2005 – 3 p.m. to 7 p.m.

St Christopher's Church, 662 Guelph Line, Burlington

An invitation to all

especially for volunteers and layworkers in children, family and youth ministries

Enjoy the Spa sessions

Batiking Meditation, Music for the Musically Challenged, Creating your Inner Sanctuary, Sacred Circle Dancing, Tai Chi and more...

Take time to

Network and browse the resource table

Relax and enjoy

Dinner and our guest speaker (to be announced)



Pre-register by November 1st for \$10/person (\$15 thereafter)
Price includes dinner, two spa sessions, guest speaker and gift give-aways

For information or to register:



Jane Stewart
Diocesan Administrative Assistant
905-527-1316 ext 420
jane.stewart@niagara.anglican.ca

Christyn Perkons
Youth Ministry Consultant
905-527-1316 ext 460
christyn.perkons@niagara.anglican.ca

Please include with your registration:

(Please make cheque payable to "Diocese of Niagara")

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____

E-mail: _____ Parish: _____

* Registration confirmed with payment.

Mail to: Diocese of Niagara, 252 James St. N., Hamilton, ON L8R 2L3

Niagara Falls Team Ministry

Continued from Page 1

of the demographics of the three parishes in Stoney Creek. Mylene Boken (a consultant with the Diocese of Toronto) was contracted to provide the survey, analyse and deliver the results. It was deemed to be a helpful process and so the decision was made to survey the whole diocese. Many of you might remember participating in these surveys in the year 1999/2000. I was serving at the Church of The Redeemer in Stoney Creek when the pilot study was conducted and was part of leading the parish through receiving the results and understanding what it could mean for us in our ministry. This was a difficult time because we (the three parishes, and Redeemer in particular) were hearing some things that were not what we wanted to hear! When I moved to serve St. John the Evangelist (Stamford) in August of 2000 I found my ministry beginning with leading the parish into its Survive and Thrive campaign (they had waited for their new Rector to do this, lucky me!) and receiving the results of our demographic study. I remember being at Christ Church on a warm September evening where wardens, clergy and other interested people were gathered

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful."

- John 15:1-2

owed the Diocese almost \$300,000 for salaries and Diocesan Maintenance and Assessment (DMM). This was the most money owing anywhere in the Diocese - not a claim to fame that anyone would want! This certainly put the spotlight on Niagara Falls as being a place where something must be done, and the time was now! Christ Church owed about \$25,000 and this debt was mostly a stewardship issue, so they reviewed this situation and were able to quickly pay this money back to the Diocese. St. Stephen's and St. John's did not owe any money to the Diocese. All Saints, St. Martin's and Holy Trinity, Chippawa did have historic debt that had been mounting for some time, and was a huge burden for them each to carry as a parish, and one that we as a Diocese could no longer afford to subsidize.

The survey result, which was being objective, made common sense when it suggested that we look at the city geographically and keep a church in each of the four compass points. Christ Church on River Road would provide an Anglican

and Dad were married." "Five generations of our family have been baptized in that font." "My parents are buried in that cemetery"...and so it goes. Many of our most important life changing memories happen in our beautiful churches. All around the Diocese we can relate to these stories because we find ourselves saying the same things, and feeling the same feelings. Can you now imagine what it felt like to be a parishioner of St. Stephen's and to leave that meeting in September 2000 knowing that you had all worked your tails off to get out of debt; had pulled together as a team to work hard on parish suppers and lunches; and yet it seemed that there was a plot to close the church anyway? Or a member of All Saints? Or a member of St. Martin's who was perhaps breathing a sigh of relief because even though their debt was the highest their location seemed to be protecting them from being pruned off the vine? There was a lot of suspicion and speculation that the decision had already been made and the end was inevitable. People were feeling angry, frustrated and helpless.

"...but you have brought us out into this desert to starve this entire assembly to death... Moses also said, You will know that it was the LORD when he gives you meat to eat in the evening and all the bread you want in the morning, because he heard your grumbling against him. Who are we? You are not grumbling against us, but the LORD." - Exodus 16:1b, 8

In February 2000, Canon Jim Powell had entered the picture in Niagara Falls having been appointed by Bishop Ralph to be the Rector of St. Martin's (a somewhat sinking ship) and the Coordinator of the Niagara Falls Team Ministry (the Grim Reaper). Armed with the report that Fred Gosse had compiled, and a mandate from Bishop Ralph to look at the Niagara Falls area and to lead the people to a place where some decisions could be made about the future of the Anglican ministry, and a lifetime of experience as a parish priest, and courage beyond measure, he went forward into the breach. Canon Jim had already formed a team consisting of the clergy and a lay member from each of the six parishes. The team had been meeting monthly since February and continued to do so throughout most of the time that Jim was the coordinator. A team newsletter was created to provide better and open communication between the six parishes. Each year we planned a day where we would bring together more people from the parishes so that relationships were formed; it was a place where feelings could be expressed; it was a place where issues were avoided - the proverbial elephant in the room!; it was a place where hopes and dreams were expressed. There were times when we were simply getting nowhere...because that was better than going where we did not want to go. At these times Jim would invite Fred Gosse to come and join us at our monthly gathering, and he would seem to be the one to "put the cat amongst the pigeons". At one point it seemed to me that Fred was the one who everyone loved to hate (if you know Fred at all, you know he could take it on the chin!). In fact his role was to be the

person who could remain objective and hold us true to our task. He would speak the truth in love, just like a parent - and sometimes like a child who does not want to clean up our room, we would often not want to hear what he had to say, and we would misbehave...and blame Fred!

This is a story of pain. This is a story of faith. This is a story of amazing Anglicans who wandered in a wilderness, sometimes shouting against God (and Bishop Ralph) "Have you forgotten us? Did you bring us

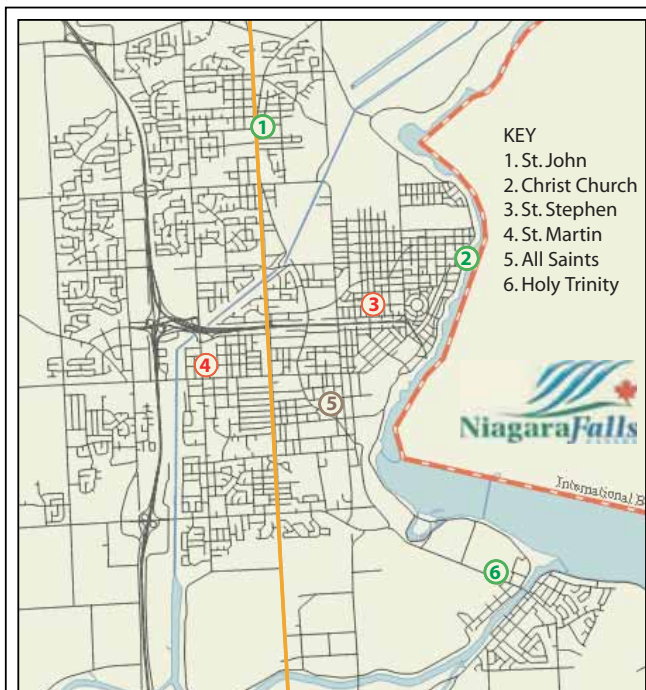


Holy Trinity

out of Egypt so we could die in the wilderness?" When we look back at the story we can see the many places where we were provided with manna, and water, and a pillar of fire by night and a pillar of smoke by day... and that we were never alone, nor forgotten. In the midst of the story it is hard to see that indeed we were being loved and guided by God, and by Jim, and Fred, and Lynne, and especially Bishop Ralph. So, where are we now you ask? Are we in the promised land? Not quite, but almost.

Holy Trinity

Chippawa was first to be affected by change. Looking at the numbers it was evident that they could no longer afford to support a full time priest. The Rev'd Lillian Porter was their Rector at this time and she was given three months notice of this necessary transition. Rev'd Lillian could not afford to live on less than a full time salary and so she gave notice and began to seek employment in the USA, nearer to where her son and his family reside. Lillian was given a lot of support and she has recently taken the Interim Ministry Course and is hoping to serve our Diocese in this capacity in the near future. In the meanwhile Lillian is serving as an Honorary Assistant at St. John's, Niagara Falls. The Rev'd Paul Brillinger joined the Niagara Falls Team as the interim at Holy Trinity. Eventually the newly ordained Rev'd Janet Cashin joined the team as Deacon in Charge; later became priest in charge, and now is Rector of the Parish, half time. Together they have journeyed and grown with the changes. Rev'd Janet has led the parish through the many transitions that have occurred as they have welcomed and loved Anglicans who were seeking a new home. Janet says that Holy Trinity has been honoured to welcome parishioners from both St. Stephens and St. Martins. "We knew that they were coming to us with broken hearts and so we endeavoured to offer them love and friendship and hope. We encouraged them to become part of all that is Holy Trinity and at last Vestry many of them took leadership positions in the parish. Holy Trinity has benefitted immensely from the energy, enthusiasm, and willingness to become part of the parish that all former St. Stephens and St. Martins parishioners have given to us. It has brought new life and new joy to us and many 'Holy Trinitarians' have found themselves caught



This map of Niagara Falls shows the three parishes that remain in green. The two closed churches are in red, while All Saints, somewhere between red and green, is in brown. With St. Martin's closed, there is no Anglican church west of St. Paul Ave./Drummond Rd, shown in orange.

from all the 6 Niagara Falls parishes. The hall was full, tensions were high, emotions were all over the place. Mylene made her presentation and answered many questions with kindness, patience, and compassion... and then at the end of the night we were left with WHAT NEXT?

The study showed that with the number of declared Anglicans we had in Niagara Falls, even taking into account projected growth to the year 2020, we would only ever need 4 parishes to meet these needs. The other piece of information was that between the parishes in Niagara Falls we

presence in the south of the city, St. John's is well situated to serve the North end, Holy Trinity, in Chippawa would serve the East (and also is unique in being somewhat of a "village" church), and St. Martin's would serve the West. This meant that St. Stephen's and All Saints were the two parishes which seemed to be excess to our needs for an Anglican presence in the city of Niagara Falls. Commonsense is one thing but we as Anglicans take great pride in our history and our stories are caught up in the bricks and mortar of our buildings. "It was at those very steps that my Mom

up in the new spirit which is so evident in the parish. There has been new life at Holy Trinity for those whose parishes closed and resurrection for us at Holy Trinity as a result of our new family and we are all blessed." Holy Trinity recently face a challenge when their parish hall had some structural damage. They needed to raise money to complete emergency repairs and they exceeded their goal, had the repairs completed, and had money left over for other maintenance issues! A wonderful story of a "grafted" branch and original vine working together to produce much fruit!

St. Stephen's

St. Stephen's parish you may remember had no debt. Their priest in this time was The Rev'd David Thomas who had come to "close them" six and half years before the parish finally closed its doors. David loved the people and the people loved David. During his part time ministry the parish had paid off its debt and were ticking along nicely it seemed. I must say that whenever I visited St. Stephen's it was evident that they worked hard, that they loved each other, and that their church was well looked after. There was such an incredible feeling of community that I felt that I could reach out and touch it. They were also lots of fun! And yet, this was the first of our parishes to close. The other piece of the story is that the location was not conducive to growth; the congregation was mostly (but not exclusively) hard working elderly people. The Rev'd David Thomas accepted retirement and joined the congregation of St. Paul's Fort Erie where he and his wife Paula are members. He also served as inter-



St. Stephen's

im when Archdeacon Ken Cardwell retired from St. Paul's in June 2003. The Rev'd Dan Bennett (now Rector of Holy Trinity, Welland) joined the Niagara Falls team first as a student and then as a Curate to Jim Powell. He served half time at St. Stephen's and half time at St. Martin's. Painfully came the day when finally in December 2003. St. Stephen's held its service of disestablishment and the people celebrated their ministry and then the diaspora began. St. Stephen's, when faced with the inevitable were very pro-active. They decided to "get on with it" and chose to close sooner rather than later. They decided to remain mostly together and a group of approximately two dozen people joined Holy Trinity Chippawa. Some others joined Christ Church and some came to St. John's. The church was sold and is now a Karate Studio. Some of the money from the sale of the building paid off Holy Trinity's historic debt. Some of the "treasures" of St. Stephen's were packed up and arrived with them at Holy Trinity and are now part of the fabric of life there. I know that the people of St. Stephen's found Holy Trinity to be a place of welcome; to be a place of heal-

ing; and now it is a place called home. Many of the still active people are "assimilated" into the parish and have important roles in the life of the parish. The people who have joined St. John's have expressed to me some sense of relief to release the burden of caring for a building, and that they are happy in their new church home.

St. Martin's

St. Martin's parish had originally seemed to be protected by its location, but as you read on you will find that this story holds a twist.



St. Martin's

Throughout these five years of transitions, Bishop Ralph came to Niagara Falls to be "Bishop in residence" each September. He would come and stay in Niagara Falls for a three day visit during which time he would visit with the clergy and spouses and offer us encouragement in our difficult tasks (a pillar of smoke by day, and of fire by night); he would meet with the team; with individuals; with whomever we thought it was important for him to meet. On one such visit, Bishop Ralph announced at a larger group meeting that St. Martin's would close but would virtually re-open the next day as The Church of the Nativity, and this would be a new beginning for them. It was a very exciting idea! St. Martin's, with Jim as their rector were seeing some growth with new families joining their midst. They had made some changes and improvements to their building adding an elevator to become completely wheel-

chair accessible and had even remodelled their sanctuary. Unfortunately, they were not able to turn around their finances quickly enough. Doing the math meant that they would be increasing their debt by more than \$20,000 per year and that was simply too much. It meant that time was up, and in this case, it was about the money. St. Martin's had earlier been receiving financial support so that they could have a Curate half time; Jim's salary had been subsidised for approximately three years and that was coming to an end; added to the historic debt the bill came to almost \$200,000. The decision that the parish had to close seemed to hit St. Martin's in a worse way than those parishes who had seen the writing on the wall from the start. Shattered dreams and broken promises were the feelings expressed. In fact as you read this story you can see the places where a great deal of outside help in resources and expertise, and finances and time had indeed prolonged the life of the parish. In June 2004 St. Martin's held its service of disestablishment and celebration of ministry. Many of their possessions were shared amongst the Niagara Falls parishes and some went further a field in the

Diocese. The remaining congregation was encouraged to migrate to Christ Church along with their rector Canon Jim, and the bulk of the parish did just that. The Rev'd Deacon Kay Baxter had a difficult transition as she was at the time of the closure very recently ordained to the diaconate (3 months) and then found herself without a parish home. Unfortunately, Kay has been somewhat of a casualty of the closure of St. Martin's and has needed some time to heal. The Baxters tried to settle at Christ Church for a time, and are now attending a parish in

the Lincoln Region and are doing very well. No one could have foreseen the sudden turn of events that led to the closure, short of being clairvoyant! We wish Kay well as she and John continue on their journey of healing. The building has been sold (to the Salvation Army) and refurbished and is now Orchard Park Community Church. St. Martin's debt to the Diocese has been paid and the majority of the active people have found their way to other parishes, mostly in the Falls. Canon Jim is currently serving the Port Colborne parishes as Interim Priest in Charge and leading them through a very similar process that he used in the Niagara Falls area (while he eagerly looks forward to his well earned retirement in May '06).

Christ Church

Christ Church has also had its ups and downs. Even though they would be viewed as a "healthy church" with no financial issues to worry about, Christ Church has had its fair share of upheaval during this 5 year period. Christ Church has been blessed with people who have been generous with planned giving and have been the recipient of several large estates. One of which was left them close to twenty years ago and helped them to refurbish their building with new windows, an elevator, a new roof, even air conditioning. The parish has a history of working hard and fund raising, and has a revolving door of activities and outreach projects. In December 2003 the Rev'd Duncan Lyon ended his time as Rector of this parish with a wonderful celebration; the Ven. Ken Cardwell served as Interim until The Rev'd Kevin



Christ Church

Block joined the parish as their new Deacon in Charge during July '04. At that time Canon Powell came on staff as Associate Priest so that he could help the St. Martin's people make the transition by being a familiar face for them; he could also help with Eucharistic responsibilities until the new rector's priesting took place in December '04. Those staffing transitions are enough for any parish to cope with,

added to which there was a sudden influx of hurt, angry, people. Of course, not every one reacts in the same way but it is a difficult time for both the people who are new to the parish and are feeling like refugees when not long ago they had their "own parish" and positions of leadership and responsibility and now they are hurt and somewhat lost, and feel like they have to start all over again. The people of Christ Church (as in other parishes) were welcoming of the new people, but you can well imagine that it is still difficult not to feel threatened and a bit un-easy when so many new people arrive on mass. (I can hear some of you saying you wish it was a "problem" that you had!) Time is a wonderful healer and the story is the same in that many people have settled in and found for themselves a new home at Christ Church with Kevin's capable and compassionate leadership. However, it was evident in January '05 that things were not as hunky dory as we thought. The Ven. Marion Vincett came to Christ Church one snowy, January day to chair a special meeting with the people of All Saints and the people of Christ Church. The topic was to discuss the possibility of All Saints becoming a Chapel of Ease under the administration of Christ Church. Apparently it was a humdinger of a meeting and it was clear that this was not a viable option for All Saints! The reason being that the mix of people from Christ Church and St. Martin's felt that it was grossly unfair for All Saints to seemingly stay open and be unaffected by all the changes when they too had a debt to the Diocese. Christ Church people were wary of taking on the responsibility of an old, historic building that might need lots of repairs in the future (although endowments funds are transferred to the "mother" church). Feathers flew and it was clear that another idea needed to appear on the horizon. With that issue cleared away from Christ Church's plate they have been able to move on and settle down to their ministry together and are doing very well. Together they are working on a memorial garden that will be beautifully landscaped on the property of Christ Church in the shape of a Celtic cross. If the work remains on schedule the garden will be dedicated on November 6th, 2005.

All Saints

All Saints is one of the most historic churches in Niagara Falls and the Diocese having been established in 1820. It is surrounded by a cemetery, and its church hall is at the other end of the street from the church. Being located on Robinson Street means that it sits in the shadow of the new Casino district. Its congregation is mostly elderly (about 30 - 40 worshippers) and of course they are very much in love with their building and all the memories it holds. During this 5 year journey their Rector of 25 years first worked half time in the parish and half time as the coordinator of Pastoral Care for the Niagara Falls team ministry. A year later, the team could not take up the cost of this position and Canon Philip Velpel accepted early retirement and is now an Honorary Assistant at St. Thomas, St. Catharines. Canon Jim Powell and the Rev'd Dan Bennett, along with some lay readers kept

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the services going for quite some time. In June 2004, at the same time that St. Martin's was disestablished and closed, a letter of disestablishment was read in the parish of All Saints. Bishop Ralph gave his permission that services could continue in the parish on alternate weeks with the (retired) Rev'd Brian Burrows presiding. In



All Saints

the meanwhile, time passed and hopefully healing occurred and hopes/plans were made for All Saints to be a Chapel of Ease to Christ Church. As I mentioned earlier that was not a viable option and so it was back to the drawing board. There was also a decision made to sell the parish hall at the end of the street and it has now been bought and sold three times! It is hoped that very soon the most recent deal will close and we will have a cheque in our hands that will clear the historic debt of All Saints. In the meanwhile the people of All Saints have been putting enough on the plate to pay their bills and Brian's salary, while we have had our creative thinking caps on. During the summer of 2005 there were many meetings with the Chancellor, the Executive officer, and the Archdeacon of Brock in order to put into place a totally new concept of a parish administrator. As the parish was disestablished and no longer a parish since July 2004 and had some appointed trustees but no parish council, wardens, nor a rector, it was essential that we find a way to offer some oversight or the congregation must cease to exist. Canon 4.5.7 gives us the opportunity to keep All Saints going for a while longer while we attempt some new and creative ministry which is the vision of Bishop Ralph.

Location, location, location! This is the saving grace for All Saints. September '05 saw a service of disestablishment take place for the parish of All Saints and Bishop Ralph announced that the former parish of All Saints would now become All Saints MISSION. The Rev'd Brian Burrows will finish up his ministry with the people of All Saints at the end of December '05. In January '06 a new person will be appointed as the Administrator, by Bishop Ralph and in consultation with the people of All Saints Mission. Their journey through Advent will be an exciting one as they truly await the birth of something new. This new ministry is made possible by a grant that was approved by Synod Council in September this year. When a Diocesan property is sold there is a formula which says that first and foremost the historic debt of the parish must be paid; next other historic debt may be paid off; and the final third of the monies is available for new ministry projects. There is a lofty job description drafted already, part of which is to look after the people who remain at All Saints with worship and pastoral care; the other piece is to be an evan-

gelist to the tourist area in Niagara Falls. All this in two days per week plus Sundays...may God help the person who takes this on because it is a big job! It would be much better if this was a full time job for at least two years, but again, our finances limit our dreams, and at least we are trying something. This ministry will only stand a chance if it is a team effort. More about this later.

St. John's

St. John's has in fact received about 50 people into its regular worshipping community over this period, from All Saints, St. Stephen's and St. Martin's. We have been blessed with many new faces and lots of talents! The Rev'd Duncan Lyon joined us as an Honorary Assistant along with The Rev'd Lillian Porter and they have both brought skills and support to St. John's. We now have a deputy warden who was formerly at St. Martin's, a Rector's warden too, and a licence lay reader; we see new faces on our parish council and finance committee, as well as Stewardship team, just to name a few. Many people are involved in worship as readers, chalice bearers, counters and the like. The new people have been a joy to receive and a blessing to us all. A school programme that was housed at St. Martin's has now leased some space at St. John's and we are blessed with up to 20 young people (grades 7 - 10) around our parish property Monday - Friday. We are learning some new ways of doing things like garage sales, and tucked away safely is a stained glass window from St. Martin's that was made by parishioners ... and when we renovate the church (soon) it will find a new place to shine and enhance our worship experience. During this time St. John's was struggling with a \$20,000 deficit and the tales of other parishes and closure were certainly an incentive to pull up our socks. At a parish meeting, members of other parishes that had closed had some heartfelt and valuable comments to make and practical help too. We were able to secure a line of credit and not go into debt with the Diocese. This approach also meant that we had accepted responsibility for our own debt and it was quickly paid back and now the line of credit sits there just in case we slip into those difficult financial waters again. At the

how did they feel? Some thought it was fun but I could also plainly see the miffed expressions on the faces of many people in the pews! Well, now you know a little bit what it feels like to be an Israelite - and a member of St. Stephen's, St. Martin's or All Saints! They had to make their way to a new home, not sure if they were sitting in someone else's pew, and adjust to a new pattern of worship, a new time, a new preacher, new programmes...on and on...and you know that we Anglicans don't like change!

Summary

All in all it has been quite a journey, sometimes in the wilderness though never without a leader, sometimes feeling lost and unsure of the future, although never alone. When Canon Jim moved on to Port Colborne last year, I assumed the leadership of the team ministry. The rectors of the three remaining parishes have continued to meet regularly and have built a great relationship. Together we brainstormed a new way of working with All Saints when the chapel of ease idea dried up, and asked the leadership in the Diocese to find a way to make it work. (please). We continue to do



St. John's

things together like advertising, an Easter Vigil, and confirmation classes. We have organized our pastoral care to Nursing and Retirement homes together, including our lay people who share this ministry. We have continued to reach out to the approximately 100 households that have not at this time made a connection with any of our remaining parishes. Each holy season we send a letter of prayer and concern to these households and inform them of our times of worship. There is a divinity student who will shortly begin a project of personally contacting each and every

household to see if we can help in any way with pastoral care or other needs. We are all excited about the prospect of working with a new team member who will most definitely need to "fish in our ponds" to put a ministry team together to tackle the challenges of the new ministry to the tourist area. Are we in the promised land yet? Not quite, but we are looking at it and it looks very good!

I hope that this story will help others around the Diocese. I have not looked up exact figures and dates but know that I am (as near as darn is to swearing) pretty close, - but I have written the story from my heart, and from my head, and most definitely from my perspective as a lived experienced. As an Archdeacon in service to Bishop Ralph I am more than well aware of the state of the nation around the Diocese. I know full well that these conversations are happening in Port Colborne, in Ridgeway, and are beginning in St. Catharines, and the Undermount Region. The Hamilton Mountain is another area that has been on this difficult journey. By all accounts the Israelites were most frequently not happy campers. There was lots of grumbling and complaining ... same here!

Is it better to struggle to keep buildings open or release people to be disciples and carry on ministry? The biblical metaphor that I like the most in this story is that of John 15:2, pruning the vines (and after all, we are in wine country). As Anglicans we experienced a sudden surge of growth in the 50's and 60's and that makes a plant rather tall and weak...Forty to fifty years later we find ourselves in a different land. Now with

appropriate pruning we have stronger and more fruitful plants. That is very much the case in Niagara Falls. Did we do everything perfectly? Simple answer, in hindsight a resounding NO! At the end of the day though we are stronger and more vital than we were before. Our journey of struggle has taken us from wandering in the wilderness, through the suffering of death to resurrection, and now we anticipate the birth on many new ministries. May God bless you as you journey into the wilderness of change. God will certainly be with you every step of the way!



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Children learn traditional Hebrew prayers at the Shabbat meal.

Getting Out of the Melting Pot in our Multi-Faith Understanding

JUDY STEERS

Imagine, as a person of faith, if five times a day someone called you and reminded you that God is greater. Greater than anything you can imagine, greater than any fleeting material or temporal interest or attraction. What if you were reminded each day, five times, to stop what you were doing and thank God, to put your life in perspective and to be humble? How might that invigorate both your spiritual life and your sense of yourself in the universe, and in relation to the rest of humanity?

Allahu Akbar. Those are the first words of the call to prayer for Muslims. The words mean "God is Greater" - God is greater than anything we can imagine. The words are a call to humility. The words do not mean "Allah is greater", that is, to imply that Allah, a 'muslim' god is greater

than anyone else's 'god'. That would be a misrepresentation. The One God is over all and greater than all our imaginings. Many Jewish prayers begin with the words (phonetically written) "Baruch atah adonai elohaynu, melech, ha'olam..."; Blessed are you, Lord our God, creator of the universe... and the words "The Lord be with you" is sure to still the minds of Anglicans as we instinctually respond "And also with you". To be called to prayer is to be reminded of that which must essentially take first place in our lives.

At the Church of the Transfiguration, we took seriously the reality that our children live and are growing up in a multi-faith society. Their 'Religious Education' at public school is limited at best, non-existent at worst. In our Sunday Morning children's and youth program, we took a deep breath and embarked on a journey together to discover the spirituality, faith practice and wisdom (and food and festivals!) of

our close cousins in the faith: Jews and Muslims.

Jewish Roots

Last year, we did a six-week, self-designed program on Judaism. Through the first few weeks, children rotated through different workshops that drew on a variety of learning modes: creative arts, experiential learning, cooking and food, story-telling and drama. We learned about Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, listened to shofar (the ram's horn call to prayer and repentance) and painted plates with symbols of Rosh Hashanah (such as the Lion of Judah - King David!). We gathered around a table for Shabbat (Sabbath) meal and learned prayers in Hebrew. The boys all wore kippah on their heads, the girls took turns in the role of 'mother' to light the Shabbat candles while one boy was chosen each week to play the role of 'father' and pray the blessing over the bread and wine. We ate challah (egg bread) and a thimble-full of wine each and learned the prayers of Shabbat - recited each Friday evening.

"Hey", says a teen suddenly one day in the 'Shabbat' workshop, "This is just like Eucharist - you know, there's bread and wine and someone says prayers, and we light candles". I ask him where Eucharist might originally have come from beyond our faith heritage. "Ohh yeahhh" he says in long drawn-out thoughtful tones. I can see in his eyes that he has made a new connection. One or two children are a little startled when they realize that Jesus was Jewish - (how did they never get that before?) "I guess that makes sense" they say. The Shabbat meal reminds them that we are connect-

ed to one another as children of God, far beyond our parish walls, further back in time than just our Christian story. Some of the children have looks of awe and wonder as they think about this. An older teen thinks it's cool to wear the kippah and takes his role of 'father' very seriously. "We get REAL wine?? gasps a seven year old as we sit around the 'family' table of Shabbat. "Yes, you get real wine in Eucharist too at the altar rail". She looks surprised, as if that never occurred to her.

As the weeks progressed through February and early March, we continued with the story of Esther - retold at the Jewish holiday of Purim. We dressed up in costumes for a Purim party, and made Hamentaschen - three cornered cookies with date filling that are traditionally served at Purim (Hamen, the 'bad guy' in the story of Esther is reputed to have worn a three-cornered hat). Finally, with the delightful children's story-book, "The Four Questions", we shared the traditions and symbols of Passover. We ate maror (bitter herbs) parsley dipped in salt water (to remember the tears that were shed in slavery), charoses - apples, nuts and spices ground together to represent the mortar that the Hebrews used to bind bricks together when they were slaves. We learned the four questions of passover, read the story of the Exodus through the eyes of the culture who lived it and at the end the younger children eagerly joined in to the hunt for the 'afikomen', a piece of matzoh hidden earlier in the meal.

We do these things, not to be 'quasi-Jewish' or to somehow appropriate someone else's traditions into our own. We are not 'Christianizing' someone else's

traditions and teachings in order to make them theologically palatable or give the texts the right 'spin'. We shared these experiences and stories with our children to learn through experience of the rich diversity of practice in the "Divine Milieu", as Jesuit Theologian De Chardin describes the world. We learn about other faiths to increase and broaden our understanding.

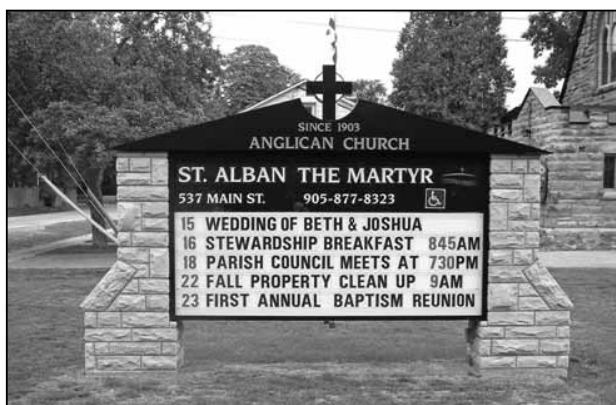
Learning about Judaism was a little easier for us, as one of our priests grew up Jewish, and had the stories, foods, understanding, symbols, 'props' and books, and she could resource us in the planning and preparation of this program.

But the next program presented a whole different challenge.

Learning about Islam

We were eager, but tentative to embark on learning about Islam. None of us knew anything, though we all had casual or work acquaintances who were Muslim. How do we teach this with integrity? How do we accurately and fairly teach about a faith tradition we do not know? We didn't want to merely do this as a quaint 'cultural study', but to engage with Islam as a faith that shares some of the same heritage that we do. We wanted to learn about their spirituality, and what do they have to teach us about prayer, their understanding of God, their faith practices and how that is integrated with family life. We wanted to know, as we had with our encounter with Judaism, if there are things to learn that would enhance our understanding of God, and help us to live our Christian faith with more depth and integrity.

Read next month how we embarked on learning about Islam, and came to a deeper understanding of our Christian faith in the process.




Reaching Out

GRAHAME STAP
RECTOR OF ST. ALBAN THE MARTYR

Reaching out to others has become a way of life at St Alban the Martyr in Glen Williams. We have found (surprise, surprise) that helping those around us that are in need has opened our hearts and minds to all the possibilities of the love of God. We are becoming more understanding that God's love

encompasses all things and people that God created. There are no exceptions. You will find that most days the doors of the church are open. Some lights on and an invitation for those that wish to pray or just sit is readily given. Some have returned on Sunday to worship with us and become members of our congregation. As you can see by our sign there are not many days that go by without something happening that lifts our hearts and

minds to the wonder of the grace of God. On the 23rd of October we are trying something new for us. We are inviting all those that have been baptized during the past two years to come to a Baptism Renewal service. For many, baptism is the outward sign of an inner faith, whether it is parents holding up a child, or an adult proclaiming their faith. It is a symbol of belonging to God and a moment of wonder and joy, a moment to be recaptured by renewing our commitment to God. All people young and old or somewhere in-between are welcome to join us and celebrate that special feeling of knowing that we belong to God no matter who we are, what we have done, or where we have been. God knows us by name and loves us without reservation. I cannot think of anything that could be more wonderful.



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Larry Perks, Long Time Editor, Dies



MEGAN STROHSCHNEIN AND MAX WICKENS

Although he retired as editor of the Niagara Anglican four years ago, Larry Perks kept a close watch on the changes in the paper until the end. Mr. Perks died at his home on Oct. 14.

A week before his death he had discussed the recent changes to the Niagara Anglican with several people, including Publishing Advisory Board member Canon Charles Stirling. Mr. Perks' career in journalism spanned 60 years and he worked on newspapers in Canada, England and Australia. He began as a copy boy on Fleet Street in London, England, when he was 14 years old.

He was editor of the Niagara Anglican for 29 years, taking the paper from a four-page publication to a 20-page paper. Although he originally agreed to take on the paper for one year, he stayed almost 30. He helped establish the Anglican Editors'

Association and served on its executive board for many years.

His expertise in newsprint journalism earned him many awards over the years from the Canadian Church Press and the Anglican Editors' Association. His dedication to communications in the diocese also earned him the Order of Niagara and he was made Honorary Canon of the Cathedral.

Mr. Perks' career in Canada started in Moose Jaw at the Herald. There he became Canada's youngest city editor of that era at 29, and developed what was to become his hallmark - a passion for mentoring young journalists. One of the first beneficiaries of his coaching was future CBC radio personality Peter Gzowski.

He then moved to St. Catharines, Ont., then to the city desk at the Hamilton Spectator, took another brief trip back to Australia, and finally returned to settle down at the Hamilton Spectator in the early Seventies.

Roughly a decade later, he moved to Ryerson's journalism faculty where his reputation for journalistic excellence and mentoring mushroomed. In the 1980s, the prestigious American Press Institute, named him the best editor in all of North America. And his Ryerson graduates still accord him fond but profound respect, even today.

Mr. Perks leaves his wife, Roddie, his children Sara, Megan and Randall and several grandchildren. Service was at Christ's Church Cathedral on Oct. 19.

Thanksgiving

ANNETTE HARRIS
ANGLICAN FELLOWSHIP OF PRAYER

"I thank you lord, with all my heart: I sing to you before all ... I face your Holy Temple, bow down, and praise your name, because of our constant love and faithfulness, because you have shown that your name and your commands are supreme.

You answered when I called to you; with your strength you strengthened me.

All the kings in the world will praise you Lord, because they have heard your promises. They will sing about what you have done, and about your great glory. Even though you are so high above, you care for the lowly, and the proud cannot hide from you

When I am surrounded by troubles you keep me safe. You oppose my angry enemies, and save me by your power.

You will do everything you have promised; Lord your love is eternal. Complete the work you have begun." - Psalm 138. A Prayer of Thanksgiving

As the new day breaks so kindly upon us Lord of life, we give our thanks, and praise you for it. The goodness of the new day, that speaks to our consciousness of all that you give, - life, hope, purpose, beauty, love (to speak of just a few of your gifts). The boundless amazing grace of our Lord Jesus Christ himself, all assurances of your constant love and care of us.

The psalmist lists so much in few words. You strengthen us for all that will befall us. As Jesus himself was strengthened in the garden, when He called to you,

that you might spare Him.

All the earth must praise you Lord. The kingdoms and nations rightly give you praise. When we were so far off, you called us back to you in deliverance by the death of your dear Son. You found a way to speak to us in human form, and the giver of the gifts taught and healed and lived with us, performed numerous miracles, raised the dead, and cried over Jerusalem. He forgave us all our sins.

We must turn to Him in trust, and learn and lean on Him, who was without sin, then we shall come to know Him better, and therefore the Father in heaven,

Holy be His name.

When the circumstances of life beset us, you are still with us Lord. We must be humble in our walk with you, and trusting in your word. Not to grow weary, to wait with a little of the patient kindness you show to us. We ask

again and again for guidance and wisdom, also for forgiveness for hasty words spoken or deeds wished undone. Your generosity and goodness are boundless, and your love is truly awesome, Amazing Grace...

You, Lord of life, have shown us clearly how to live this life, to tread softly here, to call upon your Holy name. To sing praises in all circumstances, and to give thanks always, remembering all that was shown to us, all the promises given.

Honor and might and holiness go before us, truth and goodness are on either side of us to remind us, blessings and love follow us each day, and an amazing future awaits us in eternity.

So let us here remember the lines of Saint Paul to the Hebrews, Ch13 v15:

"Let us offer The Sacrifice of Praise to God". Amen.



Annette Harris

The Mark of the Other: Mental Health in Canada

TESSA RYAN-LIPP

The bi-annual Canadian Community Health Survey, released by Statistics Canada in 2003, paints a sobering picture of the prevalence of mental illness in Canada. The Survey indicates that as many people suffer from major depression in this country as from other leading chronic conditions, including diabetes or heart disease.

The Survey's data also suggests that almost one out of ten Canadians over the age of 15 suffered symptoms consistent with addiction or one of five mental disorders covered in the survey, in the twelve months prior to being interviewed.

However, this may be just the tip of the iceberg. As the Survey uncovered, only about one-third overall of those suffering mental health problems or addictions seek any kind of professional help, largely due to the stigma attached to their illness.

The word stigma, which comes from the Greek, refers to the branding of criminals and slaves, so that their status as members of an underclass could never be in doubt. The journalist Scott Simmie, a feature writer with the Toronto Star, has written about his diagnosis in 1995 with bipolar affective disorder, commonly known as manic depression. In a 20th Anniversary Special Report by the provincial Psychiatric Patient Advocate Office, he

wrote: We still brand people. The physical markings may be gone, but an invisible stamp of 'the other' is often squarely applied to the forehead of someone with a mental disorder.

Every Canadian, whether they realize it or not, has contact with someone who is mentally ill. One in five people in this country will have some type of mental health problem at least once in their lives, and every Canadian knows someone who has been, or will be, affected by mental illness.

Anyone who laughs at jokes about 'schizoids,' accepts the media's broad caricatures of 'crazy people,' or moves to the other end of a bus to get away from someone who is muttering to herself, is complicit to a degree in stigmatizing mental illness, and those who suffer from it.

In general, society has done little to understand or accept people who are mentally ill, to the point where they suffer the type of discrimination that would be unconscionable in any other social group. Sometimes such discrimination is conscious and deliberate; at other times it is unintended, but no less damaging.

Banks may refuse loan insurance to people who have been diagnosed with a mental disorder. Private health insurance is denied to anyone who has attended a psychiatrist, for whatever reason. Landlords turns away potential tenants, because they have a history of mental illness.

Job applicants never make it past the first interview, if they are honest about their medical records. In some cases, such discrimination is against our Human Rights Code. But how many have the resources to pursue a complaint?

Such discrimination may be the reason why two-thirds of all people with a mental disorder do not seek treatment, even though the Community Health Survey indicates that more than 80% of those who seek professional help are satisfied with the treatments and services they receive. More than 70% of those who suffer from mental illness can and do return to a normal life after treatment, as productive workers and fully functioning members of their family and their communities.

The situation is improving, albeit at a glacial pace. Largely due to the efforts of voluntary mental health advocates and through information campaigns-like the current media campaign by the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, featuring prominent Ontarians speaking out about the ways in which mental illness has affected their lives-there has been an increase in public discussion of the myths and misinformation surrounding mental illness.

There is a long way to go before the stigma of mental illness is removed, but there are encouraging signs that the effort to educate Canadians on the issue of mental health will ultimately succeed and the pain of social exclusion attached to mental illness will be eliminated.



Tessa Ryan-Lipp



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EDITORIAL

Lest We Forget...

CHRISTOPHER M. GRABEC

Once again we approach the time when we honour those who gave their lives in the wars of the last century and those who were willing to give their lives but fortunately returned home to live among us.

It is now 60 years since the Second World War ended. Many of those who were willing to give their lives have since left their bodies behind to share in God's peace. There are few left today. Our gratitude is unending though, as we continue to honour both the dead and the living on November 11th.

At the same time, we hope and pray that what was asked of them will not be asked of anyone else. War is wrong - plain and simple. Oppression is wrong - plain and simple. The will of our Creator is that we should live in peace and in harmony with one another and with all of creation. To those who are among us who have survived wars - we honour you and thank you. To those who have died - we assure you of our ongoing affection and gratitude and look forward to the day when we can all be together where there will be no more sickness or war - only peace in the presence of God!

Speaking of the Creator... Whatever is

God thinking about these days? The year has been horrible. Tsunami, Katrina, flooding in South America and now an earthquake in South Asia. This is in addition to the many other global tragedies that have affected and continue to affect hundreds of thousands of people on this earth.

Where has God been? Does our God care? If you aren't asking the questions

then be sure that the folks who have been hit by tidal waves, flooding and earthquakes are. Be sure that their families and friends who survived are also asking the same questions. We can offer no answer in this paper - but we can offer an approach.

As human beings we are faced with death every day of our lives. We would be foolish to think of ourselves as immortal - although truthfully the young (especially) often do think in those terms. Our children die of accidents, cancers and sometimes of drug overdoses. The elderly pass away after contributing to this earth, to their church (temple or mosque) and to their families, leaving their mark of love on so many who grieve their loss. AIDS contin-

ues to ravage Africa and other countries who cannot afford education and medicine. We are beginning to worry about a pandemic flu that could cause countless deaths on this earth. Oh yes, we face death every day of our lives.

This month of November is traditionally a month of meditation upon this mystery. Believe us, it is a mystery. If this author might be personal for a moment, having presided at approximately a thousand funerals, my understanding of death and God's relationship to death

As human beings we are faced with death every day of our lives.

is as unclear as it ever has been. We do know this - November is very important because all we can say about understanding death is that we are open to grace and revelation of the God who somehow redeems this whole mess.

November - a month to reflect about death - so strange, yet so necessary. As Christians, we can only assume that our loving God is not the cause of this pain. As logical human beings we see that we cause wars and that we have destroyed our environment to the point where natural disasters are on the increase. We know that we can do something about this, but we must have the will to do it. Beyond that, we know in our heart of faithful hearts, that God makes it right somehow. When we pray and open our hearts to the reality of the Divine, we

feel the redeeming grace that we experience through our knowledge of the ministry of Christ. Meditation, prayer and discussion with other folks of faith, engenders within us a hope that brings with it the knowledge that God has already conquered the power of death - and that the fear that death presents to us is an illusion - and nothing more.

God does not want wars! Gods does not want natural disasters! God does not want us to suffer the pain of death! God only wants to redeem and give life.

So what does this mean for Niagara? It means that we should seize the opportunity to learn more about the redeeming activity of God in our own personal lives as well as in our spiritual lives. Then whether it's about November 11th or about the disasters that we have faced during this past year - as members of this Church we should see clearly that "neither death nor life, neither angel nor principalities, neither the present nor the future, nor powers, neither height nor depth nor any other creature will be able to separate us from the love of God that comes to us in Christ Jesus." (Romans)

What is God thinking about? We will know this only if we take the time to reflect, pray and internalize the mystery - allowing our God who creates, redeems and lives among us as Spirit, to speak within the depths of our beings.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

JIM WHITTAKER
HAMILTON, ON

Dear Editor;

I wish to express my feelings with regard to the past 'Open Space' Meeting for the Discerning God's Future for Undermount held on Saturday, September 10 at Cathedral Place.

Ever since this meeting took place, I am having some difficulty trying to digest what was said, and just as important, what was not said.

I honestly believe that this meeting was necessary in that the 'Parrot is Dead' catch phrase. However, I firmly believe that our Diocese bit off a little more than they could chew this time. I say this only because of the overwhelming response and attendance.

M.G.T.
HAMILTON, ON

More of the Same is not for Me

Talk around the dining room table the other day moved from the inevitable signs of autumn to Diocesan Synod. There was major concern we would have to face another Narrative Budget meeting or something equally appalling. Last year's budget meeting for our area was beyond imagination. It was something like a cattle auction with the highest prices not always going to the most worthy product.

The chaotic nature of these meetings, and I am assured there were all much

Please don't misinterpret me, this was a good thing. I was amazed, as were others, at the turnout and the potential input. But the forethought for this meeting was truly lacking.

I believe that the Diocese could have guided the choosing of the workshop titles in order to keep everyone on track, for the good of the Undermount region as a whole - 'Whole' being the operative word in this case.

In spite of the above, this was not the case. It was quite obvious to a number of people that one parish attending this meeting came with their own deliberate self-serving agenda which was far beyond anything that I believe to be Christian-like.

On one other note, I attended all the workshops for the time allotted for the day

and there was one person (who attended all the same workshops as I attended) who felt the need to talk the entire time during every workshop. This did not lend any time whatsoever for any other input. As luck would have it, this person had the answers to all of the Undermount Region concerns. This person was amazing! As I was sitting there listening, I said to myself, what am I or anyone else for that matter, doing here today? I could see others in the group sitting on the edge of their seats with some of their own input waiting for this person to take a breath. Unfortunately, that never happened.

In summary, this meeting day was a very disappointing one for me. I could have used this time more wisely doing something constructive.

A few years ago, I accepted the position of lay delegate, for a two year run and thought it an honour to attend the parliament of my diocese. I did the two years and have not been and won't be back.

I am told the finest moment of last year's synod was the passage, by a two thirds majority, of the motion to bless legal same sex marriages after an open and generous debate. Score one for social justice in the Church. If we can come to a resolution in a matter as contentious as this, why can't we deal with all of the presentations and motions of synod in an upfront, reasoned, considered and appropriate way?

alike, transferred to Synod and the failure to pass a budget. Something went seriously wrong here and for our part we are not anticipating attending any more of these events. When the budget came before a special Synod in January, it was presented in a fair and time honored way and passed in the wink of an eye.

Surely this must tell us something about how we conduct the business end of our diocese. We don't need smoke and mirrors. We don't need foolish and poorly presented skits from the ever competing ministries and committees. We do need truth and honesty.

AGNES
ST CATHARINES, ONTARIO

Congratulations on another superlative issue. I understand there are only two or three people, working part time who actually gather and process the items and lay out the paper, as well as a few volunteer writers and columnists. I noted with interest the Journal for October was four pages less than the Niagara Anglican and has a full time staff of seven or eight. Curious!

Niagara Anglican

NEWS • PERSPECTIVES • REFLECTIONS • FROM A CHRISTIAN CHURCH • NOVEMBER 2005

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Let Your Voice be Heard

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

Life on the Other Side of the Collar



JOHN JANISSE

We all know that we've got some challenges in our local Church. Membership and attendance is way down - and in some cases is a mere shadow of what it used to be. A whole generation of people is gone, and their children with them. Some people say a crisis of leadership is partly to blame and others see a pluralistic society as the cause.

In an effort to look at things from a fresh perspective, I decided to talk to a number of people who have two things in common - they are part of those missing generations, and they are all children of clergy. They see a different side of priesthood, and have experienced it in a way that others cannot. Maybe they would have some wisdom, some insight into the life of our Church that may help us. Not a quick fix; there is no magic pill, no clever program that will bring people to flood our churches overnight. It was a simple hope that in reading about their journeys, we may learn something that may help us on our journey.

It's not a scientific grouping; two men and four women whose ages range from late teens to mid-forties. I asked them a series of questions, and waited for their answers, hoping for honesty. Their candor, even when anonymous, is refreshing, and helps us get a look at life on the other side of the collar.

How do people react when you tell them your parent is a priest?

Virtually all of the group experience at least mild curiosity when they tell people that their parent is a priest. Dan Cox, a 20 year old student at Seneca College, and son of Jack Cox, said that when people find out, many think of him as somehow 'inherently holy'.

For Matt (who was happy to talk, but didn't want to be identi-

fied), "The normal response is "oh, that's cool". If they know anything about Christianity they'll normally proceed to ask what denomination I am. The funny ones are the Catholics who forget that priests can marry in other denominations. They give me the "But...Priests can't be married or have kids!"

Emily Wall, daughter of Peter Wall, and in her fourth year at Bishop's University, often gets the same response. She often has to explain that Anglican priests can marry. She says "Their reaction is different if they've met him. They get really surprised that he's a smoker. And some people think that he would have a problem with the fact that I'm gay, but he's really cool about that."

Paula Corfield, daughter of Lynne Corfield, gets a little different reaction. "When I tell people my mother is a priest, first they're surprised, then they say 'oh, a minister', and I reply 'No, a priest.'" It's telling that almost 30 years after the Diocese of Niagara started ordaining women, so many people are not aware that female priests exist. So often, these women clergy have given a fresh (and female) face to the Church, which so many non-Anglicans are searching for. Paula continues, "My mom makes people think twice about religion. Some people are intimidated by it, but they find my mom neat."

As a child, were you very involved in the life of the Church?

"Oh man, was I ever involved!" remembers Matt, for whom church was like a second home. "Church was a major part of my life. I was in the junior choir, sidesperson, altar guild, nursery worker, reader, worship assistant, server, Sunday school supply teacher and probably ten more things I can't think of." He even

remembers times when - too sick to go to school - he would spend the day at work with his father.

Emily remembers moving to the rectory at a parish in Windsor when she was six. "As a child I never thought I was being drowned in it. Most of my classmates also attended church. There were lots of children at our parish, so I fit in. Going to church was never against my will." The family moved back to London when she was 10, and then to Hamilton when she was 14. This last move was most difficult for her, as she had just started high school. "I joined the cathedral choir in Hamilton; it gave me a reason to go to church - which is good."

Wendy Eustace, daughter of Don Eustace and now in her 40's, remembers moving every three to five years. Sometimes the timing was bad, but sometimes it was a blessing. "When things were going bad at school, I just prayed we would move." In Wendy's family, church attendance and participation was not overtly forced. "We always had a choice to go to church, even though we were woken up every Sunday morning."

For Christyn Perkons, youth ministry consultant at the Diocesan Resource Centre, and daughter of Steve Coombs 'involvement' in the Church wasn't so much about doing, but about being. "From the joys and pranks of childhood through the turmoil of adolescence, I have felt embraced by parishioners; always including me, always caring about the small and big details of my life, always part of the milestones of my life, always supporting and affirming me. Even when I drifted away from the institutional Church in my twenties, parishioners continued to "know" me and to affirm me as one of God's own. It was this continuing love of the community that brought me back to the Church in my thirties."

Did your priest-parent bring work home?

This is where priesthood conflicts most with family life. For virtually all respondents, their parent brought work home - or they didn't come home at all. Christyn remembers, "Dinners were often interrupted by parish emergencies and evenings with my father were rare because of the perpetual meetings."

Emily says her dad is "kind of a workaholic. Some people think that priests only work on Sundays, but he's always working on something or other, even when we're on vacation. He's very much involved in his work, which is great, but a lot of the time he's not around. He was not with my mother and brother and I for much of my life, because he'd be in a meeting, or visiting people in the hospital."

Paula remembers her mom

going back to school when she was in high school herself. "She was already busy then; and things haven't changed."

Matt tries to strike a philosophical note, "There's no way a priest can just leave work at the church. There was always one more thing to type, one more sermon to prepare, etc. There were also all sorts of meetings that ended up in what other families might call "family time". Plus, a priest is always on call for emergencies, so there were many nights when we'd hear a phone call in the middle of the night, dad would leave, then the next morning we'd find out who was dead or seriously sick. Diocesan synod had this tendency to fall on my birthday a lot, so Dad often wasn't home on my actual birthday when I was young and my party was often shifted. That may seem like a small matter, but as a child, you notice this kind of thing."

Do you remember any funny/sad/poignant stories?

Dan remembers visiting his father's two parishes with his girlfriend. "One parish knew who we were right away. The other didn't; at first they treated us like we were fresh meat. Then I told them who we were - which I ended up



regretting because of all the attention we got."

Emily remembers a particular story that her dad used around Easter. "He would be telling the story to the children, but it really applied to adults too. I used to cry every time he told the story, and then I would be surprised that one of my dad's sermons would affect me so much."

Christyn has many varied memories: all the dinners with so many parish families, carrying the lantern in a 'most glorious Christmas pageant', 'Martha Bagnall and I being severely chastised after merrily tromping through the newly blooming daffodils' at St. George's St. Catharines. She remembers "the annual clergy children's

Christmas present from the Bishop, and the agony of not being able to open Christmas gifts until after the Christmas morning service."

Wendy remembers a cool guy at high school. "He was interested in asking me out, but he found out that I was a minister's daughter, and backed out. I was really hurt at the time, but now I think it was probably a good thing." Looking back, she also recognizes that she had to do without many things that other children had. "As a kid,

we didn't have lots of money. Dad would say 'we're rich in the way that counts', but that didn't buy

Nike's. When I was younger we would always have dinner together, but then that stopped when mom went back to university."

Later, when Wendy's parent's marriage was breaking down, she remembers doing much of the cooking, and took care of her younger siblings. "I knew even then that they were going to better relationships, but it was still tough."

Are you still active in the Church? How does your priest-parent feel about this?

The majority of respondents are not active in the Church; a trend that echo's our society's habits. While aware of being on a spiritu-

al journey, at this point, their journey is not tightly woven with that of the Anglican Church. Wendy is very articulate about her spiritual search, "At first, it felt totally weird not going to church on Sunday. Then for a while I thought I was an atheist. I now see the Church as a traditional organization that works for a lot of people, but it doesn't come down into the trenches with me. There's too much structure, ritual, irrelevance. It's not that there aren't good ideas, but I live in 2005. There are still a lot of men standing in the pulpits; if I want that I can go to a board room."

Wendy sees the need for spirituality in people around her, and

"like many people, I held my father, 'the priest', to a higher standard of behaviour than other people"

Continued on Page 17

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as a corporate coach, she's taking action. "I'm giving a course on spirituality for business people called 'From Success to Significance'. People need to talk about spirituality, but often they can't in social situations, and can't on a Sunday, where conversation isn't part of the ritual. When I'm



being asked to compromise my values in a certain situation, where is God? I still have many questions, and am still searching, but I just don't find it in the Church."

Dan admits to not being active, although his girlfriend is 'a committed Christian'. "My dad is fine with it; he understands completely. We believe in a lot of the same things, but to be honest, I never have had that feeling of being connected to God when I prayed. Right now, church is not my thing. I don't know if it will be again."

Paula says that shift work gets in the way of regular attendance. "I go at Christmas and Easter, or if there's anything going on. And I drop into the church and visit mom sometimes during the week. Our family is very supportive of each other, and not judgmental."

Matt says he's in a transition period, as he's moved away to university and hasn't found a new parish to attend. At his home church, he's been a youth representative on parish council, and has been quite active in diocesan youth events. "My dad is totally fine with everything I do. After we had to leave his old parish it was hard for me to get involved for a while, but after a year or two, I am starting to get back into it. Dad is great because he hasn't pushed me into anything, and is allowing me to do what I want at my own pace."

As a child of a priest, how do you feel about your parent's job?

While all of group was fiercely supportive of their parent, they did not always think so highly of the parish communities that expect so much, and, sometimes, give so little. Matt is quite vocal on this point. "I have VERY mixed feelings about the position of priest. On the up side, it is an important job that helps many people because a priest facilitates

their worship and helps guide their spiritual lives. A priest is often a friend and counselor when you're in need and is there in an emergency to help you and your family, which we all need sometimes. On the other hand, the job of a priest is a tireless one that turns one into a meticulous workaholic. It adds huge amounts

of stress to your life because of long and crazy work hours that can interfere with family life and conflict with the school schedule of children and work schedule of adults/spouses.

"Furthermore, the priest, while being a friend to those in need, is also the major target for anyone who is dissatisfied about anything in the Church, and thus they get lots of hell from people about everything from communion wine to what version of the Bible is being used for the readings. The worst part is that most of these complaints are trivial and shouldn't be heaped on the already busy priest. Congregations are great to you when you leave, or do a family baptism or marriage or funeral, but they're often ungrateful and unsympathetic to the priest and his/her family when something isn't perfect. And let's face it, with so many people of diverse backgrounds and preferences in one congregation, there will never be a time when the priest can please everyone."

Emily recognizes and supports the calling that her father has answered. "I think it's the place he should be. He has a lot of gifts, and being a priest is the right place for him. It's an overwhelming job, but he wouldn't be happy with anything less."

Many people have suggested that Emily follow in her father's footsteps, "but it's not really for me. I might want to study theology from an intellectual perspective, but I don't feel I have a call. Others have pushed me though, but never my dad."

Wendy was surprised that her emotion was so strong when she thought of her father and his work. "I really admire him; I know how hard it's been. It was tough for all of us. Being poor is hard, and I resented the Church for putting my dad through so much. He worked 24/7, and whatever anyone else wouldn't do, dad

would do. He took it all on - but it wasn't easy for us.

"People were so cruel to him when mom left. People changed from treating him like God's gift to the world, to then a piece of shit. It was then that I realized that God doesn't want a priest to be tortured. I realize now that people put all this on a public person, but he didn't deserve it, and it wasn't fair. To this day, I think dad has it all down; but the Church may not."

What is the most important thing that your priest-parent has taught you?

For Wendy, it's about love and acceptance. "My dad has been an amazing role model. He tried hard to live all his values - love your neighbour as your self and turn the other cheek. He didn't always succeed, but he really tried. He taught me that everyone is human - from top end executives on down. We need to love as many people as well as we can. Being human, we're limited, but we have to try."

Emily appreciates her father's vision of how things can be. "He sees things that can be changed, and he fights to make that happen. He's taught me to be passionate about what I want, and to not give up when there are hardships."

Matt sums it up like this, "The most important thing my dad taught me from his experience as a priest is that no matter what you do, don't give up. If you love what you're doing, it will eventually be worth the work, pain and stress at some point. He also taught me that

you have to be able to "pick which hills you are willing to die on". If you want to fight someone, make sure the victory is worth the argument. This is how he dealt with the parishioners who had stupid complaints, and it got him through over 10 successful years at one

parish, and several years at another."

Paula finds it hard to come up with a single most important thing. "I think the best thing my mother has taught me is to be myself, and not be a blind follower of anything. Be open to what others may say, but be true to myself."

For Christyn, it's the gift of grace. She tells this story. "Like many teenagers, I judged my parents by very harsh standards and I found them wanting! And like many people, I held my father, "the priest", to a higher standard of behaviour than other people. Indeed, I'm sure my poor father breathed a long, happy sigh of relief when I finished confirmation classes without inciting the class to burn him at the stake! Parishioners would frequently tell me how wonderful he was or how much of an impact he had had on their lives. I was baffled by their praise; couldn't they see the flaws that were so apparent to this self-righteous teenager!"

"With young adulthood and then, as I became a parent, I came to understand that the important lesson my parents taught me is that love is not about behaving

perfectly, and love is not about meeting expectations and standards. I came to recognize that love is about recognizing and acknowledging one another's flaws and mistakes, and assuring each other that we are loved as we are, in the fullness of our being.

"I now see the church as a traditional organization that works for a lot of people, but it doesn't come down into the trenches with me"

My father and mother loved each other deeply through mistakes, hurts, and the stresses of life in the

fishbowl of parish life, and they loved me just as I was; from the scrapes of childhood and the battles of adolescence to the errors of judgment and hurts of my adult life.

"This gift of grace from my parents has enabled me to readily understand my relationship with God through a heart of grace, and it has underpinned all my relationships."

It would be simplistic to try and sum up all of these stories in one or two neat conclusions about what is right or wrong with our Church. Most likely, these stories will touch people in different ways, like the way a scripture passage or sermon does. In listening to the stories: the honesty, the humour, the hurt, the loyalty, the compassion and the wisdom of these people who live on the other side of the collar, I am struck with the sense of the sacred, and so am compelled to end this article in the same way that we sometimes hear other sacred stories end...

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IN MEMORY

St. Christopher's Church Bids Farewell to Ernie Francis



On August 14th, 2005, St. Christopher's Church lost an incredibly dedicated parishioner while heaven gained a valued angel. While his illness has prevented him from continuing his many roles here, his influence remains amongst us.

In 1938, Ernie received his first Lay Reader's License as a "Parochial Licensed Lay Reader" under the tutelage of Reverend Gruer Luxton who jointly had charge of St. Andrew's and St. Matthew's on the Plains in Aldershot. This shared responsibility involved some considerable organization on the first Sunday of the month to hold the communion service at St. Andrew's. On this day, Ernie would begin the service at the Beach location and Rev. Luxton would do the same in Aldershot. A hymn sing would then take place at each church while the two switched places - Ernie completing Morning Prayer at St. Matthew's and Reverend Luxton celebrating Holy Communion for the congregation at St. Andrew's. There must have been some mornings when the hymns were very

numerous if the "swing bridge" (the predecessor of the current "lift bridge") happened to be open to allow the ships to pass in or out of Hamilton Harbour!

Ernie and his wife-to-be, Margaret, both lived on the Beach and attended St. Andrew's. For nineteen years, Ernie was the superintendent of the Sunday School there and they remained in that parish until they built their house in Burlington. Margaret had attended Central High School in Hamilton with Fred Eagle and when Fred had some land to sell on "Blue Water Place" Ernie and Margaret were quick to negotiate. It was an interesting point that by building their own home, they could design a kitchen that would be large enough to accommodate the giant freezer that became a joke for friends who saw it as a possible hiding place for Ernie! It was this home that they shared until Ernie went to live in the long-term care facility at Allendale in Milton where Margaret joined him this year.

Fifty years ago, the Francis family, including sons Paul and John, joined the congregation of St. Christopher's but they continued to be in the service of the Diocese. During the 1940's and 1950's, it was to Ernie Francis that the Bishop turned to act as vacation replacement for clergy in Winona, Bronte, Nelson, and Burlington. As a result, there were many people in the Niagara Region and not just at St. Christopher's who recognized "Our Ernie" as a familiar face in the chancel.

For ten or more years, St. Christopher's had a presence at Maple Villa Nursing Home where

a number of teenagers would accompany Ernie to conduct services for the residents. He also was invited to lead a memorial service each spring for those relatives and friends of residents who had died during the previous year. Similarly he led services at Brantwood Manor and the communion service at Christopher Terrace also came under his responsibility as he assisted lay people and clergy. Margaret was kept busy as a wife and mother and as a founding member of the Holly Group, which catered receptions, and the Christmas Market in the early days.

For the mainly teenaged servers who had the benefit of his training and to those of us who were educated in the fine art of projecting and enunciating the readings on Sundays, Ernie was a patient perfectionist who insisted on the right way but with a sensitive gentleness. From Ernie, we learned to "read" the punctuation and to project sufficiently so that he could hear every word at the back of the church - without amplification!! As our first licensed chalice bearer, Ernie brought a dignity to the role that those of us who followed sought to emulate.

Retirement from McKinley Transport allowed him to devote more time to his church as verger. Here in his own words, he "shared the joys of baptisms and weddings... the trauma of sickness, physical disability and death of loved ones."

Ernie Francis was a remarkable lay member of our church and diocese. Why he never became a member of the priesthood was a question to which not even Margaret received an answer although his dedication to his family would have made it financially difficult, if not impossible to return to school. St. Christopher's congregation was truly blessed when the Francis family joined our parish and continue to appreciate the gifts that Margaret and Ernie shared with us - a relationship that flourished in the love of God and in the love for one another.

We Remember Jim Costigan



TRISH MCCARTHY

When I first met Jim, it was at a Cursillo Ultreya at St. John's in Niagara Falls. His face exuded warmth and his smile gave you the impression that you were special. He was so up and positive that Springtime evening almost three years ago that it was contagious. Soon the whole group was relaxed and having fun together, reminiscing and sharing their faith. We concluded the evening with a Eucharist and as he received communion, I could see a deep devotion and abiding love in Jim.

I had the pleasure of working with Jim as we assisted the 40th Cursillo Weekend Team in preparing their spirituality talks. Jim was very tactful in his suggestions and he was clearly well read. He was purposely subtle in his constructive comments in such a way that if a person were really open they would hear the meaning but if they were not they were free to let it slide.

Jim Costigan was a bright light in his service of the Church. He loved to be busy. Jim had a passion for ministry. He spoke fondly of and thoroughly enjoyed having contact with our Bishop, Ralph. He enjoyed Ralph's humour and his energy for the Lord. Jim was very involved in the Niagara Diocese. He served on numerous committees: the (Ordination) Candidates' Committee, the Ministry Support Committee, the Wage and Benefits Committee, the Bishop's Task Force and Brock Regional Council. At the parish level over the years, he has served as a warden and more recently, has been engaged in deep dialogue about many issues with his priest, Canon Nissa Basbaum at the Church of the Transfiguration in

St. Catharines. Jim was one of the Bishop's Appointees for the Order of Niagara in 2001.

In his working life as a personelle officer at Abitibi Paper Mill in Thorold, Jim showed no bashfulness about his faith. He always had a Bible on his desk and people who were struggling often came to have an informal and confidential chat with him. Jim was considered to be a detail man. His tracking of details made life easier for those around him. It showed that he cared.

Jim Costigan often had a look on his face that made you think he had a wonderful secret. His joy in the Lord surfaced from time to time in his quiet humour. Even when a devastating stroke took its toll on Jim's body, he strove to walk faithfully. In fact, through the struggles his thirst for God and truth deepened.

Jim was the type that if life gave him a lemon, he would make lemonade. After his stroke, he formed a local Survivors of Stroke chapter at St. John's in Niagara Falls. He had a servant heart, wanting to share what he had learned with others to lessen their suffering. Jim's collaborative work helped to alleviate the isolation that many people experience who have had a stroke.

While Jim was an ordinary man in many ways, his faithfulness influenced countless numbers of people. His faith in God's plan for others sustained them even when their faith was weak. Jim was a good listener, had a tender heart, and was a wonderful family man.

As we remember and share our memories of Jim, let us remember that he relied on God as his rock. Excerpts from Psalm 27 epitomize his faith:

The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of

my life; of whom shall I be afraid? Hear, O Lord, when I cry aloud, be gracious to me and answer me! "Come," my heart says, "seek his face!" Your face, Lord, do I seek. Do not hide your face from me.

Jim is already missed in the Cursillo movement of Niagara. We trust and hope that he is enjoying the company of other faithful witnesses in God's kingdom today.

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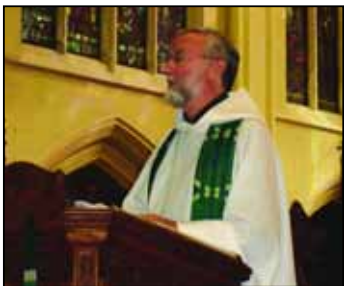
Dean of Philadelphia Visits Christ's Church Cathedral

CHARLES STIRLING

The Very Reverend Richard Giles, Dean of Philadelphia, preached the two Sunday services on October 9th, at Christ's Church Cathedral. He also met informally with a small group of people in Myler Hall on Saturday morning. He and his wife were the guests of Dean Peter Wall and Anne Harvey.

Dean Giles is a leading authority on the design of liturgical space and the reordering of church buildings for contemporary worship. He was a priest in England for some 30 years before accepting the challenging position as Dean in 1999. He has written three books on worship space; *Always Open*, *Creating Linear Worship* and the best selling *Re-pitching the Tent*.

At the gathering on Saturday Dean Giles shared his understanding of contemporary worship space and how these concepts can be applied to older traditional buildings. He is optimistic about Anglican unity and has a strong belief the Western Church is at a point of a new reformation, a rebirth, certainly an upheaval. Old seating and liturgical space are not supporting these kinds of change. The Dean referred to the layout of the average church or cathedral as the 707 model. People are lined up in rows and up front the 'pilot' is



in charge of taking us where we are supposed to go.

His chance to put his ideas into practice came with his appointment to Philadelphia in 1999, a diocese which in over 218 years, never had a cathedral. One was begun in the 1920's, but was stopped by the financial crisis of the era. The bishop focused on an old, large and under-used Romanesque style church in downtown Philadelphia and a new contemporary and vital life began for the old church under Dean Giles.

The Dean spoke of the down side of heritage groups in impeding the work of new ministry in old buildings in terms of physical change. He also noted the Episcopal Church membership's reluctance to change from an English mediaeval concept of liturgy, form and order on the one hand and their amazingly progressive move to open the Church's ministry and leadership roles to both woman and homosexuals, well ahead of most of the Anglican Communion.

There are no traditional red doors, an Episcopal Church thing, at the cathedral, nor does the choir robe or have a fixed space. They sit among the people and rather than perform, they augment congregational singing.



The seating is collegiate style, focusing on the word at the west end. At the east end, in a shallow apse is the bishop's cathedra or chair, from which he speaks, seated. In between is the Eucharistic space, and people move from their seats and form a circle around the altar at the time of the celebration. The renovations were expensive, but the failed cathedral project of the

1920's made it all happen. The old site was sold for a very considerable amount of money and that has been applied to the changes at the new cathedral. There seems to be a lesson in this, if we are to seize the new spirit moving in the Church.

Those interested in discovering more about Philadelphia Cathedral can do so, on the web at www.philadelphiacathedral.org.

A Journey with the SPCA



Carl O'Hoski with Tilly

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when my parents put two and two together and realized the snuffles and wheezes I produced were caused by our family pet.

Despite the stuffy nose there's no doubt that animals bring out the best in me. My patience is infinite with four legged creatures. I've never met a dog I didn't immediately fall in love with or a cat I didn't want to cuddle. So, allergies schmalergies - my husband and I decided to get a dog.

Certain breeds of dogs cause fewer allergic reactions than others. We tested my allergic reaction to the Soft coated Wheaten terrier

that belonged to a neighbour. When I rubbed my face in Bailey's fur I expected to sneeze and develop runny eyes. But no such thing happened. In fact I continued to breathe effortlessly and there were no sneezes. The human Bailey was not bothered by the dog Bailey.

We got a dog. About the same time Seamus came into our lives I began looking for ways to become more involved in my community. Years of working in a job that took me all over the province left me out of touch with my Hamilton roots. I felt a little disoriented in my own hometown.

It was time for me to give back to my community. Because of my love for animals I considered the Hamilton/Burlington SPCA might be a good fit for me.

A volunteer orientation at the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals provided a list of activities that required volunteers. Volunteering would allow me opportunities to work in my community and help animals. By carefully selecting my volunteer activities, I could do help out without exposing myself to any of God's creatures that made me sneeze. And that's exactly what I did.

Over the years since I began with the SPCA I've volunteered in Pet Therapy and administration. I've done everything from stuffing envelopes to sorting the mail. Staffing the SPCA booth at bridal shows has been one of my favourite activities.

My volunteer work with the SPCA has also led me into something I least expected which allows me to use and develop some other skills. Two years ago a position became vacant on the SPCA Board of Directors and I was selected to fill it. At the following Annual Meeting I was elected to the position. My Board responsibilities have included sitting on the Finance Committee, the Hiring Committee when we hired the CEO and later the Executive.

My journey with the SPCA and my community continues. In June 2005 I became the Chair of the SPCA Board. I am proud to be contributing to my community through my work with the Hamilton/Burlington SPCA and I am proud to be the Chair of the Board of this fine organization.

You never know where life is going to lead you. At one time I thought I might be able to help

homeless animals and take a more active role in my community by participating in some volunteer activities at the SPCA. Now I chair meetings and strategize fund raising activities. It's immensely rewarding to know that the shelter animals are benefiting from my efforts and the efforts of the volunteers and my colleagues on the Board. You just never know where you're life will lead you.

For more information about the SPCA, how you can help and how you can adopt a pet in need of a home, please go to their website:

- www.hamiltonspca.com (Hamilton/Burlington)
- www.niagarafallshumanesociety.com (Niagara Falls)
- www.ospca.on.ca (Ontario)
- www.guelph-humane.on.ca (Guelph)
- www.oakvillehumane.ca (Oakville)
- www.lchs.ca (Lincoln Region)
- www.forteriespca.ca (Fort Erie)
- www.uppercredit.com (Erin/Halton Hills)
- www.wellandhumanesociety.org (Welland)

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Order of Niagara recipient David Little is congratulated by Bishop Ralph Spence.



Recipients of the Order of Niagara from the regions of Brock, Trafalgar, and Undermount with Bishop Spence after the service which was held in Christ's Church Cathedral on September 25, 2005.

PEOPLE IN THE NEWS

- Congratulations to the **Reverend David Long**, Director of Human Resources, and his wife, Arlene, on the birth of their first grandchild, Cary Maria, on September 11th. Proud first time parents are Paul and Gen.
- **Barbara Carpenter**, a long-time member of St. James the Apostle in Guelph, passed away on September 21st. Barbara was the mother of Lorraine Steinman and son-in-law of the Reverend William Steinman of St. Catharines.
- Congratulations to the **Reverend Jack Cox**, rector of St. John's, Winona, and Our Saviour Stoney Creek, and Alison McDonald, who were married on October 1 in Winona.
- Our deepest sympathy to **Canon William Thistle**, retired priest of Niagara, on the death of his wife, Ida, on June 2; and on the death of his daughter, Lynn Thomas, on June 10. Please remember Canon Thistle in your prayers.
- The **Reverend Robert Thorne**, retired from Niagara, died on



Bill and Wendy Tyre of St. Cuthbert's, Oakville, recently celebrated 50 years of ministry in their parish.

October 5. Father Bob Thorne and his wife, Nadine, moved to the Kingston area in retirement. He ministered in the parishes of Christ Church, St. Catharines; St. Paul's, Dunnville, including the Dunn Parish; and St. Augustine of Canterbury, Hamilton. Our thoughts and prayers are with the family. The funeral was held on Saturday, October 7th, at Tompkins Funeral Home, Kingston.

- Congratulations to **Archdeacon Laughton Binns** and **Mrs. Marion Binns** on the birth of

another grandchild: Alexander Robert, born on September 9. Proud parents are Rob and Holly in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

- The **Reverend Stephanie Pellow** has accepted the offer to be Deacon in Charge at St. Alban's, Grand Valley, on a part time basis (at 40% time), effective October 1.
- **Don Hains, ON.**, a faithful member of Christ Church, Whitfield, died on September 5. A Memorial Service was held on October 16. Our thoughts and prayers are with his wife, Peggy, and the family.
- **Ridley Doolittle**, a faithful member of St. Thomas, St. Catharines, died on September 12. Funeral service was from his parish church on September 15. Our thoughts are with the bereaved family.
- The **Reverend Gerry Holmes** will complete his ministry as interim at St. Luke's Church, Palermo, on October 31. Archdeacon Fred Gosse has been appointed to St. Luke's, Palermo, as interim, beginning November 1.



131st Diocesan Synod

November 18th and 19th 2005

Carried live on the web:
www.niagara.anglican.ca/synod2005

Keep up to date with the news and events of the diocese

visit

www.niagara.anglican.ca

Bishop's Calendar

November 2005

- 1st, 2 p.m. - St. Mark's, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Women of St. Mark's, Heraldry Speaker
- 5th, 9 a.m. - Mount Mary, Ancaster, Visit to Cursillo
- 6th, 11:15 a.m. - St. John's, Winona, Anniversary Service
- 6th to 7th - Provincial House of Bishops
- 8th - Provincial Executive Meeting
- 13th, 10 a.m. - St. John's, Burlington, Anniversary Service
- 13th, 3 p.m. - Christ's Church Cathedral, Undermount Confirmation
- 16th, 8:15 a.m. - St. Mildred's Lighbourn School, Oakville, Dedication Service
- 18th to 19th - Hamilton Convention Centre, Diocesan Synod
- 23th, 7:30 p.m. - St. James, Dundas, Parish Visit
- 27th, 10 a.m. - Holy Trinity, Fonthill, Parish Visit

Calling all
 Anglicans

Across Canada,
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 by providing assistance to
 children and families affected by
 the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Africa.

We're calling on you to support the
 Partnership for Life Campaign for as little as \$10 a month.

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 Sign up now at www.pwrdf.org/lifetime,
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PARTNERSHIP FOR LIFE
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Call for Poets

- Have you got a poem you would like to share?
- The Niagara Anglican will be publishing a collection of diocesan poems in early 2006.
- Submissions (along with author's name) should be emailed before December 1st 2005 to newspaper@niagaraanglican.ca