



Niagara Anglican

A section of the Anglican Journal

NEWS • PERSPECTIVE • REFLECTION • FOR A GROWING CHURCH • DECEMBER 2006

**THEN THE GLORY OF THE LORD SHALL BE REVEALED
and all people shall see it together...**

Isaiah 40:5



ADVENT LETTER FROM THE BISHOP

THE RT. REV. D. RALPH SPENCE
BISHOP OF NIAGARA

Dear friends in Niagara,

During the past few weeks I have been ill and unable to leave my home. I am hoping that by the time you read this, I will be well again, and able to resume my pastoral duties. This period of illness has given me a great deal of time to reflect upon my life and my ministry to the church. I am certain that you will hear more about this as time goes on. But let me reflect on one thing at this time—the feeling of powerlessness.

It's a strange thing in life. We are perfectly aware of our mortality and of our fragility at least in an academic sense. From the time of my youth, I have known that sickness and death exist, but you know, it always seems to happen to other people. When you have infections that cannot seem to be defeated, you realize how little control we have and how we must rely on the care of others, and above all upon the

grace of God, manifested in his son Jesus, who so wants to be a part of our every day living. I said that carefully. It's not that God forces love, care and guidance upon us, but God truly desires to be of service to us. We get so busy and so tied up with ourselves that we forget the gentle urgings of the Lord and we forget how much we really need God to sustain all that we are and all that we do.

Sickness serves to remind us of our dependence upon the God of all goodness. Of course this brings me to Advent. Like sickness, it is such a time of darkness. Yet in the midst of darkness there is a light; a truly hopeful light of the Christ child who so much wants to lead us along the path of joy and fulfillment. I do not suspect, nor do I hope that many of you will be ill for lengthy periods of time in the near future. But perhaps we can use this time of Advent in the same way. It's a time to open our hearts to the

activity and to the warmth of Jesus Christ who longs to be with us every moment. It's a time to realize that no matter how out of control we may feel, in any circumstance, we know that there is a God who loves us and will gently guide us to peace and fulfillment.

I'm inviting all to journey during these days of Advent toward the light of Christ. Journey toward hope and look in every corner for the goodness of God, the same goodness that was shown to his own Son Jesus throughout his entire ministry. If you open your eyes, you'll see that God standing there with arms open longing to walk with you.

In recent days I have known that love of God and his Son Jesus and I will walk through Advent struggling to be more aware than ever. Please join me in this pilgrimage.

+

Much ado about something



LYNNE CORFIELD
RECTOR - ST. JOHN'S NIAGARA FALLS

I must admit that over the years I haven't really heard any good reasons to have a Provincial Synod. I was elected as a lay delegate in 1994 but as I entered Seminary that year I passed up the chance to go and the alternate attended in my place. When I was considering if I should attend at that time, the people I sought advice from said that I wouldn't miss much if I didn't go, and they certainly wouldn't miss me... I was told, "provincial Synod doesn't really do anything!" So, being the good and dedicated mature student that I was, (alright, geek) I decided the best thing to do was give it a miss and stay on top of my studies.

Fast forward to 2005 and I found myself on the ballot for Provincial Synod as a Clergy delegate and was elected at our Diocesan Synod that fall. In the meantime a lot of water had passed under the bridge, and I had been ordained, served a curacy and a couple of parishes, been the Regional Dean of Brock and am now a Regional Archdeacon. I also had the opportunity to work on the Liturgy Planning Committee for General Synod 2004 and the local arrangements committee and because of that involvement attended the General Synod sessions as an observer. Although I was not able to vote I found attending General Synod to be an exciting experience as the delegates were debating some very important issues. It was certainly time well spent.

Pleasantly surprised

So, having read my convening circular and along with three other clerics, four lay representatives, a youth delegate and our Bishop Ralph, I set off one October Tuesday evening bound for Stratford. I

guess it was finally time for me to find out if this Provincial Synod was "Much ado about nothing?" I arrived in Stratford dutifully prepared, but still wondering if this was going to be a good use of my time. In all honesty I thought that a change was as good as a rest and if nothing else I was bound to meet some nice people and catch up on some sleep. With all the tight budgets and budget cuts that we face each year it seemed to me that perhaps Provincial Synod was in effect 'middle management' and in a business model, this is the layer that can usually be dispensed with.

I am delighted to report that I was pleasantly surprised. The local arrangements committee had done a super job of preparing for the arrival of the delegates. We were seated at pre-planned tables with a mix of people from each of the seven Diocese that make up Provincial Synod (Algoma, Huron, Moosonee, Niagara, Ontario, Ottawa and Toronto). This provided the opportunity to meet other Anglicans from a large geographical area, urban and rural, and to hear about the challenges that face people around the Ecclesiastical Province as they try to keep their churches going in a difficult and sometimes hostile world that does not particularly want to hear our 'Good News'.

How much diversity is allowed?

An opening exercise had 20-25 delegates gathered around a flip chart in four corners of the conference room sharing what challenges they face in their churches. Many people voiced concerns about how do we connect with our youth? Where are they? What can we do differently in order to make our churches more youth friendly? This laid the ground work for us all to listen to many well prepared and informative presentations on topics such as theological education—how do we fund it? How do we keep the needs of theological education before the country?

See MUCH ADO on page 5

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PARISH NEWS

Niagara Anglican - December 2006



MAKING A DIFFERENCE. Six-year old Jasmine Henry, a member of St. James Church, Guelph, holds a certificate she recently received from A Child's Voice Foundation, acknowledging her donation of a 10 inch braid of her hair which will be used to make a human-hair wig for a child who has suffered hair loss. This year Jasmine has learned first-hand about the effects of chemotherapy and hair loss as she has watched her grandmother, Joanne Henry, progress through treatment for breast cancer. For more information on donating hair, visit www.achildsvoicefoundation.com.



Going forward in faith

ST. GEORGES, GUELPH prepares for its 175th anniversary

ROSEMARY ANDERSON
ST. GEORGE'S, GUELPH

From the time the newly refurbished carillon heralds the New Year at midnight on December 31, St. George's Church in Guelph has its 175th anniversary year packed with events to celebrate.

From the Bishop's Levée on New Year's Day, 2007 will bring special music, a liturgical art exhibit, speakers, dinners and entertainment, along with visits from former clergy to make this a special time to share with everyone in the community.

Because music is an important part of the church, an anniversary anthem has been commissioned and will have its world première in a Concert of Anthems, on Friday, February 16. The anthem, "Eternal God," is composed by award-winning composer Dr. Mark Sirrett of Kingston, and will be sung by the Guelph Chamber Choir and the St. George's Choir. The audience will recognize and enjoy many of the old and new anthems featured in the concert.

Another concert of sacred music will be held on Sunday, March 25, at 3 pm, when the renowned Elora Festival Singers, will sing Bach's "St. Matthew Passion."

The highlight of the year will be the anniversary week, April 21-29, 2006.

Archdeacon Thomas M. Greene, rector of the parish, will be among those welcoming everyone to

the church building on Saturday, April 21, for a tour focusing on the stained glass windows and the interior carvings. That evening, a gala anniversary party at Guelph Place will feature dinner and entertainment. If they wish, guests can dress in styles of the Victorian era to add to the fun.

On Sunday morning, everyone will gather at St. George's Square, in the heart of the city, where the first St. George's Church was built in 1832. The Right Reverend D. Ralph Spence, Bishop of the Diocese of Niagara, will officiate at a ceremony with civic dignitaries and then lead the congregation in a procession to the present church which was built in 1873, beside the Speed River. The Bishop will preach at the Eucharist and officiate for a tree planting on the church grounds.

On Monday, April 23, St. George's Day, a carillon and organ recital by Gerald Manning, organist at St. George's, will be held at noon followed by the Eucharist.

On Wednesday, April 25, Craig Kielburger will be the speaker at the church. At the age of 12, the boy from Thornhill, Ontario, learned about the number of very young children forced to work in factories in Third World countries and with friends, organized Free the Children, the largest youth organization in the world.

The following Saturday, April

28, the church will be open again for guided tours as part of Doors Open Guelph, a city-wide heritage event.

On Sunday, April 29, the Primate of the Anglican Church of Canada, the Most Reverend Andrew Hutchison, will preside at the service and wrap up the week's celebrations.

Young people play an important role at St. George's, and on May 4, some 120 youth are expected for the Niagara Diocesan Youth Synod.

Former rectors and curates will be guest preachers throughout the year, but among the special guests will be. The Right Reverend David Ashdown, Bishop of the Diocese of Keewatin—which is 'twinned' with Niagara Diocese—will be speaking on March 4.

Church committees are still adding to the programs, including a very special exhibit of contemporary liturgical fabric art from churches across Canada as well as other internationally known speakers and musicians.

St. George's promises a warm welcome to the community as well as former members and visitors who would like to join in these 175th anniversary events. For a complete list of all church events for the year, as well as dates, times and tickets, visit www.saintgeorge.ca or contact St. George by telephone at 519-822-1366 or email at office@saintgeorge.ca.

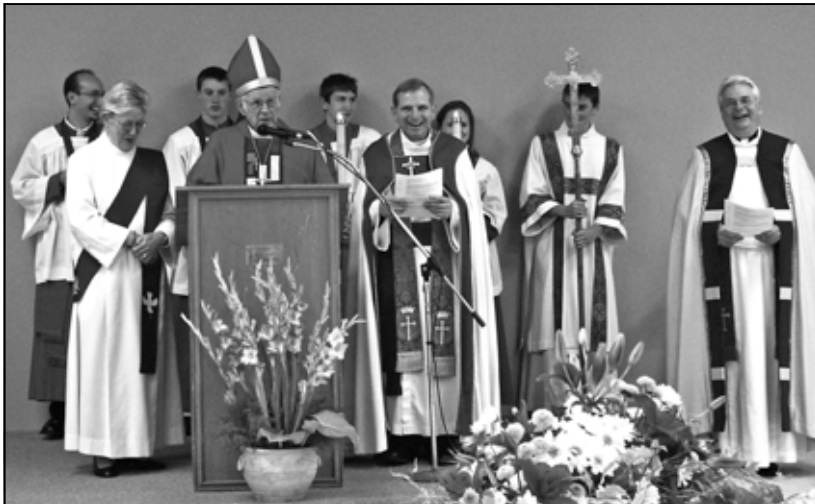
160TH CELEBRATION of the Consecration of St. John the Evangelist Church in South Cayuga. The Dunn Anglican Parish shared Harvest Festival and the 160th Celebration of the Consecration of St. John's Church in South Cayuga with members and friends! The church was beautifully decorated both inside and out. An estimated 160 people attended the service in this lovely frame church, surrounded by lush fields just a short distance from Lake Erie. Many came from a distance, as far away as Florida.

New Books of Common Prayer were dedicated as well as a memorial bench in the graveyard. A luncheon and fellowship followed the service.

The church was consecrated on June 15, 1846 by The Right Reverend John Strachan, Lord Bishop of the Diocese of Toronto. One of the first wardens of St. John's, Lieutenant-Colonel John Johnson became the founder of Trinity College. (Submitted by F. Hill King Treasurer)



INTERPRETATIONS. Some of the 28 participants in St. Cuthbert's adult study group in Oakville this fall pause for a group photo. Participants have been exploring various means of interpreting Scripture with an eye to both understanding what a text meant "back then" as well as it might, or might not mean, today. Topics included Exploring the Historical Setting, Discovering the Literary Context and Audience, Identifying Oral and Literary Forms, Analyzing the Structure, Investigating Words and Phrases, and Putting It All Together. These courses are co-facilitated by the Rector, the Reverend Joseph Asselin and the parish Honorary Assistant, the Reverend Audrey Conard. The parish gets good turnouts for these programmes which are held about three times per year and participants commit to about ninety minutes of private study and reading between sessions.



Build it and they will come

KEITH BRAITHWAITE
ST. LUKE'S, BURLINGTON

Bishops, Priests, Deacons, MPs, MLAs, Mayors, would be Mayors, City Councillors, Parishioners, Friends and Families, all came to St. Luke's, Burlington on Sunday October 22 to help celebrate the dedication of the new parish hall. What was to be the climax of our celebrations, the dedication service with unveiling of a plaque was dampened when the flu bug hit Bishop Ralph so the plaque is still veiled. On the bright side it will give us yet another opportunity to celebrate, when Bishop Ralph can reschedule his visit. Bishop John Bothwell who was scheduled to be the celebrant at the service was called upon to be the preacher, the celebrant and also asked to bless the corner stone. With less than two hours notice Bishop John delivered a sermon that was witty, thoughtful, and paid tribute to the parishioners of St. Luke's and the leap of faith that was made in

so successfully carrying out the Building in Faith project.

Prior to the dedication service the parish had played host to Synod Council, the St. Michael's report meeting, the Affordable Housing Halton's annual meeting and held a variety of parish and community events as part of our Building in Faith Festival.

The celebrations started on Sunday, September 10, when the traditional welcome back from summer service was held in the new hall. During September and October people feasted on pancakes and sausages at a Sunday Pancake Brunch, seniors were entertained by Adam Timoon at a seniors celebrate event, Group A held its annual Victoria Day Dessert and Card Party a little late but just as successful as ever. Other social events included a wine and cheese evening, a Royal Ascot Gala Dinner, a Children's Halloween Fun Day, a Music at St. Luke's cabaret evening and a Family Pot Luck Supper. In addition

to our social events, Dr. Gary Warner spoke to us about "Faith in Action" and the youth of the parish hosted the first Burlington Anglican Youth Event. Still to come are The Great Fall Hymn Sing with the choirs from West Plains United and St. Matthew's, a Parish Retreat led by Bishop John Bothwell, the last Music at St. Luke's event of the season with soprano Rachel Snow and last but not least the annual concert for children in need this year featuring The Three Cantors. For more information on these upcoming events please visit the parish website at www.stlukesburlington.ca.

Although the new hall is admired for its aesthetics, acoustics and modern amenities we have come to realise that the building is more than bricks and mortar, it has become a symbol of the parish's conviction that God is leading us in new directions and calling us to meet the challenges of being the church and proclaiming the Gospel in this generation.

David Davis: Legend and Legacy

FREDERICK L. FORSYTH
PROVINCIAL JUSTICE - ST. LUKE'S PARISH,
BURLINGTON

On May 6 2006 one of the brightest lights in the musical universe was extinguished with the passing of David Davis after a lengthy and courageous battle with cancer.

To have had the opportunity to serve under David's direction in one of his almost innumerable musical leadership roles was indeed a privilege the likes of which I expect will never pass my way again. When I say that, I know that I speak for literally thousands of men, women, and children who have had that same experience. It may have been in the Hamilton Children's Choir, the Christ's Church Cathedral choir, the St. Luke's, Burlington, Anglican Church choir, the Ars Antiqua Chamber choir, the Canadian Male Orpheus Choir, or as a private student. For those who didn't sing it may have been simply as an appreciative member of an audience at a performance of one of these musical ensembles directed by David, or at one of his resounding organ recitals when it seemed as if the pipes themselves were in danger of bursting loose from their moorings in response to the tremendous energy and power generated by their master at the grates.

To say that David injected enthusiasm into all of his endeavours is to grossly understate the man's personality. He was able to virtually energize even the most otherwise emotionally inert amongst us with his sheer unbridled expressions of joy for the sublime and his immediate detection of a dissonance where it ought not to be.

David Davis was not, however, simply a man of music. In fact there was nothing simple about his diversified talents. He brought his vaulted passionate personality to his love of his back yard garden, to his gourmet cooking and gourmand eating pleasures, to his sensitively expressed taste in interior decorating, to his love of a good story and

his infectious sense of humour, to his spirituality, and to his love of family and friends. In my book David Davis was "Renaissance Man" reborn in the 20th century, and yet, in these troubled times, riddled as they are with such global guile, he was literally a man without guile. David Davis was the very definition of a 'man for all seasons.'

Even at the end, David, in the immortal words of Dylan Thomas, "did not go gentle into that dark night." When he realized that his earthly life was drawing to a close he turned his mind and prodigious talent to selecting the music and the musicians to perform it at his inevitable funeral service.

And so it was that on May 10 2006, just when we were all stumbling around in the wake of the extinction of that brightest of lights on May 6, we found it to be rekindled in the most glorious funeral celebration which I expect I will ever have the privilege of attending. It was impossible not to feel the very essence of the Resurrection in the Cathedral during the musical tributes and words of eulogy from clergy, friends, and family. For me, as I sang with the massed choirs, that was the embodiment of the legend and legacy of David Davis to all of us. To see the beauty in God's world, to see the simplicity of it and express it through the medium of music as it was given to us by those divinely inspired composers for the spiritual enrichment of all, to bring an island of peace and harmony to our troubled spirits in this great sea of angst which so often pervades the world around us; this is David's greatest gift to us. Let it not be squandered and left to lie fallow in our own lives. For my part, my fourteen years of singing with and knowing David have forever changed my life, and for that, I am eternally grateful. If we heed his example, his light will never be extinguished and the terrible void created by his passing can become a positive force for the good of all. David's legacy will thereby live and grow forever.



THE NATIVITY ON A GIANT SCALE

PAT PUGH
ST. GEORGE'S, GUELPH

If you attended a Christmas Eve service at St. George's in Guelph, you might be forgiven for thinking that you had stumbled into the wrong season. The church is renowned for presenting the Nativity pageant with giant ten foot puppets. It is more reminiscent of Mardi Gras than of our Lord's birth.

The puppets were the brainchild of The Reverend Stephen Berryman and Pat Pugh but the help of many parishioners was needed to actually create them and to mount the annual performance. For several years prior to 2004, the church had presented a Living Nativity which was a mixture of live performers and smaller puppets. Some of the performers had grown tired of doing the same thing and were asking for something new. They probably could not have imagined where that hunger for something new would take them.

While you still see two human narrators, all the other actors in the play are puppets. There are three different types; backpack, hat-head and mask puppets. Four of the ten foot backpack puppets—so called because they are worn much like a backpack—require the operator not only to wear the creations but also to walk and manipulate arms attached to rods; all the while peering through a small semi-transparent piece of fabric. The hat-head puppets, of which there are two, are worn like hats with enormous veils. The human performers likewise view the world through semi-transparent cloth. The mask puppets are just that; masks which are held in front of the face. These puppets are used by some of the younger members of the congregation who delight in the opportunity to run in the church!

This powerful presentation of the Nativity story makes a strong impact on both adults and children, and is one of the highlights of St. George's Christmas celebrations.

Are you thinking you would like to create something like this for your church? Contact St. George's by calling 519-822-1366 and leave a message for Pat who would love to talk puppets with you!

Marketing and the Church



MICHAEL PATTERSON
DIRECTOR OF EVANGELISM

You may know by now that the Diocese of Niagara is engaged in an experiment of sorts. Through Advent, leading up to Christmas, our Anglican Church will be marketing the true message of Christmas through a series of radio and newspaper advertisements aimed at the broadest audience possible across the diocese. This campaign will involve five different radio stations and a number of newspapers and has been designed to remind people that "the best Christmas gifts cannot be put into a box." This type of advertising campaign has never before been attempted in our diocese and it is something that will, no doubt, elicit a variety of responses from people.

Marketing within the Church is perhaps the most controversial aspect of evangelism and communications for our congregations. People may perceive marketing as the perfected art of pitching products to audiences with subtle means of manipulation, this then causing the unsuspecting consumer to shell out their hard earned dollars on goods or services they neither want nor need. There is a sense that religious institutions should exist beyond the commercial worldliness of traditional marketing and, in fact, should stand in opposition to such worldly devices.

Yet the reality remains, congregations are diminishing, fewer people are regular

members of our faith communities and the practice of faith has gotten lost in our modern culture. People perceive our religious institutions as irrelevant and, more critically, have no idea at all what the message of the Christian Gospel means for them or the world.

We can no longer assume that people will understand or appreciate what the message of the Gospel is just because we are a Church. A good marketing plan can enable us to articulate who we are and what our mission to the world is. It can allow our communities to communicate to those it serves and to the world beyond the immediate congregation. And it can define and articulate specific ways the church can serve a world in need.

Marketing can feel far away from the spiritual sensibilities and foundation that most people associate with religious faith communities. However, rather than trying to get people to 'buy into' the Anglican Church, the whole point of marketing our Church is to present a new means of inviting people into a new life with Christ in the context of a Christian community. It is another opportunity to teach people about the way of and to God in and through the body of Christ that we call the Anglican Church.

There are those who believe that this form of marketing or out front evangelism is not only necessary but is mandated by scripture. Throughout the gospel, Jesus adapts the way in which He proclaims or markets the kingdom of God depending upon who He might be speaking to. When confronted by Sadducees or Pharisees, He would employ a particular style or approach that was direct, specific and challenging. When dealing with the sick and

See **MARKETING AND THE CHURCH** on page 23

Journey to wholeness



IAN DINGWALL
RETIRED EXECUTIVE ARCHDEACON

Being in my early 70s, one of the things I notice about myself is that I am getting quite retrospective. By and large that is a good thing, as long as "one doesn't inhale", as a friend advises me. To look back and see things from the past, but not to indulge too much in "those were the days" but rather to allow past things to stimulate reflective thoughts about who we are, where we've come from and, maybe even, where we are going now.

In that spirit I embarked recently in writing down events and happenings from the time of my birth, 1934, to the present. This exercise was for my own benefit, although I hope that my children and grandchildren will find my recollections interesting and worth reading.

Out of it all, I believe one of my more interesting times was between age 14 and 20. Let me tell you about some of it.

I was born in Inverness, Scotland and lived there until I was almost 14; not a very long time but enough to embed in me a profound sense of being Scottish.

A difficult transition

But in 1948, there came about a huge change. I was the youngest of 6 children and my mother, a widow since the year of my birth, decided to emigrate to Canada and join her oldest daughter, who had married and emigrated as a war bride to Vancouver, BC.

Moving from a small, isolated town in the north of Scotland to the urban center of Vancouver was a huge adjustment for Mum and for me. Until that time, I wore short pants or, on Sundays, the kilt. After my first day in a large high school, I begged Mum for long pants! But the transition was far more potent than school and clothing. Let me spell it out for you.

Mum and I were living in my sister and brother-in-law's home. Warm and secure in many ways, it was, nevertheless, not "our" place and we had to adapt. My brother-in-law, Bob, having returned home from the excitement and turbulence of war, did not settle down well. He soon became addicted to alcohol and so for our first years in Canada we lived in a home that was rife with tension and conflict. To his eternal credit, Bob eventually joined Alcoholics Anonymous and for the rest of his life he lived in sobriety. Those first, though, were not serene.

My sister was completely unaware

Then, my sister Peggy observed that, compared to contemporaries, I was naïve about things Canadian. She felt the simplicity of my Scottish childhood had, in a fashion, retarded my growing up and experiencing adolescence. I was fourteen at the time. She therefore asked her own children's pediatrician to give me some guidance. Peggy was completely unaware that this same physician was homosexual although in a heterosexual marriage and the father of a child.

The doctor invited me to his home and hired me as a lawn mower, which was great, for I then had my own money. Further, he and his wife generously included me in family happenings—cottage weekends, symphony concerts, and social events that included highly educated, socially prominent people. I was introduced to the immense opportunities of life in Canada; I was encouraged to think in terms of extending education to university. This was all very heady stuff for unsophisticated me. Things I would not have contemplated in Scotland now seemed reachable in my new environment.

I was innocent and naïve

However, the downside was that the doctor introduced me to homosexual acts.

At that age I was innocent and naïve, and in my confusion, for some time I submitted myself to something I knew I should reject. Finally I cut off my ties with this man and his family and after a few weeks my sister and her husband pried out of me the reason. They took immediate action and hired a lawyer. Within days, I was involved in a hearing of the BC College of Physicians and Surgeons.

I should mention here my mother. In things of this nature, she was ignorant. I know she was very upset by the whole business, but simply retreated into herself, and told me to do what I had decided was best.

In those days (1950-51) for a charge to have credence in law, at least two boys needed to be involved in testimony. But I was on my own. Peggy and Bob, having started the process, left me, at age 15, to attend the Hearing alone. I remember vividly, traveling on the streetcar to this event. I was subjected to cross-examination by a well known litigation lawyer hired by the doctor and, because I was the lone accuser, the case was dismissed. To be fair to the system, the doctor was given a sharp rebuke. He retired soon after, and died shortly into his retirement.

I found myself in personal despair. I will always be grateful to my lawyer, Douglas Forin, who was wonderfully gentle and caring to me during this ordeal. So about to celebrate my 16th birthday, I found myself alone, quite lost and engulfed in personal despair and confusion.

I tell you all this to share two things

First, I have never allowed that experience to convert me to sexual homophobia. In fact, immediately after that hearing I quit high school and worked in a Vancouver construction company office where the most caring and supportive person for me was gay. He never intruded his own sexual preference on me but, instead, was encouraging as I furthered my education at night school and got on with my new life.

Later I had the good fortune in my early university days of meeting someone who became a life long friend. He was gay but our friendship transcended all the difficulties of my previous experience and, until his death a few years ago, we were the close friends. The bottom line was that although he was homosexual and I am heterosexual that never was any kind of issue in our friendship. He died in 1999 and I still remember him with fondness and gratitude.

Telling you this is my way of saying that I do not consider the Gay Life Style as an abnormality but simply another way of living. Why we need to become fearful and judgmental about such is for me a mystery and I wonder why it occurs. Perhaps it is because so many of us are fearful of anything that is different from ourselves and that we have a somewhat distorted view of God—not as a Loving and Embracing Parent but as an angry being whose first intent is to "zap" those who appear to be different.

Second, I would like to share with you what was my 'salvation' in that disturbing period of my life. It was the parish church of St. Margaret's Vancouver and the Anglican Young Peoples' Association (AYPA). I felt alone and rudderless and I found myself absorbed into a caring and celebrative Community. Ever since that time I have been committed to the Faith Community—not because of Doctrines, Dogmas or Glorious Liturgies but simply through Friendship. And as those friendships developed, so did my Friendship with God and the things of the Spirit.

I hope that what I have shared here will do two things: Affirm that all human beings are the children of God and declare that the Church is a Community and not a rigorously legal and exclusive entity but rather a compassionate, living and loving group of people who are not dedicated to judgment and condemnation but to the Divine Rule of love.

Forget the fuss and worry about all you need to do to get ready for the Holiday Season!

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December 8 & 9, 2006

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Youth leave their mark on provincial Synod

BILL MOUS
DIVINITY STUDENT

Delegates to Provincial Synod met recently in Stratford, Ontario and for the first time youth and young adults were among their ranks! They were appointed as members of Provincial Synod from each of the seven dioceses (Algoma, Huron, Moosonee, Niagara, Ontario, Ottawa and Toronto) which make up the Ecclesiastical Province of Ontario as a result of a resolution approved by the Provincial Executive Council in 2004.

Provincial Synod is similar to our Diocesan Synod, except that it deals with issues pertaining to the Church on a broader geographical level—such as provincial government advocacy, theological education and sharing resources between dioceses.

Urging youth involvement at all levels

In his opening charge to members of synod, Archbishop Caleb Laurence ended by imploring the youth and young adult members of synod to become fully involved in the synod process and urged them to voice their hopes, dreams and fears about the Church to the synod. The following day the Primate, Archbishop Andrew Hutchison, also strongly urged youth involvement in the church at all levels, noting that he had asked all standing committees of the National Church to have at least one person under the age of thirty amidst their membership.

One of the tasks of this Provincial Synod was to elect a Prolocutor. The Prolocutor, or vice-president, serves a three year term and works in conjunction with the Metropolitan, who by virtue of the office is the president of Provincial Synod, throughout the three year period between meetings of Provincial Synod. With the Archbish-

op's charge in mind and a genuine interest and passion to be part of the governance of the Church, Chris Miller, youth delegate from the diocese of Ottawa and a student at St. Paul's University, put his name forward to be Prolocutor. The following day he was elected by synod members and installed at St. James' Church in Stratford as the youngest prolocutor in the history of the Provincial Synod! His election sent a clear message to the Church of the Ecclesiastical Province of Ontario: youth and young adult voices are not only welcomed by the Anglican Church, but they are valued as fully participating members of the Church.

Inclusive language, climate change, poverty

The youth caucus, because this was their first time participating at Provincial Synod, was given time to make a presentation on the last day to the members of Synod. Instead of choosing to make an oral presentation about their experience, the youth caucus decided to put their observations, hopes and faith into action by presenting seven motions for consideration by Provincial Synod.

The motions were wide ranging. One motion called for a student representative on the Ontario Provincial Commission on Theological Education (OPCOTE). Members of the commission admitted that the omission of a student representative was an oversight of the Provincial Synod and that it only made perfect sense to have such representation on a commission that dealt with education. Other motions included the use of inclusive language during worship services at Synod, calls for dioceses to work on raising awareness about climate change and to advocate about poverty issues to governments, and a motion that en-



The members of the youth caucus pause for a photograph before presenting their motions to the members of Provincial Synod. From left: Sarah Brown (Moosonee), Bill Mous (Niagara), Chris Miller (Ottawa), Josh Houle (Huron).

couraged the planners of Provincial Synod tie motions to the numerous information sessions held over the course of Provincial Synod.

A democratic and peer selected process

Another motion entitled "Continued Pastoral Oversight of Post-Secondary Students" called for a taskforce of Provincial Synod to "explore the feasibility of developing a network whereby parish clergy of the Ecclesiastical Province of Ontario could, with the consent of the student, forward contact information to a parish or chaplaincy near the university or college where the student will at-

tend, to enable effective and continued ministry with students who leave their parochial boundaries to attend post-secondary education." The youth caucus felt that there is currently a significant gap in ministry for post-secondary students and that this motion might begin to address that gap.

The final motion that was presented encouraged Diocesan Bishops to appoint their youth delegates on the basis of a democratic and peer-selected process to select a nominee for the position. In Niagara, this could take several forms such as Youth Synod members elect nominees for the position and the bishop selects from

a list of three nominees, or that youth members to Diocesan Synod select a name from among their ranks to forward to the Bishop for appointment.

All seven motions were passed by the members of Provincial Synod.

At the end of the day, the youth caucus at Provincial Synod certainly made an impact on the proceedings. By adding their voice to the discussions, offering a candidate for Prolocutor, and moving seven motions, the youth and young adult members of Provincial Synod responded to Archbishop Caleb's charge and assumed their full membership in the life of the Church.

Much ado about something

Continued from page 1

How do we prepare leaders who can adapt to the diversity of its members? We heard presentations from the Advisory Committee on Postulants for Ordination (ACPO) which is one piece of a discernment process on the journey towards ordination; an overview on the Windsor Report and St. Michael report which address the issue of same sex blessing that will be discussed at the next General Synod in 2007. We thought about questions like, how much diversity is allowed within the Anglican community? On what matters? Who gets to decide? What is a blessing? Where is the Holy Spirit leading us? I found out that on our behalf we have people who challenge the government on issues of water legislation, prison legislation, hospital visiting and the privacy act, cemeteries, accessibility, etc. I was glad to know that someone with know-how takes to time to lobby on our behalf regarding such

important issues.

Archdeacon Jim Boyle, former secretary to General Synod had us consider the issue of church governance. His report had us consider that we are possibly over governed at the parish level, diocesan, provincial, national and international level. We are faced with some hard questions due to declining finances, the heaviness and complexity of church structures, the pace of life. We need to consider the complexity of our Canons, the size of General Synod, its purpose and role, the number of dioceses, the complexity of changing diocesan boundaries to name a few. We were left with an invitation to join in dialogue and discussion, and to dream creatively about what the church needs to accomplish the mission of the church of Christ.

An exciting community

This is just a small portion of some of the information we received and you can read more in Bill Mous' article in this issue, and in the report from Steve Hop-

kins in the Diocesan Convening circular. Needless to say I did not catch up on any sleep during or after the sessions as I found the presentations too well prepared, enlightening and informative, and the hospitality suite was fun. I left the Provincial Synod with lots of information, some new friends from around the province and lots of questions...and so I ask you, our readers, fellow Anglicans in the Diocese of Niagara, if we could peel the lid of your church this Sunday during worship what would we see? Would we see people sleeping or meditating? People at prayer or planning their shopping lists? People listening to God or people listless for God? People singing with heart and soul and voices or people mumbling along with heavy hearts? People leaving with more questions than answers or people questioning why they came? People wondering, "is this a good use of my time" or people wondering how can I become part of this exciting community?

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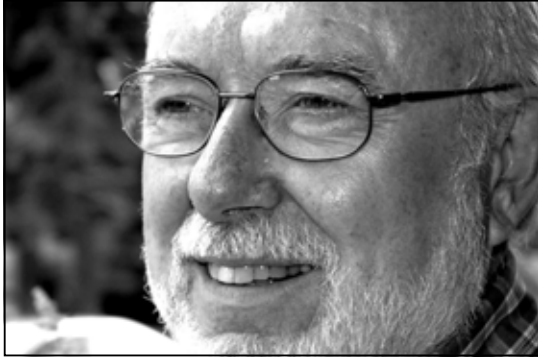
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Stewardship and the future of the Anglican Church



In October the Synod Office announced Jim Newman's retirement from the position of Director of Stewardship and Financial Development in Niagara. Jim had a heart attack in September but is now well on the way to a full recovery. Recently the *Niagara Anglican* interviewed Jim to chat about his 'tour of duty' with the Diocese.

Q: Was retirement for a second time a difficult decision for you?

JN: Yes. I enjoyed working with the staff at the Diocesan Resource Centre; they are an excellent group of dedicated people. I visited many parishes and met lots of wonderful, generous, and committed Christian people, and I learned so much about stewardship. But retirement was the right decision for me, given the circumstances. I'm taking good care of myself and getting healthy again.

Q: Let's talk about stewardship. There's been a long term problem of inadequate revenue in many parishes in Niagara. What have you discovered about that?

JN: I discovered that the traditional approach to stewardship only goes so far. You may have heard me say that we need to develop a culture of stewardship in Niagara. That's been the number one goal of the Stewardship and Financial Development Committee for 2005-2006.

A major breakthrough occurred at Synod last year when delegates were asked to respond in writing to a three-part question. First we asked, if we had a Culture of Stewardship in Niagara, what would it look like? Without hesitation the delegates wrote comments that in summary said:

- Our focus would be on ministry and service.
- Our churches would be growing.
- More programs would be offered.

GOD CREATED EVERYTHING, and everything still belongs to God. Our role is to be the caretakers or stewards

- God would be working in people's hearts.
- Parish needs would be seen as opportunities, not challenges
- We would give with thankful hearts; not out of duty.
- Normal average giving would be 5 percent.
- We'd be working together as a diocese.

That's an inspired description, don't you think? Second we asked, are there barriers to developing it? Once again they came up with an amaz-

ingly insightful list that included:

- The plague of consumerism
- Concern about how money would be used.
- Insecurity about unemployment.
- A deep sense of scarcity
- Uncertainty about the future of the church.
- A lack of sound teaching on stewardship principles
- Need for focus on mission and outreach.
- A sense that the church will always exist and God will always provide.

And then we asked, what two things will you do in your parish in the next ten days to bring it about? Again there were an overwhelming number of responses, which I've condensed down to the 21 shown here. They said they would:

- Preach about abundance.
- Discuss year-round stewardship.
- Write follow up letters.
- Present a clear picture of parish finances to parish council.
- Question how others feel about stewardship.
- Encourage legacy planning.
- Publicize planned giving.
- Renew story telling.
- Articulate mission.
- Highlight accomplishments.
- Lead by example.
- Give a testimonial.
- Emphasize outreach.
- Review their financial position.
- Create a will.
- Increase their financial giving
- Seek God's will for tithes and offerings.
- Write cheques.
- Develop narrative budgets.
- Institute pre-authorized payments and commitment cards.
- Encourage more use of the legacy planner.

A culture of stewardship; in a manner of minutes they had described it, named the barriers to it,

and identified many constructive steps and actions to bring it about. But the barriers are powerful. When one considers that our Diocese is located in one of the most affluent parts of the world, it seems inconceivable that we would have many more parishes struggling than not. And look at the urban sprawl and changes in demographics. One might expect we'd be planting a church or two.

Q: So how do we get there?

JN: I've read many of the books,

pondered the case studies, been to major conferences, courses, and seminars, listened to many of the experts, and belonged to the right professional groups. I've also been the Chair of the Ontario Stewardship Network—a group of Anglican and Lutheran stewardship professionals who share their best practices. All of us see similar problems in our parishes and congregations.

I decided to revisit the recommendations of the experts, starting with David Gordon. You'll recall that the Diocese of Niagara adopted his stewardship program nearly a decade ago. It's based on sound biblical teaching about stewardship that includes the following points:

- God created everything, and everything still belongs to God. Our role is to be the caretakers or stewards.
- We're stewards of our environment, our churches, others, and ourselves. The church is the basic channel for our personal stewardship.
- Our offerings of time, talent, and treasure are offerings of ourselves in our role as stewards. Our motivation for giving comes from the realization

of what God has done and continues to do for us.

Q: So does it work?

JN: There was some interest shown by parishes, but not as much as one would think. Most parishes seem to think they are doing all of this already.

Q: Did you find any other experts with good advice?

JN: Yes, there's a Presbyterian pastor, researcher, professor, church consultant and speaker named Dr. Kennon Callahan who has a somewhat different approach. He says "the churches that do the best in church finances have a rich, full, abiding passion for mission. They are motivated by a theology of service, not a theology of survival. Their compelling, driving spirit is one of a giving, serving, and loving mission."

Callahan gives an extensive seminar called *Twelve Keys to an Effective Church*. The content is practical and his examples are inspiring. One of the most useful points I picked up is that people respond best to three things: compassion, community, and hope.

I THINK PARISHES NEED LEADER-ADVOCATES to create common agendas, to develop effective messages and dialogues, to deliver the right message to the right people, and to create networks of more advocates

of what God has done and continues to do for us.

■ Stewardship is or should be a way of life. But of course we can choose to accept this role or not.

The David Gordon model provided a sound process as well including a Stewardship Chair and Committee, a detailed Stewardship Calendar, Parish Planning Days to update the parish budget about future needs, and a Parish Event to celebrate the response. Initially it worked quite well. But after a few years the David Gordon program lost momentum. The problem may have been related to how it was used. Many Parish Planning Days were poorly attended, and others tended to focus on capital improvements.

Q: What else did you do?

JN: I also revisited the work of Terry Parsons, Stewardship Staff Officer for the Episcopal Church. She presented a workshop called "Seven secrets to amazing stewardship" at the Ontario Stewardship Network Conference in May of 2005. Unfortunately that conference was not well attended by folks from Niagara. Essentially the Seven Steps are:

- Pray: stewardship must be prayer based
- Engage the Gospel: it's more than reading and listening. Engaging means asking yourself what you are going to do about it.
- Rebuke scarcity and claim abundance.
- Say "thank you" to others and God every chance you get.
- Teach and nurture holy habits like praying, tithing.
- Set the example you want to see.

It's difficult to find fault with

I was thrilled to see how well this approach tied in with the work we'd been doing with narrative budgets. Narrative Budgets are a fantastic tool - they focus on telling the parish story about its mission work, and it's true - most people are motivated by that.

Q: So whose advice should one follow?

JN: All of these experts deliver sound advice. It's all scripturally based, it's all compatible, and it all combines to make one completely inclusive stewardship program. But the overall results so far in Niagara are still rather disappointing.

Q: Where did that lead you next?

JN: I considered the approach taken by universities and hospitals. They are exceptionally good at developing funding. For example, McMaster University receives numerous gifts in the range of \$1,000,000. There are more than 1200 President's Circle members who give annual gifts of \$500 or more. And in 2004 McMaster received the largest single cash gift in Canadian history; \$105,000,000! Donor Michael G. DeGroot said, "I am confident of McMaster's ability to maximize the impact of this gift so that its net effect will have far-reaching benefits."

Q: It sounds like you are on to something here...

JN: Yes! Universities and hospitals are using Callahan's approach. They understand the importance of focusing on their mission, and building on compassion, community and hope. They are wonderful story tellers. They also understand the importance of advocacy, public relations and marketing. It seems to me that our

parishes are missing the first of those three things: advocacy!

Q: How would advocacy work in a parish?

JN: Well, there's a large group of parishioners and the un-churched too who form what I call a quiet majority. Probably less than 50 percent of parishioners are aware of all their parish is doing. The competition for their attention is fierce. And in turn, parishes may not be paying attention to what people love and value.

Q: This is starting to sound pretty commercial. Aren't you concerned this is too secular?

JN: No, absolutely not. Remember, "We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous..." I believe our model and reference point should be our own Lord and Saviour.

I think parishes need Leader-Advocates to create common agendas, to develop effective messages and dialogues, to deliver the right message to the right people, and to create networks of more advocates. We have some, but not nearly enough. Leader-Advocates would speak out

on behalf of parishes and their role in the community, ensure there is a positive public perception of parishes and their value, and provide a forum for people to work in parish stewardship and financial development.

Q: So is the overall goal to save parishes or to advance the Kingdom of God and carry out the Great Commission?

JN: It's both! A closed or declining parish is in no position to evangelize and advance the Kingdom.

Q: You mentioned there's an important role for public relations and marketing in a parish.

JN: Yes, "public relations" is about getting the message across. In other words, this is who we are and what we do, this is when and where we do it, and for whom. Marketing on the other hand is finding out what parishioners need, and changing when necessary to meet those needs. Who are you, and what do you need, how, when and where can we best deliver it to you, and what are you willing to support?

Canon Michael Patterson, the Diocesan Director of Evangelism, is doing extraordinarily good work in evangelism—that's the church's word for marketing. He has a whole toolbox of resources, and we are fortunate to have his sound expertise in the Diocese.

Q: How is Advocacy-Leadership different?

JN: I believe there's a big role for Advocacy-Leadership. Traditionally there's been an expectation that stewardship will be the responsibility of three or four people such as the Stewardship Chair, the Rector and

Continued on next page

— RED RASPBERRY HOLIDAY TRIFLE —

Submitted by Carol Summers

This has been a favourite with our family for a few years now. My son has already reminded me that it is nearly time to make the trifle! It is rich but not too sweet. It is definitely a special occasion dessert but well worth the effort. (Submitted by Carol Summers)

Ingredients (Makes 15 servings)

1 purchased angel food cake, sliced
800 g (32 oz) frozen sweetened raspberries
1 cup thawed raspberry-cranberry juice concentrate
6 tbsp Cointreau
4 cup raspberry-cranberry juice
2 tbsp cornstarch
For mousse layer
6 large egg yolks
3/4 cup sugar
1/2 cup fresh orange juice
4 tbsp unsalted butter
2 tbsp finely grated orange zest
Generous pinch of salt
200 g (8 oz) mascarpone cheese
1 cup heavy cream whipped to medium firm peaks
1/2 cup heavy cream whipped to medium-firm peaks and placed in decorating bag with piping tip or in plastic resealable bag with corner snipped
6 fresh raspberries

**Method**

To make the berry filling: In a large saucepan bring the 4 cups of raspberry-cranberry juice to a boil over high heat. Cook until reduced to about 1 1/2 cups (about 10 minutes). In a small bowl, stir together 4 tablespoons Cointreau with the cornstarch. Whisk into reduced raspberry-cranberry juice and cook on medium until juice thickens and becomes clear.

Remove from heat and add the 800g (32 oz) of frozen raspberries. Set aside, and let stand until the berries have thawed.

To make the mousse layer: In a heavy non-reactive saucepan combine the egg yolks, sugar, orange juice and butter. Cook over medium heat, stirring to dissolve the sugar, until the butter melts.

Reduce the heat to medium-low and stir constantly with a wooden spoon until the mixture thickly coats the back of the spoon (about 5 to 10 minutes).

Strain mousse through a fine-mesh strainer, to remove any lumps, into a large bowl. The orange mousse mixture will be very thick. Refrigerate, covered with plastic wrap on the surface to prevent a skin from forming, until chilled, about half an hour.

When mixture is chilled, in a large bowl, mash mascarpone cheese with a rubber spatula, add 1/4 cup of orange mousse and stir until smooth and creamy. Stir in remaining orange mousse and then fold in the whipped cream.

To make soaking liquid: In a small bowl, mix 1 cup of thawed raspberry-cranberry concentrate with 2 tbsp of Cointreau, Brandy, Grand Marnier or orange juice. Stir until blended and set aside.

To assemble the trifle: In a 12-cup trifle bowl or a glass bowl with straight sides, layer half the angel food cake slices on bottom, making sure that only the white, cut edges of the cake are visible against the sides of the bowl.

Drizzle cake with half the soaking liquid. Evenly spread half the orange mousse mixture over the soaked cake slices. Spread 3/4 of the berry filling carefully over the mousse. Layer remaining angel food cake slices on top of berry filling, cut sides against the glass.

Drizzle cake with remaining soaking liquid. Spread remaining orange mousse mixture over cake. Mound remaining 1/4 of raspberry mixture on top of the mousse in the center of the bowl.

Pipe whipped cream on top of trifle to decorate. Garnish with fresh raspberries. Refrigerate 4 to 6 hours or overnight.

The future of the Anglican Church

Continued from page 6

Wardens. But it needs to be much wider and deeper than that. We need parishes full of Leader-Advocates who are working on developing a culture of stewardship. They need to be:

- Supporting, encouraging and building support and awareness incrementally.
- Telling their personal and parish stories.
- Creating conditions that allow others to act.
- Expanding others' experiences and creating memories
- Confirming their identity as Christians.
- Enhancing awareness and appreciation of our parishes and the Synod Office.
- Creating relationships, partnerships, and coalitions.
- Being responsible as leaders.
- Giving generously; at least at the 5 percent level or higher.

I'm talking about modelling a different kind of stewardship. Parishioners who are Leader-Advocates are willing to show that we have something in our faith that, unlike a commodity, has real value. They can visualize their parish as a strong, viable, and valuable institution. They understand that people love their parishes, but parishes can't live on love.

Q: I'm not sure I have the courage to be a Leader-Advocate.

JN: Remember those 'barriers' to developing a culture of stewardship? What points can you make that are more compelling than the parish's tendency to preserve the status quo?

Leader-Advocates are people who combine belief, passion, and courage. They are example-setters, and pace-setters. They use their spiritual gifts and their learned skills. They are generous with their time, talent, and treasure. The reality is - they're ordinary people doing extraordinary things through the Holy Spirit.

Q: What about tools and resources?

JN: We have lots of tools and resources:

- The Healthy Parish Check List.
- The Narrative Budgeting Tool.
- Bulletin inserts and Ministry Moments.
- The Parish Assessment Tool
- The Proportional giving guide.
- The Intention Card and PAG.
- The David Gordon program.
- Terry Parson's "seven secrets."
- The Kennon Callahan program.
- Planned Giving methodologies and materials
- The diocesan website.

■ And lots of assistance is available from the Diocesan Resource Centre, clergy, stewardship chairs, and other parishes.

Think of the competition—there are more than 85,000 registered charities in Canada. The old way of asking people to give "because our parish needs the money" just isn't going to cut it any longer. Leader-Advocates will work in the front lines of public relations, marketing, and parish advocacy. And most of the time there's no significant cost outlay required. The Jamesville Community Centre in Hamilton is a wonderful example. The lack of recreational facilities and community space available to people living in the Jamesville neighbourhood was a concern. A group of people undertook a project spearheaded by Christ's Church Cathedral that created a community centre. None of the partners could have done it alone, but together they were able to put together existing space, skill sets, and resources for use by the whole community. The project was about compassion, community, and hope.

Q: So you're saying we have the tools, but what we really need are strong Leader-Advocates who will keep parishes simmering all year round.

JN: Yes. There should be at least a dozen in every parish, and hundreds across the Diocese!

Q: How would this happen?

JN: I think we have to re-position our parishes effectively and we have to do it soon! A good way forward would be to look in the Diocese for the natural groupings that have a propensity toward leadership—for example, all the people who attended The Leadership Conference on October 28. I expect they would welcome continued dialogue and be supportive of initiatives about developing a culture of stewardship.

It's a simple choice, really. We can continue to do what we've been doing and risk seeing many of our churches decline, or we can change. We can continue to spend an inordinate amount of time worrying about the future and appearing to focus on church politics and scarcity, or we can recast our focus on mission and ministry.

I'm in favour of recasting our focus on mission and ministry. Then we'll give from a theology of abundance. If we do it well, as I believe we can and should, we can be the kind of church that I think God wants us to be—viable, and filled with compassion, community, and hope!

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Once upon a Christmas



CHARLES STIRLING
CANON - CHRIST'S CHURCH CATHEDRAL

When one seeks to remember the things of yesterday, they sometimes get just a little mixed up, perhaps remembering two or three different years as one. Oddly enough this is not terribly important to what one is remembering. It all seems to fit comfortably anyway.

I am at an age when remembering is a good thing and having the courage to jot some of it down is even better. For most of us there are happy remembrances of Christmases past, and it seemed appropriate for me to look at a rather typical Christmas during the years of the Second World War. This was not one of the happier periods of life, but for me it was a good time, marked by the common courtesies one experienced, going about doing one's business in the community, and certainly by a fairly broad sense of patriotism and flag waving. We had a war to win and people put their minds to that goal.

I was quite lucky because no one in our immediate family or friends lost anyone to the war. My father, because of a few minor health and fitness concerns, was at home and doing 'war work'. He was also, in our community, an air raid warden and it now seems so distant to recall that when the sirens sounded, the lights went out until they wailed again. But sound is never erased, just as with the sound of the Lancaster bomber. Once heard never forgotten.

There was not all that much to buy and for most things Ottawa Street seemed to supply most of the needs of a small boy, with a small allowance, while downtown Eaton's, Robinson's and the Right House looked after all the rest. Sadly, none of the three stores exists today, nor in fact do the old stores of Ottawa Street. I really miss them all.

But to return to Christmas, we lived a bit further out in the country, now well within the city, and my sister and I would waken to stockings and presents, some of which I had already found and investigated. Small boys have their ways. Some time before lunch we would go to

my grand parents' home, for this was the centre of the festivities of our small family. We got to take one present with us, so as to play and generally stay out of the way, for this was the day of the great goose and there was much to be done. We also listened to the radio, and I am proud to confess that within my living memory, I began to listen to Dickens's, A Christmas Carol, and I have not missed a broadcast, television show, or a video of this play since. In fact, one of my annual Christmas preparations is to sit down with something cold and munchies or two, and watch again the redemption of Alistair Sim, as Ebenezer Scrooge. I love it!

One year I had received a cardboard fort. It was not large and I was able to put it together quite nicely with my father's help. I had it for years. There were also simple warships and masses of cardboard soldiers. As I seem to recall the warships sailed the living room carpet, while the fort defended itself from their attacks. It was, as I said, a good time for me, for I had lots of imagination and lots of time in the innocence of childhood.

Fairly often on these occasions friends or relatives were invited to the feast, and I have this sense of remembering how I terrified some older lady with my tank, that shot sparks out of its gun, while wandering around her shoes.

The meal was, as always excellent, with the goose and all of the vegetables. There were crackers with hats and trinkets. It is hard to imagine how all this came to be in a kitchen that had a sink in a tiny room at one end and there were no counters, just a Hoosier cabinet and a tall gas stove, and of course the table and chairs. Grandmother was in charge and believe me it was perfect. The dining room was usually jammed with folks and it was a Christmas feast fit for a king. Good food and Thanksgiving were the order of the day.

I don't seem to recall what people drank on those occasions. There sure must have been something, as I recall my father putting the fort together, my sister and I had Canada Dry ginger ale, but after dinner there was sherry and port. We were allowed a sip; however it did not take me long to discover where it was kept so we had another sip or two, when no one was looking.

We were very lucky children and by the time we were bundled into the car to go home the wealth of the day had overtaken us.



Worship with visual aids

JOHN COURSE
RECTOR - ST. DAVID'S WELLAND

We started with the local library's portable screen and overhead projector. During the second year of our monthly Sunday-evening services, we purchased a laptop computer—which doubles as my office computer—and a manual screen for an investment of less than \$2,000. The screen is mounted behind a beam on the right side of the building and angled slightly to allow people from the far side of the church to see it clearly. The main advantage of having the screen off to one side is that it remains less obtrusive than if it was suspended from the centre of the building. When not in use, a pulley system allows the screen to be pulled up behind the beam.

Last Christmas, I decided to project the words of the pageant onto the screen after being told for several years many found it difficult to hear the children's parts. When we began the Eucharistic portion of the service, page numbers superimposed on Christmas backgrounds were projected to help the congregation follow the service. At the end of the service, many visitors and infrequent attendees enthusiastically informed me that for the first time they could actually follow our service. In addition, even our regulars seemed pleased with the use of the screen.

Consequently, I approached a number of our church groups to ask them what they thought of using the projection system every Sunday morning and stressed, in particular, its usefulness in helping visitors and newcomers to follow the service. How many times have we seen such persons put down the books and give up in frustration? Some stated that they were sympathetic to the needs of people unfamiliar with our services and, in turn, asked if I had ever considered the fact that the books are heavy for our own people with arthritis, and many of them cannot flip through the pages as nimbly as when they were younger. It had never crossed my mind. Others told me they were pleased

to find they no longer required reading glasses when the screen was in use. As was the fact that parents holding toddlers lacked the sufficient number of hands to attend to their child and find their way through the service.

As using the projection system every Sunday morning was a fairly dramatic move, I decided to conduct a survey last spring. First, I explained that the bulletin would remain the same, the books would stay in the pew racks, and nothing would be projected that was not in people's hands to assure those wary of such a new development that they could choose to ignore the screen and worship as they had in the past. I also made it clear that, if passed, we would project the services on the screen from September to the end of December of this year and that shortly before Christmas a second survey would be conducted to find out where our congregation stands on this issue. Perhaps I should add that I hadn't even dreamed of polling those attending our 8:00 am service. I had always believed there was an unwritten rubric that read something like, "Trifle with the early service at your own peril." After several of our 'eight-o'clockers' asked why they weren't going to be polled, I decided to risk it on the grounds that they asked for it.

Following an explanatory preamble, the survey consisted of three questions. The first asked how long the respondent has attended our church (visitor, under one year, six years or more). The second established the respondent's age-group (pre-teen, teenager, 20-29, 30-39, 40-49, 50-59, 60 and up). The responses to the first two questions would allow us to see any trends to the answers provided to the last question, which was worded along these lines: "Taking into account visitors and newcomers not familiar with our pattern of worship as well as those having difficulty reading the print in our books and/or following the resources used during worship, how do you feel about having the service projected onto the screen?"

The respondents were asked to check one of three choices: positive, neutral, or negative. Space was also provided for comments. The surveys were conducted during the services on two consecutive Sundays.

I used the screen during service times to show the trends revealed by the survey and to indicate that 97 percent of those respondents attending the eight or ten o'clock service gave their assent to use the screen. By far the majority checked the 'positive' box, and we considered a 'neutral vote' to indicate cautious 'assent'.

Following the survey, we purchased the Anglican Liturgy Licensing agreement from ABC. The CD contains the complete BAS, BCP, and a plethora of resources we scarcely use. The price varies with the size of the congregation using it. At the time of writing, we have used this resource—along with two music copyright licensing agreements to enable us to project the hymns as well—for seven consecutive Sundays.

The first Sunday morning the screen was used, I watched more and more people put down their books, and as they did, the responses and singing became louder and more robust. Now, we find only a few people using the books, though page numbers are still announced to help those who prefer not to use the screen. We have also had two baptismal services since early September, and the projection system has made it so much better for the extended family and friends to follow the service.

Many churches have used projection screens as worship aids for years now, and recently Roman Catholic Churches have begun installing such systems in their church buildings. Based on my experience, I would certainly recommend our churches try to catch up as soon as possible. Hopefully, the majority of your worshippers would thank you for it.

On a closing note, if the bishop's charge were put on DVDs, it would make it much easier for our congregations so-equipped to watch it.

The Reverend
D. Linda Corry
B.A., B.Th., Dip.Min., OACCCFP
Psychotherapist

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Questions about Afghanistan



MARTHA TARTARNIC
ASSISTANT CURATE - ST. JUDE'S, OAKVILLE

Although I try to keep myself regularly updated on our national and international news, there are many holes in the picture I have pieced together of our country's involvement in this battle. While I know that there is a difference between the conflict in Afghanistan and the conflict in Iraq—going into Afghanistan had the support of the United Nations, Afghanistan's government had a documented link to al Qaeda—it seems that there has been a lot of conversation and debate about the war in Iraq and very little about Afghanistan.

Now the body count is getting to be intolerably high, concern is mounting and protests are beginning to rage, and there is still an appalling absence of any probing or piercing conversation about this national issue.

Iraq stories have gotten great quantities of attention from our daily news, they are the subject of bestselling movies and books, and the inspiration for pops hits getting heavy airplay on the radio. We know about the problems that arose when the US and company overthrew the government and tried to impose a vision for operating Iraq that did not emerge from the people themselves. We know something of the economic and cultural destruction that has taken place in that country that is making reconstruction so utterly impossible. The hypocrisy of the United States going into Iraq to overthrow Saddam's regime, when the United States was so much a force in establishing Saddam's power in the first place, has elicited much comment and criticism.

But the United States was also instrumental in establishing the Taliban in Afghanistan. Afghanistan is undoubtedly suffering much of the same turmoil and upheaval as their

economy and culture has taken blow after blow. And there appears to be just as much resistance to the imposing of a new vision on Afghanistan by foreign powers as there is in Iraq.

And these issues don't even raise the more obvious question about Afghanistan: why is the United States not now at the forefront of a conflict that they initiated?

Whereas there was a dramatic lead-up to the war in Iraq, ample news coverage throughout, a great deal of public debate, and many staged demonstrations, Canadians now find ourselves in Afghanistan, losing soldiers—a recent study concluded that a Canadian soldier was six times more likely to lose his or her life in Afghanistan than an American soldier in Iraq—and we are only now beginning to have the conversations about why we are there and what we should do to address the horrifying loss that is steadily tallying up.

These are not easy conversations to have. It is not easy to delve into the reasons behind our involvement without appearing to dishonour the work of our troops, who are no doubt fighting for our country with courage and integrity that deserves to be recognized and applauded. It is difficult to separate the cause—and the rightness or wrongness of that cause—from the persons who are giving their lives to fight that cause.

And so, I write this article, not because I know the answer to any of these questions, but because I have questions. Because I have questions, and because especially in the church, we have a calling to dive into the questions that make us uncomfortable, that do not elicit easy answers, and that lead to conversations that are difficult to have.

We see this calling in the one whom we try to follow. Jesus was always challenging the barriers of who and what was considered taboo or off-limits. Jesus courageously asked people to talk about the places in our lives, collectively and individually, where we typically avoid shining the light. And he was persistent and consistent in his call for us all to "not point out the fleck in another's eye while we ignore the board in front of our own."

We see this calling in our baptismal vows, our renunciation of "the evil powers of this world which corrupt and destroy the children of God," and our promise to "strive for justice and peace among all people." And that is clearly what this conversation is about: it is about structures that are far bigger than any individual person, and those structures are broken. It is about structures of international government, structures of the assumptions and the powers behind nations going to war, it is even about the structures of media that cannot help but to leave large gaping holes in the stories that are told about world events. And although these structures might be bigger than individuals, it is very much in our individual hands to imagine how these structures might be reconstituted to be more healthy and life-giving than the current state of affairs leaves them.

We see this calling in our tradition. We have not been, and are not now, always wonderful at sorting our way through difficult subjects and areas of concern. We get it wrong a lot of the time; we get shrill, we get angry, we get defensive, and we get insulting. But the church has nonetheless operated for two thousand years, has made some significant changes, gone through incredible adaptations, has influenced, critiqued, and challenged society for good and for ill, and has had to make some radical negotiations as it has come to terms with society's challenges, influences and criticisms. Sometimes kicking and screaming, sometimes with hearts burning passionately, the church has been at the forefront of many of the most important conversations of history. We have a lot of energy for some of those important conversations right now, and our willingness to have those conversations bears witness to this calling.

Hopefully in this important time, when lives are being lost, when the major world conflicts continue to divide people along lines of race, religion and culture, when relations between nations are dissolving and souring at an alarming pace, we can have energy for this conversation also.

This is the story of the birth of Jesus as told by Phillip Doddridge (1702-1751)

Hark, the glad sound, the Saviour comes,
The Saviour promised long!
Let every heart prepare a throne,
And every voice a song.

He comes the broken heart to bind,
The bleeding soul to cure,
And with the treasures of His grace
To enrich the humble poor.



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For registration and information, please contact Christyn Perkons, Consultant in Children's and Family Ministries at 905-527-1316, ext. 460 or email at christyn.perkons@niagara.anglican.ca

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An emptiness that God seeks to fill



MICHAEL THOMPSON
RECTOR - ST. JUDE'S, OAKVILLE

"What are we waiting for?" It's the question that Advent poses, asking us to probe our lives at some level deeper than any marketplace can reach. The depth we probe in Advent is a place of longing, the "empty cradle waiting to be filled" we sing of in "She Flies On."

What we find in that well of longing, of waiting emptiness, is something of God—not as answer to our longing, but God as 'noodge', the Yiddish 'persistent nag' who will not let us forget our longing. Because at its deepest point, it is God's longing too, a path God's longing takes into the world. Perhaps God is waiting in Advent too; waiting for us to develop a longing so acute, and an emptiness so total, that God's new Word might stand a chance of being heard above the numbing analgesic racket of our lives.

But the question can come at us another way as well: "What are we waiting for?" It caused me to reflect on the 'doctrine' event with Bishop

Matthews in October. I wonder if the focus on doctrine might not be, at least for some, a form of numbing racket to avoid an encounter with the sort of emptiness that God waits to fill. The separation of the question of doctrine from the question of longing, while allowing us to have a difficult conversation more easily, might prevent us from having the difficult conversation altogether if we are seduced by its painlessness.

The world is not standing on tiptoe

For centuries, the Anglican Church has been careful to hold the tension between doctrine and longing, between something that sounds full and finished and certain, and the 'poverty of spirit' that our Lord commends to us in Matthew's beatitudes. Doctrine can seem to settle things. And settled things leave little room for hunger, Spirit and the kind of newness God announces in 1 Samuel 3, newness that will make the ear of everyone who hears it "tingle." The world is not standing tiptoe to see if we can straighten out our doctrine. The world is standing tiptoe to see if God has something new to utter into the emptiness and longing that—no matter how good the weather-stripping of souls—slips through the cracks into every life. Will we fill aching souls with doctrine? Or will we allow the truth to

be told, that we are longing and we are empty?

And what Word does God yearn to utter into that longing and that emptiness? Do we have a doctrine that God has spoken through the scripture, or an expectancy that God is speaking through it—a breath of Spirit across a reed of witness that yields a Word for us? We know that we need such a Word. The text of our culture is too thin to sustain truly human lives. It is all Report on Business and People magazine, the stuff of the wealthy and the status of celebrities. Or it is just the power of winners to define the game of life so they stay winners.

These texts cannot speak to us as we or others we know and care for stand in harm's way, when we are the harm's way, as we lose our loves, our dreams, our bearings, our lives. This thin text is the thing that turns a eulogy into standup comedy, a loss into a fantasy, and sends every ache in search of a prescription. No, the world needs a more substantial text, a more substantial story, in response to a more desperate waiting and a deeper emptiness than mostly we can find words to name.

Bearing the weight of human living

But God's Spirit cannot woo the world with a brittle text, shattered by the force of our deep yearnings

and vast emptiness, or a brutal text, slashing our soft frailty with its tempered, absolute blade. The text with which we can woo the world, the text that can bear the weight of human living, is a text that is both frank about the harm we get up to and tenacious in its insistence that there is a new creation afoot, in which we and all that lives may enter God's future. We will know the size and shape of that future when we truly know the size and shape of the waiting, longing emptiness at the deepest part of our lives.

In the face of such a hard and holy work—finding and naming the God-shaped hole at the heart of our lives, knowing and naming without fear or shame the empty cradle, voicing the longing that business and doctrine as usual cannot groan into words, the question of what we will bless seems flimsy against that outlandish truth that God blesses us. I wonder why God does that.

Could it be that it is in us, creatures who bear the image of God, and can choose to participate in the mission of God, there is always a chance that we will make that choice? I wonder if God blesses us because trees and rocks do God's will just by being trees and rocks, but our work is different work, work that requires constant renewal of our sense of God's gracious presence alongside us. Work that, as the Spirit

blows across the reed of scripture in our midst, might look something like this: Broader hospitality and deeper compassion.

The Spirit blows across the table fellowship of Jesus, across the fore-ignness of Ruth, across the blustering weakness of David, across the building of Solomon's temple and across its ruins, across James and John jockeying for position, and brings us a Word that blesses us, and that helps us to remember what some, perhaps, have forgotten—that it is not by doctrine but by the Word-made-flesh that we are welcome at the table.

God welcomes us to the table

God knows who we are, who we struggle to become, whom we refuse to embrace, and welcomes us to the table, blesses us. If we knew how deeply that blessing cuts across the grain, how little it has to do with what we deserve, and how much God longs to breathe into our emptiness and longing, we would not be stuck where we are stuck. And God could use us to bless the world.

"Maranatha" is a dangerous word, because it invites the sovereign God to do a new thing, an ear-tingling thing that doctrine will never anticipate. Only a patient fearless probing of the emptiness will help us recognize that the new thing God does fits the emptiness that awaits it.



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Funeral pre-arrangements

HELPING YOUR FAMILY in a time of stress

IAN DINGWALL
RETIRED ARCHDEACON

Here are a few steps which will truly help a family at the time of one's death. It's never too early to look at these issues and to make some decisions. Some may well live to a wonderful old age, but we know that others do not. Take some time and go through this; it really will help.

■ Write down your plans as clearly as possible to avoid confusion when the time arrives for arrangements to be made.

■ Name family member or other person(s) you might wish to name, who will have primary responsibility in ensuring your wishes are fulfilled

■ When you have completed and printed these plans, share them with your immediate family and allow them to respond and give feedback.

■ Make an appointment with the Rector of your parish and share your plans with him and ask for his comments and advice.

■ Choose a Funeral Home, making sure that you are confident with their staff and their approach to your wishes.

Funeral arrangement

When dealing with the Funeral Director let them know that you are in charge of things and that your wishes are priority. Also be positive about what your wishes are.

Be up front about costs. There are options and you should be aware of same.

■ Burial or cremation, and if the latter, what do you wish done with the ashes—memorial garden, family plot or other.

■ Do you wish Funeral Home visitation or at Church or other options?

■ Will there be viewing at the visitation and do you wish an open or closed casket?

■ Public announcement wording and content.

■ Financial matters including Insurance should be clear.

■ After the Funeral Service do you wish a reception or some form of gathering?

■ Do you wish flowers, or donations to a particular charity?

Consider Church Service plans:

■ Will you use the Church or the Funeral Home?

■ Will the Casket be present or not?

■ What kind of service to you want, BAS or BCP?

■ Do you have Hymn selections and/or readings that you would like read?

■ Do you wish all to attend the Cemetery or just family or otherwise?

■ Do you wish to specify speakers at Service (family, clergy or friends)?

Building up the fiscal health of our parishes in service of the Lord



Long synonymous with KFC, members of the Swire family on behalf of the Col. Harland Sanders Foundation presented a cheque for one million dollars to rehabilitate an entire ward at McMaster's Children Hospital.



PETER SWIRE
ASCENSION, HAMILTON

Over the past fifteen years, I have been invited to look into the financial affairs for over seven dozen parishes. Many of them have resulted in visits or the exchange of phone calls or emails well beyond just looking at the records at the Diocesan Resource Centre. In my travels, I have met a great number of faithful Anglicans who relate stories of financial challenges. However, I have heard perhaps an equal number of stories of hope and successes as well.

At the gentle prodding of this paper's editor, I thought the timing

would be right to share my experiences with the wider Church. This article will address some of the common issues involving parish revenues.

A balanced budget can go south

From time to time, wardens and treasurers moan about being in a deficit. Short term deficits are not an issue if there is a plan to address the shortfalls. It is the longer term perennial deficits that pose the greatest concern to the parish, the regions and to the Diocese. We all want to do the best we can but sometimes we don't know how. Perhaps these ideas may help!

Suppose I make the statement that St. Swithin's has an average gift of \$1,000 per year.

Most of you would say, WOW, I wish our parish could be like them! Well, maybe you want to be like them or maybe not.

If I told you that 30% of the

envelope givings at St. Swithin's came from 10% of the membership, your alarm bells should go off! What happens if a generous donor should pass away or a youthful executive gets transferred over 1000 miles away, your balanced budget now goes south!

Now, if I told you that the givings by every group were more or less proportional and St. Swithin's had a balanced budget, should you be happy? Maybe yes? Maybe no? If most of the budget comes in from October through April, how do we fund our vital mission and ministry from the late spring through the early fall? Do you not pay your salaries and DMM and let the other 100 plus parishes pick up the interest cost?

Stronger on the revenue side

Finally, if I told you that the parish leadership at St. Swithin's was held up as a model for the Church with healthy annual givings; proportion-

al givings, reasonable and predictable gifts. If I even told you that St. Swithin's through some good stewardship work balanced their income over the year, you would likely be in awe or jealous of their success. Now, if I told you that 40% of their total parish income was from rentals and fundraising events, does your view change? It should.

So, how can we make St. Swithin's stronger on the revenue side?

If your first reactions are to start a stewardship drive, an every member visitation and hand out pledge cards, you are jumping the gun! Parish leaders should be encouraged to be pro-active in sharing abundance rather than reacting to scarcity.

From my experience with parishes in financial stress, they generally do not have a good understanding of the make up of the offering income. Yes, the envelope secretary can readily tell you who donated what but rarely can tell you the broader giving patterns. Unfortunately, it takes a bit of work to delve into the receipts. For the computer savvy, a simple spreadsheet or data base file can solve the mystery. By entering the weekly gifts by donor and then resorting only by donor, you begin to see how a unique parishioner contributes to the mission and ministry of St. Swithin's. You would be surprised at what pops out from data mining!

A five year goal

In a small parish, about 60% of the envelopes purchased every fall never get returned. In a large parish, closer to 75% of the envelopes purchased never get used! About a third of a parish could be described as faithful donors. Another third are clearly pay per view! Some take envelopes so that they can put something on the plate even though economic conditions result in nothing put in them. Finally, some people give the same amount now as they did in 1960 even though their incomes are now four-fold of what they were then. You will also find

that some people give only by envelope but will donate handsomely once per month.

Whatever your parish donor profile looks like, parishes should promote the ease and convenience of pre-authorized gifts as a visible means to support the mission and ministry of their worship community. It is a no hassle, donor controlled means of year round stewardship. In the ideal world, the amount received from PAP and those stalwarts who give every week should equal the amount that goes out each and every month for salaries and the DMM. Even, if your parish is not there; think of it as a five year goal!

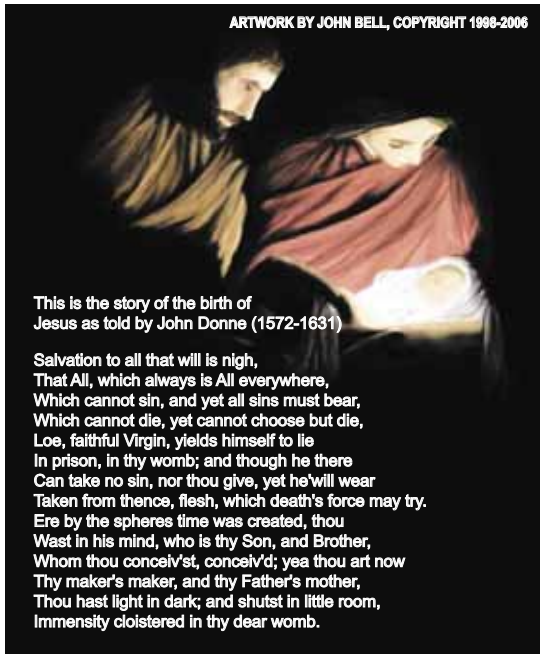
There is, of course, the big challenge. We, as Anglicans, do not like to ask for money. We assume that whatever is in the budget will appear. Most often it does but at the cost of some restless parish council meetings. I have said to some parishes that a good target for gifting is about 3% of gross household income. In most parishes, that would supply all the necessary resources needed to sustain and grow our mutual ministries. While that number may appear high but lower than the Scriptural tithe, it is a reasonable benchmark. However, we often fail to emphasize the fact that a gift at this level will generate handsome tax savings. In effect, the after tax cost of a 3% of gross income is about 1.8% or about the cost of a daily coffee and doughnut!

A parish can lose its charitable status

So, why the focus on gifts by pre-authorized deductions? Firstly, unlike your insurance, taxes, utilities and the like, which are controlled by others, only the donor controls the amount generously given to their parish church. Secondly, it saves money by eliminating the cost of envelopes and perhaps eliminates any line of credit interest. Thirdly, it reduces the seasonality of givings

See FISCAL HEALTH on page 13

ARTWORK BY JOHN BELL, COPYRIGHT 1998-2006



This is the story of the birth of Jesus as told by John Donne (1572-1631)

Salvation to all that will is nigh,
That All, which always is All everywhere,
Which cannot sin, and yet all sins must bear,
Which cannot die, yet cannot choose but die,
Loe, faithful Virgin, yields himself to lie
In prison, in thy womb; and though he there
Can take no sin, nor thou give, yet he'll wear
Taken from thence, flesh, which death's force may try.
Ere by the spheres time was created, thou
Wast in his mind, who is thy Son, and Brother,
Whom thou conceiv'st, conceiv'd; yea thou art now
Thy maker's maker, and thy Father's mother,
Thou hast light in dark; and shutst in little room,
Immensity cloistered in thy dear womb.

— SHORTBREAD —

Submitted by Carol Summers

Ingredients (Makes 12 portions)

200 g (8 oz) unsalted butter
100 g (4 oz) white granulated sugar
200 g (8 oz) flour
100 g (4 oz) cornstarch

Method

Set oven temperature to 170°C (325°F)
Cream together the butter and sugar until light and creamy.
Sieve together the flour and cornstarch and gradually work into the creamed mixture.
Knead gently on surface lightly dusted with cornstarch until smooth.
Divide the mixture in half and roll each out to a circle 15-18cm (6-7")
Place on baking sheet, mark each into 6 portions, prick well and flute the edges.
Bake at 325°F (170°C) for 30 to 40 minutes until cooked but not browned.
Cut into portions while still warm and cool on a wire rack.
Dust with granulated sugar.

This can also be cooked in a shallow oblong tin and marked into fingers. Cut when hot and leave in tin to cool.

Variations

For added flavour add 50g (2 oz) chopped almonds to the creamed mixture or dip the cooked shortbread fingers in melted chocolate.





Make a real difference

SHARE YOUR CHRISTMAS with a family in need

WENDY ROY
DIRECTOR - ST. MATTHEW'S HOUSE

Christmas is coming but it won't be an easy time for hundreds of families that registered with St. Matthew's House Christmas Adopt-a-family program in November. If you, your family, parish or group are looking for a special way to share your Christmas with a family experiencing hard times, St. Matthew's House offers you an opportunity to make a real difference.

Last year St. Matthew's House Christmas program helped 4,273 family members and individuals. Based on the growing numbers of families suffering from the impact of poverty in Hamilton (at least one in five), unemployment, and financial hardships, we expect to help even more families to enjoy a happier Christmas. Too many of them are at risk of becoming homeless. Ways you can sponsor a family include:

- Provide the food for Christmas dinner for a family.
- Provide new unwrapped toys for children or gifts for teenagers.

St. Matthew's House suggests

gift certificates from A&P, The Barn, Fortino's or No Frills to cover the cost of meat. You can also supply potatoes, vegetables and dessert.

As a suggested guideline, you should be able to sponsor a family of four for 150-175 dollars.

St. Matthew's House provides sponsors with first names of family members, plus ages and sizes of children. Sponsors will bring the food and gifts to the Christmas program site located at: Wentworth Campus, Mohawk College, 196 Wentworth St. North, Hamilton on December 12, 13 and 14 for distribution to families.

Families registered at St. Matthew's House are eligible for assistance from only one agency, thereby avoiding duplication.

Please call Debra House at the Christmas Program at 905-522-4584 if you wish to sponsor a family or to obtain more information. Thank you for remembering children and families most in need at St. Matthew's House this Christmas. We send our best wishes for every blessing at Christmas to you and yours.



Coins for Cuba

CONTINUING OUR MISSION FROM LAST MONTH

JOHN PAGE
OUTREACH COORDINATOR

The height of our Cuban visit was to have the opportunity of sharing Communion with our Cuban brothers and sisters in that small mission church in Jobabo. And I can truly attest for all of those who went on this trip from Grace Church this cemented a relationship and created a bond that will never be broken.

The idea of supporting the Episcopal Church of Cuba, while certainly nothing new, is something that every Anglican Church in Canada is able to do by simply emulating the method tried and proven by Grace Anglican Church in Milton. This concept has been shared with the Niagara Diocesan Outreach Committee as well as the Primate's Office in Toronto. These two, together with my own parish in Milton and the experience of the trip to Cuba were the inspiration to take this project nation-wide.

How will this be achieved? I wonder if the Lord ever realized the potential impact of the internet. While so much negative information is disseminated over the world wide web I firmly believe it is also a tool that can bring together mighty global forces that can and will benefit the human race. This is certainly true for the Coins for Cuba web site, www.coins-forcuba.ca.

The focus for the Coins for Cuba web site is to raise awareness of the needs of the Episcopal Church in Cuba, congregations, clergy and church buildings. As an off-shoot Coins for Cuba will also look at ways and means to support Cuban students in seminary and studying towards ordination in the Episcopal Church of Cuba.

The Anglican Church of Canada has long supported the Episcopal Church of Cuba and a number of congregations have and continue to pray for and provide material support for Episcopal parishes in Cuba. Now, through the efforts of this site, we desire to recognise ongoing efforts and to significantly build that level of support. In Cuba at this time there are just over twenty ordained clergy, including the Bishop of Cuba, serving 10,000 worshippers in 34 distinct parishes. At this time, the site covers the following areas:

- The concept for this initiative.
- The History of the Episcopal Church in Cuba.
- A comprehensive list of clergy, parishes and the communities in which they are located.
- An On-Line form to register your congregation.
- A list of clergy and parishes together with their supporting Canadian churches.

The method used at my home parish of Grace Church, Milton, Ontario was so very simple and certainly not unique as a fund raiser, but one that helped us achieve our goals while still maintaining our other parish outreach projects. In fact, with greater awareness of the needs beyond our parish giving to such projects actually increased and we believe that in return our parish has itself been blessed.

Between late 2004 and the end of 2005 approximately \$2,200 in loose coins was collected. Of this amount the Grace Outreach Committee allocated \$1,600 to go towards the renovations required at the San Pedro mission church. The renovations include a new roof, new window shutters and a fresh coat of paint.

I was aware of the plans for our Canadian Primate to visit Cuba to be present for the Diocese of Cuba's annual Synod in early February 2006. Contact was made with the Primate's office and the funds we had collected are now safely being held by the Bishop of Cuba for the time when the renovations at San Pedro can take place.

The goal of the Coins for Cuba project is to recruit at least 100 Anglican churches in Canada willing to match or surpass the level of funding raised by Grace church. Once this target is achieved we will be able to provide the Diocese of Cuba, through our Primate's office, a minimum of \$200,000 per year.

The use of the funds raised would be placed at the discretion of the Bishop of Cuba and could be applied to a number of needy projects:

- Renovations to church and mission buildings;
- The provision of supplies to enhance worship services;
- To help support theological students studying in Cuba;
- To help support the Seminario Evangelico de Teologia in Matanzas, Cuba

Once our target is reached it is our prayer that we will be able to duplicate our efforts in support the Episcopal Church in many other Central and South American countries.

The funds for the Coins for Cuba web site were provided jointly by Grace Anglican Church and the Niagara Diocesan Outreach Committee. Blessings and thanks to both.

And now I've got only one more thing to say: Ladies and Gentlemen, start counting your coins!

Donations can be made to:

St. Matthew's House Christmas Adopt-a-family Program
St. Matthew's House
414 Barton Street East
Hamilton, Ontario L8L 2Y3

Income tax receipts will be provided.

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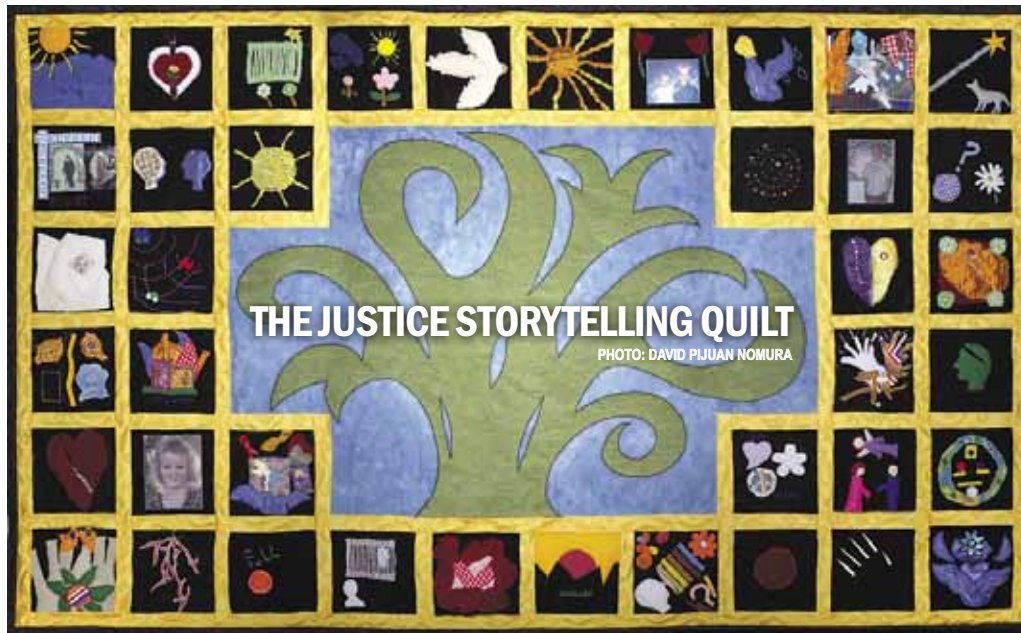
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Insurance and risk management committee
Investment committee

Audit committee

For information please contact Bob McKinnell, the diocesan treasurer, at robert.mckinnell@niagara.anglican.ca or by dialing 905-527-1316 (ext. 520)



COLLEEN SYM
SOCIAL JUSTICE COORDINATOR

Last month I attended a fundraiser in support of an outreach program. Part of the evening was devoted to an auction of Mennonite quilts that had been donated to help raise money. However, the most impressive quilt I saw that night, you could not bid on. Its value was "priceless." This was the "Justice Storytelling Quilt."

The quilt was the result of a project sponsored by the Church Council on Justice and Corrections. The Church Council on Justice and Corrections is a national faith-based coalition of eleven founding churches, created in 1974, to promote a restorative approach to justice with an emphasis on addressing the needs of victims and offenders, mutual respect, healing, individual accountability, community involvement and crime prevention. The Anglican Church of Canada is a member of the Council.

Restorative justice is based on a vision of justice that heals and restores. It is based on an understanding that crime is a violation of people and relationships and that justice is served when those most directly involved in an offence are given opportunities to redress the harm caused.

Produced by victims and offenders

Meagan O'Shea, a multi-media artist and performer, interviewed and worked with each participant in the project to create the quilt patches and help them tell their story. Stories include those of the parents of a son who killed their daughter, the mother who survived an attack by her son after he murdered her two other children, the wife of a man killed by a teenager.

In all there are forty stories told in the blocks of the quilt. Each patch of the "Justice Storytelling Quilt" is a symbolic descriptive image produced by both victims and offenders from

across Canada. A touch on any patch activates a two minute audio testimony by its designer describing the criminal event that took place in his or her life, what happened and how it felt.

Dave Nomura, a Toronto computer artist who specializes in interactive media, wired the quilt.

The quilting of the textile was done by Susannah and David Shantz. David is a Protestant Chaplain in the Quebec prisons. Through the Mennonite community he and Susannah became involved in victim-offender encounters and it is also through the Mennonite community that they inherited the art of quilting.

A flyer describing the quilt explains

"A quilt reminds us of comfort, warmth and security. It protects us from the cold and hostile elements. There was a time when quilts were made from the scraps of material left over from sewing dresses and shirts. There was also the delight of seeing how these pieces could be put together to make a beautiful artistic design.

These concepts are also found in this quilt. It tells the stories of forty very sorrowful and horrifying events and has a way of bringing us together as a community. Since quilts represent a safe place, we find courage to listen to people share the details of the murder of a family member. The artistic image helps to portray the violence in an unthreatening manner. Just as the scraps have purpose and meaning when they are pieced together, so the wounded bits and shattered pieces of our lives can be brought together to project a powerful and peaceful message of forgiveness and reconciliation.

The purpose of the quilt is not primarily to sensitize us to the pain of victims and offenders which could make us very angry and vindictive. It is designed, rather, to bring us together so that we may empathize with the suffering, hope and courage of victims and offenders."

Restorative Justice Week

Each year in November, Corrections Canada sponsors a Restorative Justice Week. The quilt was unveiled as part of the ceremonies in 2005. A sermon prepared for this year by the Church Council on Justice and Corrections guides us on how we can foster true justice:

■ By truly living together in community and caring for the whole as much as for ourselves as individuals.

■ By seeing things from a new perspective. We do this by widening the circle to get more diverse opinions and perspectives, and by giving these new perspectives due consideration.

■ By turning the world upside down, as Jesus did. In Matthew 20:16 we read, "So the last will be first, and the first will be last." We take ourselves much too seriously and are personally offended if we believe that life has treated us unfairly.

■ By asking the question, "Even if I have not received all that I believe I should, do I have enough?" Is God truly merciful and just?

■ By learning more about our neighbour. We can only truly know ourselves through our being in relationship to others. If our immediate circle is narrow, our perceptions of ourselves will also be narrow.

■ By forming new, creative partnerships and acting together to ensure that God's will is indeed done, here on earth—thus bringing the Reign of God, the Peaceable Kingdom and true justice closer to a lived reality on earth.

In 2007 Restorative Justice Week is November 18-25. To have the Justice Storytelling Quilt displayed in your community contact the Church Council on Justice and Corrections. Or better yet, if there are issues of conflict in your community or simply to build community, think about your own quilting bee to work towards reconciliation and forgiveness or inclusion and diversity.

A LITANY FOR RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

From A Justice That Heals and Restores: A resource on restorative justice jointly produced by the Church Council on Justice and Corrections and the Anglican Diocese of Toronto's Working Group on Restorative Justice in collaboration with the EcoJustice Committee of the Anglican Church of Canada. A Decade to Overcome Violence project. September 2005.

Holy and incarnate one
who longs to set the prisoner free
and to heal the broken hearted:
We pray for our brothers and sisters
who are offenders,
who stand accused in our courts and
who serve time in our prisons.

Let justice roll down like waters,
And righteousness like an ever flowing
stream.

We pray for our brothers and sisters
who are victims of crime,
and who, like many victims, are re-
victimized
by our criminal justice system.

Let justice roll down like waters,
And righteousness like an ever flowing
stream.

We pray for our Church,
remembering that in our corporate history
we have been both offender and victim.

Let justice roll down like waters,
And righteousness like an ever flowing
stream.

We pray for all those in our criminal
system who try to do justice:
for police officers, judges, lawyers,
chaplains, and for corrections,
parole, and probation officers.

Let justice roll down like waters,
And righteousness like an ever flowing
stream.

We pray for our neighbourhoods, our
communities, and our society,
where the impact of crime and the fear
that it breeds
harm people, damage relationships, and
tear at the human spirit.

Let justice roll down like waters,
And righteousness like an ever flowing
stream.

Blessed are you, Lord our God,
who sent your Son among us
to bear the pain and grief of humankind.
Receive the prayers we offer this day
for all those in need in every place
and grant us strength on our journey.

Amen.

Building up the fiscal health of our parishes in service of the Lord

Continued from page 11

so the wardens can assist in long term planning rather than griping over the summer doldrums. Finally, it is both a very subtle way of stewardship and commitment that we do not see in pledge cards.

The rental of underutilized space is very problematic for parishes.

Firstly, parishes are at risk of losing their charitable status if the gross rental receipts exceed 10% of total parish income. If it does, it

makes sense to establish a separate non-for-profit corporation. However, that is just another administrative layer that most would not want to undertake. Secondly, parishes often do not charge enough to cover the added costs of heat, hydro, cleaning staff, etc. let alone the lost opportunity to use Church owned space for parish needs. More often that not, wardens see the cash received as going to the bottom line when in fact the added costs are rarely acknowledged. Fi-

nally, some parishes let out their space for little or no compensation as part of a broader outreach activity. If this is the case, parishioners must give extra to cover the added costs involved. Again, this is often not considered.

Do a few things well

From my experience, fundraising events can be both living giving and life draining. I have witnessed parishes charging a mere 2 or 3 dollars for a fruit pie when the ingredients

are worth more than that. Charge enough so that the costs are fully covered and any amount above that is the reward for the donated time. I have also found that parishes tend to raise money from themselves rather than from the community. Promote the event so that it effectively brings in dollars from the community. I know of parishes where they just do that and can make \$3,000 in less than half an hour! Fundraising events should be limited in number so that our volunteers do not burn

out. Do a few things well and the community outside of the walls will support it! Finally, fundraising for a major purchase such as a repair or building renovation is great but if a parish needs to fundraise more than 10 percent of its total receipts within its operating account, you are at risk. A minor hiccup in weather or competing events may result in a deficit.

For next month, I will offer some thoughts on how to trim parish operating costs.

Getting to know you

THE REVEREND SUE-ANN WARD Assistant Curate, Christ's Church Cathedral



FRAN DARLINGTON
HONORARY - ST. JAMES, GUELPH

The Bishop of Niagara, the Right Reverend Ralph Spence, consistently encourages Anglicans across the Diocese to explore connections with Christ's Church Cathedral and the people who bring it to life in the name of Christ. One of those people is the Reverend Sue-Ann Ward, Assistant Curate.

With primary duties in pastoral care, outreach and Christian education, Sue-Ann has brought new energy to the Cathedral's ministry in Hamilton's central core, which reaches well beyond the congregation, particularly through St Matthew's House and SISO, the organisation which assists immigrants and refugees, women, youth and racial minority peoples integrate into the community.

Sue-Ann's first project has become the Jamesville Breakfast Club, nurturing children of three local schools. "The principal at St. Mary's [Elementary School] made us aware of the need, and asked for support. Now we feed sixty plus children and a handful of adults every morning!" A large sign welcomes all, and the local crossing guard even comes early to enable the children to arrive safely.

With many volunteers from the Cathedral congregation along with Diocesan staff, "help is provided with assignments and tutoring. Some volunteers do the shopping, others provide games." A former teacher in Special Education and Behavioural Intervention in Juvenile Court, Sue-Ann reads with the children, and represents the community on St. Mary's Parent Council. She was warmly welcomed, but as an Anglican priest in a Roman Catholic school, "at first there were questions. 'Are you a priest? Tell me about that!'"

Sue-Ann enjoys watching "older children integrate with younger ones in ways they can't in class... [It's] building community, getting to know each other, and sharing a meal. We encourage any children to come, and for parents to allow them to come," all part of the effort to keep children in school.

Local businesses generously support this outreach: "We're getting to know so many people from the community, businesses, markets, and organisations, too many donors to name them all! We're able to do this because of partnership! Partnerships are so much stronger when we work together. The Roman Catholic Church asked for help—Amen!"

Growing opportunities

This ministry has evolved into the Community Centre, which began as a development project concerned with housing and recre-

ation, paying attention to poverty issues around Hamilton, [and discovering] how to reduce poverty and strengthen our communities." Soil in "brownfield areas is contaminated so children cannot play there, and there were no local recreational facilities and little green space. We approached the Roman Catholic School Board to ask if we could use some of their space."

St. Mary's School now provides space after school and on weekends, "every day but Sunday: four classrooms, a seminar room, an office, a kitchen, and the gym after 4:00 pm."

Her eyes dancing, Sue-Ann explains, "We want to work with other individuals and groups in the community to provide programs, crafts, arts, dance, music for all ages, chess, sewing, table tennis, leadership for teens, and summer camps!" Cathedral members and staff have organised a clothing cupboard, and Sue-Ann is "working with [McMaster University] to provide child minding while immigrant women take classes."

But there's more to come!

Now, supported by the Hamilton Association for Residential and Recreational Redevelopment Programs, the hope is to purchase property to provide better housing, recreational and gathering space. A Board has been "formed to provide oversight, to foster various necessary skill sets, to facilitate protection for the Diocese in terms of liability should something go drastically wrong, and to enable grants the Diocese could not apply for." Sue-Ann grins, "I've learned how to write funding proposals!"

With Sr. Michael, CSC (Community of the Sisters of the Church), who volunteers for twenty hours a week is Simon Mach, a Sudanese refugee hired as Community Centre Supervisor. He has "done wonderful things in this community! His background is in nursing, he has a lovely family, with a wife and four children, and speaks at least six languages. He's teaching me Arabic!"

Sue-Ann is quick to recognise contributions by many other people, and her enthusiasm bubbles: "This is all out of identified needs within the community. We're not doing stuff for people, but with people!"

A Vicar, a Deacon, and an Assistant Curate

Sue-Ann's energy is also directed to other areas, such as Pastoral Care. "The Cathedral has a wonderful team. They're absolutely terrific, all twelve of them, going out. Some take communion to those unable to attend the Cathedral for worship."

For Christian Education, "There's a team of leaders. We got input from parishioners about topics and scheduling, so it varies through the year." Bryan Stopps supports Sue-Ann in offering Youth Ministry for "about a dozen" young people.

Another responsibility for Sue-Ann is "the privilege of helping to organise and MC events at the Cathedral, [such as] the celebration of Confirmation, Ordination and the Order of Niagara." Echoing Bishop Ralph, she says firmly, "I strongly believe that those services should all happen here, to bring people together, to function as [the Diocesan] family."

Acknowledging that she "sort of replaced [the Reverends] Dan Brereton and Ann Turner," past Cathedral Vicar and Deacon respectively, Sue-Ann also does "regular priestly wonderful things. I visit people in their homes, baptise, marry, bury, do Confirmation preparation." At the recent Diocesan Leadership Conference, Sue-Ann shared her experiences in a presentation on outreach and empowering a parish. She says, "We all need a reason to get out of bed in the morning. A parish is no different; it needs a reason to be too."

Sue-Ann also appreciates ministry deeply shared by the Cathedral Dean, the Very Reverend Peter Wall. "I'm very blessed to have a Rector who has entrusted me with many other duties."

Where would Jesus be?

"[Unlike most curacies] I'm not here to do a two year curacy and (then) move on. I'm here!" That means stability for Sue-Ann and those she serves with great enthusiasm and real humility, doing "lots and lots of different and wonderful things! This is the best place to do ministry. Christ's Church Cathedral needs to be here!" Asking, "Where would Jesus be?" she answers her own question, "With the most disadvantage! We can do so many ministries without spending money if we just bring resources together. There's money out there. If you can show people they're touching lives, they'll open their wallets. People need to know what they can do."

For someone who, when she revealed her strong call to ordained ministry, was laughed at by her high school guidance counselor, Sue-Ann Marilyn Alexandra Ward, nee Jones, has offered energy and commitment and taken on responsibilities that would intimidate many others. Earning a B.A. in Science in 1992, and a B.Ed. in 1993, Sue-Ann became a teacher, but never forgot that call. Sue-Ann married Jeff Ward, who became an engineer, and a senior manager with the technology firm Celestica. Together they have four children of their own—Danielle, Michael, Justine and Zachary, who are now young adults—and have been fostering "mostly special needs children for years." Sue-Ann and Jeff have also been caregivers for Jeff's younger brother who was severely brain-injured in a car accident in 1991, "but now he's making a new life."

Sue-Ann reads "just about anything," makes music on the piano and guitar, actively participates

Governor General announces appointment of Three New Heralds Extraordinary

Governor General announces the appointment of three new Heralds Extraordinary

Her Excellency the Right Honourable Michaëlle Jean, Governor General of Canada, announced today the appointment of three new Heralds Extraordinary within the Canadian Heraldic Authority.

Mr. Roger A. Lindsay of Toronto, Dr. Helen K. Mussallem, C.C., of Ottawa and Vancouver, and the Right Reverend D. Ralph Spence, of Hamilton, have received the titles of Herald Extraordinary for their particularly notable contributions to Canadian heraldry over many years.

The appointment of these new honorary heralds will bring the number of Heralds Extraordinary to six. On occasion, these persons can perform duties on behalf of the Canadian Heraldic Authority.

The Canadian Heraldic Authority, which is headed by Her Excellency the Governor General, is responsible for the creation of coats of arms, flags and badges for Canadian citizens and corporate bodies and for units of the Canadian Forces. It was created in 1988 to ensure that all Canadians who wish to use heraldry have access to it. It also encourages good heraldic practice consistent with an international level of heraldic excellence. For more information about the Authority, please visit www.gg.ca.

JOURNEY OF THE MAGI

This is the story of the birth of Jesus as told by T.S. Eliot (1888-1965)

A cold coming we had of it,
Just the worst time of the year
For a journey, and such a long journey;
The ways deep and the weather sharp,
The very dead of winter.
And the camels galled, sore-footed, refractory,
Lying down in the melting snow.
There were times we regretted
The summer palaces on slopes, the terraces,
And the silken girls bringing sherbet.
Then the camel men cursing and grumbling
And running away, and wanting their liquor and women,
And the night-fires going out and the lack of shelters,
And the cities hostile and the towns unfriendly
And the villages dirty and charging high prices:
A hard time we had of it.
At the end we preferred to travel all night,
Sleeping in snatches,
With the voices singing in our ears, saying
That this was all folly.

Then at dawn we came down to a temperate valley,
Wet, below the snow line, smelling of vegetation,
With a running stream and a water-mill beating the darkness,
And three trees in the low sky.
And an old white horse galloped away in the meadow.
Then we came to a tavern with vine-leaves over the lintel,
Six hands at an opening door dicing for pieces of silver,
And feet kicking the empty wine skins.
But there was no information, and so we continued
And arrived at evening, not a moment too soon
Finding the place; it was (you may say) satisfactory.

All this was a long time ago, I remember,
And I would do it again, but set down
This set down
This: were we led all that way for
Birth or Death? There was a Birth, certainly,
We had evidence and no doubt. I had seen birth and death,
But had thought they were different; this Birth was
Hard and bitter agony for us, like Death, our death.
We returned to our places, these Kingdoms,
But no longer at ease here, in the old dispensation,
With an alien people clutching their gods.
I should be glad of another death.

Continued on next page

Church decline a myth



GRAHAME STAP
ST. ALBAN THE MARTYR, GLEN WILLIAMS

When I wrote the article on Church Decline I had no idea I would get such a response, both verbally and via email. The main response seemed to be that I did not know what I was talking about. "Of course the church is in decline we have only half the congregation we had only five years ago."

There seemed to be an acceptance that as long as the church is in decline, it is normal for a particular church to be in decline. However if decline is a myth, then why is our congregation not growing?

It is a very good question. However the answer is more complicated. There are many areas where demographics have changed and the surrounding neighbourhood is no longer Anglican. It could be there is no parking or because of a change in area development where the church is now hidden and hard to get to. There are many legitimate reasons why a church is not growing.

This does not change the fact that church decline is still a myth. In the July issue of MacLean's Magazine, the following was reported. In 1975, 41 percent of Protestant and Catholic Canadians attended church once a month or more. This dropped in 2000 to 30 percent and rose again in 2005 to 34 percent, an increase of 4 percent. The gallop poll I reported on earlier showed a 3 percent increase over the same period of time. So the increase is getting larger and even more people are attending church

on a somewhat regular basis.

It was also interesting to note that MacLean's reported that church brings us together more than sports and recreation, more than School or community, and even more than politics. What was the most significant, I believe, was that 43% of all Canadians have attended a religious service in the past six months not including weddings, funerals, or holidays and that 62 percent of Canadians believe in heaven.

I believe we need to accept that society is looking for answers that it cannot find. One of the reasons for the huge success of *The Da Vinci Code* is that it seems to answer questions in a way people can accept. It is not the truth but it fills a void until the reader realizes that it is based on wishful thinking.

The Anglican Church is ideally situated to fill the void people feel with the truth that God loves all things God created. We accept that baptism in any Christian denomination is valid and that all people are welcome at the table of the Lord. Even more that this, I hope I am right, we do not judge people but accept them where they are and not where we expect them to be. We allow people to find their own place within the church. We make people feel welcome and we reach out to those that are seeking. What we are not so good at is inviting people to share with us the love that God has for each of us. So let us make every Sunday, Invitation Sunday.

December 3 is the first Sunday of Advent, the first Sunday of a new year in the church. Let us make it, and the first Sunday of every month, Invitation Sunday. Let us all invite a friend, colleague, and/or neighbour to share with us the love of God. If we do this we will soon see that Church is indeed a myth.

Getting to know you

Continued from page 14

in and/or coaches various sports, walks, hikes, runs, and loves to laugh! Four plates on her office wall say a lot about this serene, gracious woman: Mother Teresa, the loaves and fish of Capernaum, a ballerina, and one from Cooke's Presbyterian Church in Toronto, where Sue-Ann's Grandfather was an elder and she was baptised.

Change, challenge, and gift

God had more in mind for this gifted couple. Following studies at Trinity College, Toronto, Jeff and Sue-Ann were ordained together as Deacons in May, 2005, and as priests in December, 2005. The Dean commented fondly that it was the first time he had seen two candidates for ordination holding hands! Jeff is now serving as Assistant Curate at St. Simon's Church, Oakville.

Reiterating her advocacy for partnership, Sue-Ann says, "We are very, very blessed with the folks we have. We've got parishes

doing wonderful things, let's work together! We can learn from wisdom, and support each other." Acknowledging that "anxiety is natural when we feel threatened," she continues, "if we demonstrate that we're doing God's work, if people see generosity and loving out there, they'll want to be involved."

Last year, the editor of this newspaper, Christopher Grabiec, wrote, "Advent is about hope and living a life anticipating and working toward the fullness of God's reign on earth. It's about growing in our understanding of the immanent presence of Christ and God's spirit among us. It's joyful and hopeful."

The Reverend Sue-Ann Ward's joy and hope in her life and work shines in her eyes as she proclaims, "I love it, love it, love it!" Indeed "anticipating and working toward the fullness of God's reign on earth," she is a gift and inspiration, not only for this holy season but every day, not only to the Cathedral and the community around it, but to us all, and we are thankful.

— KING'S CHRISTMAS PUDDING —

Submitted by Carol Summers

This pudding recipe is, as its title implies, a royal one. It dates from the reign of King George I when it was used in the royal kitchens. I don't know if it still graces the royal table, but I thought it might find a spot on a few of ours. You could have one to eat and two to give as gifts, or to save for next year!

Ingredients (Makes three puddings)

675 g (1.5 lbs) finely shredded suet
450 g (1 lb) small raisins
450 g (1 lb) demerara sugar
450 g (1 lb) stoned plum halves
110 g (4 oz) thinly sliced citron
110 g (4 oz) thinly sliced candied peel
1 tsp mixed spices
Half a grated nutmeg
2 tsp salt
450 g (1 lb) breadcrumbs
450 g (1 lb) sifted flour
450 g (1 lb) eggs weighed in their shells
1 wineglass of brandy
10 oz (half pint) of milk

Method

Beat the eggs to a froth and then add to them half a pint of new milk and mix the various ingredients. Let the mixture stand for 12 hours in a cool place, and then put in moulds and boil for eight hours.
Three ordinary sized puddings can be made by any culinary member of a family from the aforementioned recipe.



Love came down at Christmas



SUSAN C. HUXFORD-WESTALL
ALL SAINTS PARISH, HAMILTON

Some two thousand years ago an extremely significant event occurred. It doesn't matter whether it was 2006, 2009 or 2013 years ago. The fact is that it happened. It doesn't matter whether it happened in Bethlehem, Nazareth or anywhere else in Palestine. It happened.

What happened? A child was born. So what? It doesn't matter whether it was born in wedlock or out of it. We are told that the mother was betrothed to an older man and the respectable clergy of the day said that the child was a bastard, born of fornication.

We know very little of his childhood. Were his early years spent in Egypt where he could have been under the influence of the Septuagint, the Greek Old Testament that he often seems to have quoted? Did he ever travel with his presumed uncle, Joseph of Arimathea, and visit the famous well at Glastonbury as William Blake has asked? Or did he work in his father's carpentry shop in Nazareth preparing lumber for crosses? Does it matter or are these legends to encourage our own conceits?

The true vision for humankind

In spite of all the doubts and questions that arise among scholars and the ordinary man and woman in

the streets, something did happen. While he was still a young man he left an indelible mark upon the history of the world in a remarkably short ministry of no more than three years. His life has proved to be a model for us all.

What can we learn from the life that we celebrate as having begun at Christmas? What lessons has God for us in the life of Jesus of Nazareth? Is it not that God demonstrated his love for us in revealing to us the true vision that he had for humankind at the beginning of creation? The Old Testament repeatedly tells us that God has wanted us to go one way, but we have insisted upon going our own way. God has been blamed for giving us freewill so that we could do as we like, but had he not done so we would be nothing but puppets on strings held by God or, as some would have it, the Devil. Throughout the Old Testament God sent prophets to direct people into the right way, but again and again they wandered off course. We have often interpreted the scriptures to suit ourselves, whether we have been Hindus, Buddhists, Confucians, Jews, Christians, Moslems or any other faith in which the Spirit of God may have been seen to have had influence.

The highest level of love

But God so loved the world that he gave his son, as we are reminded in St. John's Gospel. What does this mean? Does it not mean that, in his love for his creation, God sent the very image that he had first pictured at the Creation, the thought or image that was in his mind, the Word that he could have uttered to express that

image, the Logos, the Beloved Image that he had for mankind? Love came down at Christmas, the love that God wants us all to exhibit and that, up to date, we have failed in so miserably. Jesus is the model that we should be following. The early church knew that and lived the life (vide the Acts of the Apostles) but it was not long before worldly politics entered the picture and the true church went off course.

Where, then, should Love lead? The Greeks had three words for love. The purely animal nature of love was eros, from which comes all our erotica, played on by Hollywood until sexual satisfaction has become the primary purpose of love. Phylia expresses that filial love that should exist in a family, between brothers and sisters, parents and children. The highest level of love is agape, the deeply mutual love that all creation should have for humankind, a love that was celebrated in the early church in the Agape, the love feast that was intended to show the love and care for each other that existed in the early congregations and ultimately became the Eucharist.

How, then, should we exhibit the Love of God, shown in that child that was born so long ago? Have we any right to deny love where it exists, whether it be between parents and child, brothers and brothers, sisters and sisters, men and women, man and man, woman and woman. If love comes from God should it not be blessed, is it not already blessed, by the God who is Love? If love came down at Christmas, have we any right to send it back again a few days later (Holy Innocents)?

Death and incarnation God Moments



NISSA BASBAUM
RECTOR - TRANSFIGURATION, ST. CATHARINES

At the end of September, I attended my uncle's funeral. His death was sudden. While in New York City to present a paper—my uncle was a retired paediatrician—he began having trouble swallowing and decided to have this checked out at the hospital where he once worked. Diagnosed with melanoma of the liver, he died four days later.

It was a shock for all of us in my extended family. Seymour was the youngest of my mother's siblings and always seemed to have energy to burn. Until the end of his life, at 78 years-old, he was still driving long distances from Florida, where he lived, to New York and Toronto—journeys which had become

since I cannot remember the exact words he used):

"We have arrived at the point in the service which we, as Jews, recognize to be sacred; that is, the burial of the dead. For us, it is a duty that we lovingly perform, believing that it is inappropriate to leave the burial of our loved ones to strangers. For this reason, each one of us here, as you feel comfortable, will assist with the burial of Seymour's body. Please dig up the dirt three times and scoop this onto the coffin. The first time you dig up the dirt, use the back of the shovel rather than the front, an act which symbolizes that we are not just shovelling dirt but undertaking something which has far more significance than this. There are four shovels available. Once the members of the immediate family have taken their turn, anyone else who wishes to participate may do so."

The act of burial was sacred
I'm not really sure why but I did not take a shovel myself. Instead, I was completely focused on the actions

"We have now come to the end of the funeral service; we have cared for our loved one who has died and we are now called to move on. Henceforward, our focus shifts from the care of Seymour to the care of those who are left to carry on without him. To symbolize this, I would ask all those who are present to form two lines facing one another, from the graveside to the end of the cemetery grounds. Members of the immediate family will walk between these two lines. This is a sign of the sacred duty we are called to act out in the days ahead. Having done what we are meant to do with the person who has died, we are now asked to show compassion for those who are left behind."

We run away from the reality of incarnation

The liturgy in which I participated on that day did what I understand liturgy is intended to do; that is, make real, both death and life. Ironically, it was the most incarnating theology I have yet to experience in a funeral service. Isn't it odd that it was Jewish? Aren't we Christians

CHRISTYN PERKONS
PROGRAM CONSULTANT, DIOCESAN RESOURCE CENTRE

The word advent comes from two Latin words; 'ad' and 'vene' meaning 'come to'. In the four weeks of Advent, we focus on the God who comes to us. We celebrate God's coming to liberate us, to care for us, and to be in an intimate, personal relationship with us.

Our celebration is centered on the story of the Nativity; the conception and birthing of Emmanuel, God With Us. Each Sunday, we highlight a segment of this very familiar story. We share the delightful absurdity of Elizabeth and Zechariah's pregnancy. We shout the message of repentance and preparation for the coming Messiah along with their son, John the Baptist. We tremble in awe at the angel Gabriel's message to Mary. We marvel at Mary's acquiescence to the will of God. We are indignant at the townsfolk of Bethlehem who cannot find room for the weary teenager about to give birth, and we rejoice that the innkeeper offers the warmth of the stable. We wonder with the shepherds at the night sky full of celestial messengers telling of the birth of Christ. We trail after the Wise Men as they follow the unusual star in the Eastern sky. We know this story through and through. But Advent is more than re-telling the story of the birth of Jesus.

Missing the celestial messengers

Each of us has a story, too—unique, powerful, and full of pain and beauty just as Jesus' story is unique, powerful and filled with pain and beauty. We have birth and conception stories. We delight in life's joyful absurdities. We are indignant over social injustice. We feel deserving yet unrewarded. We cry aloud over our misdeeds. We are forced by the decisions of our government into circumstances that try our patience. We are awestruck and wonder-filled, but...

The Nativity story is also strewn with God moments; moments when God's interaction with the world is clearly visible. Our lives are full of God moments, too, but we're often unaware of them. We're just too busy, too caught up in the minutiae of daily life to stop and listen for God's still, small voice. We're so preoccupied taking care of business that we miss the celestial messengers; we miss God's absurd moments. We miss the signs of God's relationship with us.

Advent is a time in the church year during which we are particularly encouraged to slow down and recognize our God moments. We are invited to see the angels in our lives; to hear the voice of God. The Nativity story challenges us to recognize the mysterious stars leading us to God incarnate. Shepherds herald good news all around us and entice us to see new life. We are encouraged to ponder all of these signs in our hearts so that we can say "Yes." Advent helps to remind us that we can't say "Yes" to God if we are too busy to see and hear God trying to interact with us.

Creating sacred intervals

Advent is also a time to reconnect with our own incarnation stories. As we hear the familiar Nativity story,

we are prompted to evoke our own stories of becoming. What events were formative for us? What are our hopes? Who are our prophets? What are our values? Do our daily activities reflect those values? Where are our communities? How are we contributing to the well being of our communities? How are we living out our experience of God Within?

Our faith communities use liturgy and ritual to help us reconnect to our stories and to our God moments on Sunday mornings and with mid-week programs. But we need to create that holy space for ourselves and our families during the week as well. There are endless ways in which we can create sacred intervals that allow us to access our stories and our God moments between Sundays in our homes, in our workspace and in our communities.

Here are just a few ideas:

- Look at family photos or videos together—with your children, your parents, your siblings, etc. Have those "Remember when..." conversations. If family members live far away, record the sharing memories time and send it to them. You might want to focus on Christmases past or on faith journey milestones like baptism and confirmation.
 - Create some quiet alone time in your daily or weekly schedule; time for you to experience, to identify and to ponder your God moments.
 - On your family night, play a new game or work on a puzzle together—or if you don't have one, commit to a family to spending one night a week doing something fun together.
 - Make special cards for family members or friends who live far away and write individualized messages of caring and support.
 - Go for a night walk with family or friends and re-discover the night sky. Find the brightest star and encourage each other to share how your experience being led by God.
 - Invite a family that's different from your own for dinner; a family from your church or neighbourhood that you don't know well whose composition doesn't reflect yours. Ask about their faith community experience, their rituals around family time, or their Christmas rituals—or December Holy Day if they're not Christian.
 - Design a quiet prayer ritual for your family; either as you awaken, over a shared breakfast or as you leave for your day. Generate for yourself and your children an expectation that they will encounter signs of God's presence throughout the day.
 - Use activity books like *Before and After Christmas* by Deborah Trafton O'Neal or *Twenty Four Days Before Christmas* by Madeleine L'Engle to plan Advent-related family time and to discuss what's important to your family members about their relationship with God.
- Create space in your life so you can notice the angels declaring God's glory, attend to the shepherds proclaiming the Good News, pursue the stars leading to God Incarnate, heed the voice of God in your life, and open the door of your stable to the Christ. It's easy to see what God has done. Practice noticing the God moments so that you are ready for what God promises is yet to come.

CHRISTMAS IS NOT JUST ABOUT THE BIRTH OF JESUS. It's about the human face of God in every aspect of our existence, including death...

legendary in our family, journeys that meant more to him than probably anything else. A gifted and brilliant doctor, dedicated to his work, he always seemed even more dedicated to his wife, children, siblings, nieces and nephews.

Jewish funeral

This lifetime commitment to his family was evidenced by the number of us who came from across North America to be at his funeral. I was one of these relatives and, while I certainly wanted to go to the service, I confess to a good deal of ambivalence about actually being there. My family is Jewish and my experiences, heretofore, of Jewish funerals had not been positive, including my own mother's burial a few years ago. If I'm honest about this, perhaps it's not so much that the funerals are Jewish, but rather that I often think I could have done them better myself!

To my surprise, however, my uncle's funeral proved to be different. The service itself was as it should be, a celebration of his life, and it quickly became evident that his had been a life that was even bigger than most of us had probably imagined. Yet, the liturgy in the synagogue didn't strike me as much as the burial at the cemetery following the service. It was like nothing I had ever experienced in the 22 years since I have been ordained and presiding at funeral liturgies myself.

Many of the people who had been to the service at the synagogue went to the cemetery. We formed an enormous crowd at the graveside. The rabbi began by saying the appropriate Jewish prayers, just as any Anglican priest might recite the standard Christian prayers at the time of a burial. Then, he said the following (somewhat paraphrased,

of others, actions which probably took somewhere in the neighbourhood of 45 minutes. The process was not finished until the body was completely buried in the ground.

I have never been to any other funeral service—Jewish or Christian—where this has been done. I think what had the most impact on me were the words of the rabbi when he talked about the inappropriateness of allowing strangers to bury our loved ones. I couldn't help but remember all the burials I have done since being a priest where the body hadn't even been lowered into the ground in front of the family, let alone buried by the members.

Just as the rabbi had suggested, I experienced the act of this burial as sacred and, perhaps even more than sacred, as incredibly real, more real than most of us are ever prepared to be when it comes to the subject of death. As I watched the faces of people when they took the shovel, as I watched the coffin gradually disappearing into the earth, I couldn't help but feel that this was the way every burial should be carried out. The rabbi referred to this as an act of duty; I might have called it an act of love. Perhaps in this particular instance, the two are one and the same thing. Whatever, those 45 minutes were filled with compassion, both for my uncle who had died and for all of us who were suffering the loss. There was no opportunity to run from the finality of the situation; there was no opportunity to escape the reality that this was the end. Whatever loose ends there might have been, they were more than likely tied up in this one sacred moment.

My surprise did not end with the burial, however. When this part of the liturgy was complete, the rabbi continued:

the ones who have supposedly cornered the market on the Incarnation? Isn't Christmas, the season we are about to enter, all about how God incarnates, or makes real, the divine presence in our world?

All too often, and especially at the time of death, Christians run away from the reality of the incarnation, whether it be in the manner in which we deny death by saying our loved ones have "passed on" or "passed away" rather than "died," or in the manner in which we often watch as the funeral director sprinkles a vial of sand on the coffin in the shape of a nice, tidy and sanitized sign of the cross. There is nothing nice or tidy or sanitized about death, or about life for that matter.

The human face of God

In some ways, I guess, speaking of funerals and burials at this time of year seems an odd thing to be doing. After all, isn't Advent about the expectation of birth, and Christmas about this expectation being realized? Surely, a conversation about funerals and burials might more appropriately be saved for Holy Week or, at the very least, for the season of Lent. Still, I cannot shake off the impact on me that my uncle's burial had, a burial that more than epitomized the hardcore meaning of the Incarnation.

Christmas is not just about the birth of Jesus. It's about the human face of God in every aspect of our existence, including death, and until we are prepared to deal head-on with this reality, we are forever destined as a faith community to run from all that is real and divine in our midst.

Surely, it must be time to look for God around us instead of looking for God beyond us. Isn't that what is meant by the proclamation "the kingdom of God is at hand?"

Let the little children come to me



CHRISTYN PERKONS
PROGRAM CONSULTANT, DIOCESAN RESOURCE CENTRE

How welcoming is your faith community to children with disabilities and special needs? Do you have trained volunteers to teach special needs children in church school? Can a wheelchair move easily through your halls and aisles? Is there space beside a pew so that families with a member in a wheelchair can sit together? Are spiritual experiences and faith learning shared with children in

writing, through mediums that the child can't access or needs help to access. The child may have aged out of the nursery but be developmentally unready for a Sunday School classroom as it currently exists. The parent may need another adult who is responsible solely for her special needs child during the Sunday School time. The reality is that you may not have special needs children because those children and their families may not feel like they have a place in your community; they may not feel welcome.

Do special needs children need our faith communities? Yes. Do these children have spiritual needs? Yes. Do the families of special needs children need the support of our faith communities? Yes. Do we have a responsibility to meet those spiritual needs? Yes, I believe we

and activity of the parish is framed to include the greatest diversity of people rather than limiting those involved. People who are different from the majority of the congregation are treated with dignity and respect; that includes sexuality differences, mobility differences, intellectual differences, chromosomal differences and the list goes on. And finally a culture of inclusion views every member of the congregation, every visitor and everyone outside of the parish as individuals with individual strengths and challenges. Inclusivity is about seeing a person without the labels and accompanying assumptions. Inclusivity is more than tolerating differences; it's about celebrating, affirming and appreciating that we all look, talk, think, act and learn in different ways...and we are all gifts of God to each other.

LET THE CHILDREN COME TO ME and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.

Mark 10:14

multiple learning styles? Do you offer a support group for parents or siblings of children with special needs? Does your children's ministry reflect the needs of all children?

Wait, you may respond—we don't have any children with disabilities or special needs! The reality is that parents tend not to bring their special needs children to a church that doesn't have a program in place already, unless they have received a particular invitation that commits to making the faith community experience work for their family challenges. Many of us may have had special needs children born into our congregations. Those families may continue to attend church as long as there are no behavioural challenges with their child. In most parishes, those families disappear as soon as the child is expected to conform to a norm that they are unable to meet. It may be an autistic child who has managed the church environment well as a baby but begins to scream for long periods of time as a toddler or preschooler. It may be that a mobility challenge didn't emerge until the child moved from parents' arms to supportive equipment that doesn't fit the church environment. It may be that the child has reached Sunday School age and can't find a way to connect to the material because the faith learning is all expressed through words, through

do! Spirituality is an innate part of the human condition. It does not depend on intellect or physical mobility or sight or emotional facility. The signs of a healthy spiritual life are not to be found in the ability to memorize verses of the Bible or the ability to stand up and sit down in unison with the congregation on Sunday morning. Rather, the relationship with God is always there, and we are called to help each child of God grow into that relationship in whatever ways are possible. Special needs children can be taught strategies and practices to help them live out their spirituality in their daily lives. Families of these children need more than our prayers; they need us to actively include them and their children in the life of the church; they need to see us embrace their children as we welcome them into every aspect of the faith community. Parents need to know that their children are safe and well tended while they are in our care, and they need to see that we believe their children are deserving of the joy, hope and love that the practice of our faith brings.

The foundation for this kind of welcome is a culture of inclusion. A culture of inclusion holds firm to the principle that everything in church reflects a commitment to thinking, seeing and saying, "People first." Every opportunity

Of course, in the end, if the faith community is inclusive of the special needs child and is committed to meeting that child's faith journey needs, then that congregation will also be committed to including and supporting the faith journeys of special needs adults. What a rich blessing that walk could be for all of us. Living faithfully as the body of Christ is not easy. We are asked to love and embrace all people just as Jesus did with those set apart from the society of his day. We can learn a great deal from Jesus' focus on people's strengths instead of their weaknesses; on what children and adults can do rather than what they can't do. Living, learning, praying and worshipping together benefits everyone. The child with a disability or special needs finds a faith community where s/he is fully included, where his/her spiritual gifts are nurtured and utilized for building the body of Christ. And those who are developing typically have wonderful opportunities for growth—opportunities to see past what's on the outside, past the differences, and to perceive and nurture the child of God on the inside.

If you are interested in a training workshop on this topic for Sunday School teachers and other church leaders, please contact Christyn Perkons at 905-527-1316 (ext. 460) or christyn.perkons@niagara.anglican.ca.

Youth Leadership Training Program is coming

JOYCE WILTON
PROGRAM CONSULTANT, DIOCESAN RESOURCE CENTRE

This is the time of the year to look around your parish and see if you have any young people grades 8 to 10 who would make potentially great leaders in your parish and community. Do you know someone who would thrive in a community of their peers, as they develop leadership skills and grow in understanding of what it means to be a leader of faith in these times?

YLTP or the Youth Leadership Training Program is one of the diocese's premier youth ministry programs and takes place from Sunday to Wednesday during the March Break (this year March 11-14). We accept 12 new applicants a year for this amazing three year program. Applications are now available in your parishes or you can call the Diocesan Resource Centre at 905-527-1317 (ext. 430) and Joyce Wilton will assist you with the application process. Joyce

can also be reached by email at joyce.wilton@niagara.anglican.ca. The registration deadline is January 18, 2007.

Just a reminder to all those in Year 2 or Year 3, your year group leaders will be contacting you about your upcoming year activities, so stay tuned! So calling all parents, youth leaders and clergy, look around, see who would thrive with this opportunity and encourage them to make the contact. We look forward to hearing from you.

A journey in faith



MATT ARGUIN
ST. CHRISTOPHER'S, BURLINGTON

As I am writing this article on October 31, I find myself somewhat overwhelmed. In the afternoon, I went to the mall, bought some candy and rented a scary movie to partake in the festive spirit of Halloween.

Little did I know, I was about to witness something more terrifying than the Exorcist or Freddy Krueger combined. Christmas decorations were already being displayed in the major department stores at Burlington Mall! I had entered the mall wishing for a simple short-lived sugar high, and now left the mall with an incredible sense of anxiety.

Now I have to start thinking about what presents do I have to buy? What decorations do I need for the apartment? And above all, I find myself thinking, "Wow time has flown by."

But in the hustle and bustle of preparing for the holidays, where has the celebration of Advent gone? You know, those four weeks before Christmas actually arrives? Don't they have something to do with a wreath and four candles? What does it all mean? Why even bother observing it at all?

Advent in different church communities

From my own personal experience, I've learned that Advent can mean different things to different people. As a child in the Roman Catholic Church, I was taught that Advent was a season for repentance and inner reflection. It wasn't really until the 3rd week—when the candle of 'joy' was lit—that kids would start to get excited for Jesus or Santa Claus.

Although it's not a common practice anymore, Advent is also a time when Catholics may choose to alter their diet—similar to that of Lent—to exclude eating meat on Fridays.

When I came to the Anglican Church, I was astonished at the difference in tone when it came to observing Advent. For one thing, the candles were blue, not purple. In the Roman Catholic Church, purple is worn in both Lent and Advent. It is generally treated as a colour to convey a somber tone in the liturgy and sermon.

Although it may seem trivial, the change to blue candles was a welcome change for me. It is a much softer colour to look at, and I think it is a great way to treat Lent and Advent as separate, yet equally special liturgical times.

One of the things I find most interesting about Advent is that it is not universally celebrated in all Christian communities. Many people in other Protestant denominations (Baptist, Pentecostal, Anabaptist, Jehovah's Witnesses

etc.) do not observe Advent at all. Indeed, some of them may be completely unaware of its existence in the wider Christian world.

Advent as a time for growth

We are incredibly blessed to have Advent as part of our faith-journey. By preparing for Jesus' coming at Christmas time, Advent gives us an opportunity to think about what God means to us.

I would like to present you with a thought-exercise. There is a point to it at the end, I promise, and hopefully it's one that you will enjoy.

Picture yourself as a young Jewish person living in Jerusalem around the first century CE. You are likely proficient in some kind of trade, whether it is basket-weaving or carpentry, or any number of things. Your modest wage is taxed heavily by a foreign government. The government's military presence is so powerful that any vocal resistance to Judea's administrators will likely result your being punished or even killed.

Your family lives in constant fear of becoming destitute. You're not even sure as to whether the promises of a Messiah that local rabbis have told you about are actually real. They could just be there as a child's story to give enjoyment and a sense of hope that will never really be fulfilled.

What would we be like if Jesus had never come into the world? What if we were still searching for a Messiah, like so many Jews in the first century CE? Would we view the world in a different way? Are we willing to let God into our lives now, even if it seems silly at times?

These are all questions I would invite you to explore during this Advent season. I also have some helpful ideas that may help to stimulate further thought, and provide a little fun for the whole family.

Tips for celebrating advent

■ Buy an Advent Calendar. These are available at many stores for a relatively good price. Even at the age of 24, I still count down the days until Christmas! It makes me feel like a kid again. Also, on a spiritual level, it makes me think of how God can bless us everyday, even with something as small as a chocolate.

■ Construct a Jesse Tree. Using paper, felt, construction paper, or whatever you have handy, create a tree with several bare branches. On each branch, hang a symbol that represents God, your family, or something extra-special about yourself. Have each member of your family take turns creating and hanging their symbols on the Jesse tree. The Jesse Tree helps to remind us that God loves all of us, and is working through every generation to bring hope and joy to everyone.

■ Have an Advent wreath at home. By having a short and simple candle-lighting service at home, God's presence is no longer limited to church on Sunday mornings.

Together, let's make this Advent a wonderful spiritual journey filled with hope and joy.

Liturgical resource for a new year



PETER WALL
DEAN - CHRIST'S CHURCH CATHEDRAL

As a new liturgical year dawns with the beginning of Advent, many clergy, church musicians, worship planners, worship and liturgy committees and others charged with creating liturgies in parishes will be looking at the season of Advent and looking for new prayers, hymns, and other elements of the liturgy expressed in new ways. The four Sundays of Advent provide a perfect opportunity to experiment, to try some new things, to re-fashion those things which we love so much.

This year we have in our midst a tremendous new resource which I highly recommend for perusal by all. *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* is a superb new worship resource, produced jointly by the Evangelical

Lutheran Church in America and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada. Over six years in the making, this book of worship has benefited from extensive research and testing and has involved the whole church, throughout the USA and Canada, in its development. Like its predecessor, *The Lutheran Book of Worship*—and indeed like several North American Roman Catholic worship resources—this new book serves as a comprehensive worship resource in one volume, rather than the more familiar Anglican practice of a separate prayer book and hymn book.

This new book contains various forms for Daily Prayer, Holy Baptism, pastoral offices for healing, marriage, and funeral; Lutheran Confessional documents, 10 settings for the Eucharist, the entire Psalter, extensive service music, and over 650 hymns, all in one volume! It is indeed impressive!

This book has been very carefully prepared, and the church is being equally carefully prepared for its introduction. Using a DVD sent to each congregation, a sampler of hymns and service music, and a scheduled

unveiling of the book and its contents over almost a full 12 months of congregational use, this has been a carefully crafted process - both the creative process and the process of introduction and initial use. I have been very fortunate, largely because of my responsibilities representing the Anglican Church to the Lutheran

the Anglican world (USA, New Zealand, England, Ireland) and books from other traditions (*Catholic Book of Worship, Gather, Voices United*, etc.) this new Lutheran book should have a place of honour. Simply from the point of view of hymns alone, there are some great additions to our already rich treasury of hymns. Be-

lieve that we should both know and be supportive of this book—there is much in it to commend it to us; there is much to learn from reading it; there is much that we can adapt to our Anglican realities.

As full communion with our ELCIC brothers and sisters continues to deepen in our experience,

AS FULL COMMUNION WITH OUR ELCIC BROTHERS AND SISTERS CONTINUES... we are benefiting from the richness of each others' experience

National executive, to have been invited to participate in special events preparing for the new book's arrival this fall, and also have been invited to be part of a group introducing it to Lutherans in southern Ontario—I guess that really is ecumenism!

I believe that those of us who plan liturgies that include a number of resources on our bookshelves; not just the predictable and very necessary Anglican resources but also other sources from different times and different traditions. Along with books both from other provinces of

yond hymns, the ten Eucharistic settings are all excellent, the complete Psalter is included, with 16 psalm tones, all accessible and pointed for congregational use.

Daily prayer services (Morning Prayer, Evening Prayer, and Compline) all include the service as part of the services. Without in any way diminishing the importance and the serviceability of our Anglican books, this particular Lutheran volume strikes me as a cut above, simply because of its comprehensive nature. I strongly recommend buying a copy. I

more and more parishes and communities across this country are experiencing shared ministries, either two congregations (Anglican and Lutheran) worshipping together or congregations of one church being served by a cleric from the other church. We are learning more and more about each other's worship lives and materials; we are each benefiting from the richness of each other's experience.

As we begin a new year, may these rich new resources be a much valued gift to us!

This is the story of the birth of Jesus as told by Samuel Crossman (1624-1683)

He came from His blest throne,
Salvation to bestow;
But men made strange, and none
The longed-for Christ would know.
But O, my Friend,
My Friend indeed, Who, at my need
His life did spend!

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Canada Volunteerism Initiative

Colleen has written this article to bring to the attention of our readers recent funding cuts made by the federal government. Funding has been cut to federally funded programs that supported volunteers and those seeking to enforce equality and human rights under the Canadian Constitution. We all should be concerned as these programs enhanced the abilities of those serving people in need and those striving for a more just society.



COLLEEN SYM
SOCIAL JUSTICE COORDINATOR

Each year, twelve million Canadians volunteer with 161,000 non-profit organizations that provide critical services to citizens. The quality of life of every Canadian is better because of the work of volunteers.

Many volunteers are doing the work that society expects non-profits to deliver. We cannot take volunteerism for granted. Yet in a recent motion, the Government of Canada has done just that.

Over the past 5 years, the Canada Volunteerism Initiative has been effective in bringing strength to this movement. Volunteerism, the movement that supports, engages, and retains volunteers, requires support at all levels of government.

The federal government has eliminated funding for the Canada Volunteerism Initiative (CVI). This sudden and surprising decision will impact organizations all across the Anglican Diocese of Niagara.

The CVI was cut as a "non-core" program—a program that doesn't meet "the priorities of the federal government or of Canadians." This surely cannot mean that the federal government places no value on Canadians being involved in their communities. It is hoped it

simply means the government has a better plan for how they will invest in volunteerism.

The federal government now has the opportunity to develop a new way to support the engagement of Canadians in their communities of volunteering and volunteerism. Discussions should be as soon as possible.

Court challenges program

The Canadian Constitution establishes important constitutional rights, including the rights of official language minority groups to education and government services in their primary language and the rights of everyone to equality before and under the law and to equal protection and equal benefit of the law without discrimination. However, these rights are empty unless the individuals and groups they are designed to protect can exercise and enforce them.

Since the Charter of Rights and Freedoms was adopted 25 years ago, successive federal governments have recognized that they have a responsibility to ensure that disadvantaged minorities have funding to take Charter cases forward.

The Court Challenges Program, by providing modest contributions to the cost of important test cases dealing with language and equality rights, has made these constitutional rights accessible to Canadians. Without the Court Challenges Program, Canada's constitutional rights are real only for the wealthy. This is unfair.

The beneficiaries of the CCP are individuals and groups who believe that laws and policies discriminate

against them or deny them their language rights. They cannot go forward without lawyers to represent them, since constitutional challenges are legally complex.

When a country like Canada enacts constitutional rights it takes for granted that residents, when they believe the government is violating their rights, can and will challenge the offending law or policy. If residents cannot use their rights because of financial barriers, then Canada's constitutional democracy is hollow. Governments must care that the rights they embrace are not meaningless, and the CCP has provided a simple and modest way of ensuring that they are not.

Critics of the CCP dislike some of the cases that it has supported: cases related to same sex marriage, voting rights for federal prisoners, criminal law provisions regarding hitting children. The fact that some individuals or groups do not agree with some of the test cases funded by the Program is not a reason to cancel it.

The point of a constitutional human rights regime is to ensure that diverse claims, perspectives and life experiences are respected and taken into account in the design of laws and policies. The equality guarantee and the language rights in the Constitution were designed to help minorities, whose views and needs may not be reflected by governments, to be heard on issues that affect them closely. Cancelling the Court Challenges Program mutes their voices further, and makes Canada a meaner, less tolerant society. Funding for this program ought to be restored.

The changing face of Christmas

ROGER HARRIS
ANGLICAN FELLOWSHIP OF PRAYER

It does not feel like a year since I wrote about Christmas and three individual journeys in particular. Each December 25 provides us with an old birth to celebrate—a placing in the hands of God all that has taken place over the past year and looking forward to a new year of challenge and progress along the path we have chosen.

Every January 1, new resolutions are made to enhance our personal well being, to try and come to terms with things about us that we want to change. The difference between the 25th of December and the 1st of January is the difference between the spiritual and the physical. Both are a time of celebration, and both provide a starting point to move forward. One to seek out the will of God, the other to seek out the will that we want for ourselves.

Spiritual affinity to the Lord

The superlatives for the Christmas occasion have already been written, and it is gradually becoming difficult to maintain the importance of this occasion in the light of changing social and secular behavior. Each year, more emphasis seems to be placed on 'bringing in the new year' with the partying and revelry, instead of the celebration of the birth of an age of salvation, with the opportunity to embark upon, and bring new life to the gifts from God that we have been blessed with.

With each successive year, the birth of our savior is taking second place to Santa Claus, and the attitude seems to be 'okay, it's Boxing Day lets throw out the Christmas tree, and get ready to party.' Instead of meditation on where the next step on the path is going to take me, it is 'what can I make my New Year's resolution be for next year.' The sadness in all this is that

the movement away from Jesus is a movement towards nonfulfillment, because, like the presents we receive, there is no spiritual affinity to the Lord or the occasion of His birth.

The commercialization of Christmas appears to have gained strength in the last quarter of a century. A few decades ago, there was little in the marketplace that could be considered unsuitable for giving as a present at this time of year. Not so today. With the introduction of electronics and the creativity of the human brain, we see more and more movement from the giving of peace and goodwill, to giving satisfaction to mankind's need for self worth. Out goes the 'reason for the season' and in comes 'the biggest bang for the buck.'

Our lamps must always be lit

Well, that's the bad news, now for the good. For all mankind's fickleness and error, nothing will elimi-

nate the true meaning and occasion of Jesus' birth for the Christian community and the faithful to God. As the secular world moves in to diminish the importance of this event, Christians around the world are being strengthened by the knowledge that these happenings are in keeping with, and part of, all that we have been made aware of for the future. There is no doubt that our faith is being diluted by the secular world, but in Jesus we have the whole unity of creation with us in song, praise and adoration, joy and good tidings, as we journey once more to the manger and into His presence.

To some the celebration of Jesus' birth is one of visiting a glorious past. This is of course absolutely true, but in that past were not only the birth of a savior, but also the start of a mandate from God, which has to come to a conclusion. This mandate did not end with the death of Jesus, but will be com-

pleted when He returns to claim God's own. What a celebration for all who will witness His return, and be able to celebrate his birthday with Him.

With the changing patterns in the world about us we need to communicate with God through the scriptures and prayer, so that our lamps may always be lit, and we will always be aware of what God wants us to know about His plans for us through His Son Jesus. Whatever the future has for us while we wait for God's word to be revealed, will not be supportable unless we have His spirit within us to help and guide us day by day. If we begin to look forward, 'the hope that has been set before us' that we find in our journey into the past to see Jesus, will be supplanted by 'the hope that we now see with us' for those who journey into the future to meet Him and to celebrate His birthday with Him.

Niagara Anglican

A section of the Anglican Journal

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Editor

Christopher Grabiec
905-312-8444 (ext. 101)
newspaper@niagara.anglican.ca

Advertising

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

Layout: Kayn Leduc

Proofreading: Bryan Stopps

Mailing Address

Cathedral Place
252 James St North
Hamilton, ON L8R 2L3

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Publishers Advisory Board

Pam Claridge
519-941-6804
John Janisse
905-312-8444 (ext. 102)
Geoffrey Purdell-Lewis
905-628-4176
Canon Charles Stirling
905-383-1088
Carol Summers
905-772-5641

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 email or physical address of the author for verification purposes. The newspaper reserves the right to edit submissions.

Preaching and practicing grace

CHRIST CHURCH, NIAGARA FALLS offers solutions to our problems

ALAN L. HAYES
THE ITINERANT CHURCHGOER

Some churches are wrapped up in their own problems, while other churches offer solutions to other people's problems. Thanks be to God for Christ Church, Niagara Falls, which belongs to the second category.

Not that Christ Church hasn't had its own problems! In recent years, it has suffered 'upheavals' and 'ups and downs.'

Those terms were used in one of the most memorable articles that the Niagara Anglican has published in recent years. In a candid, sensitive, articulate, and comprehensive report in November 2005, Archdeacon Lynne Corfield described how Anglican life in Niagara Falls was being reorganized. Six churches, some of them struggling, had entered a painful but redemptive process which was creating a very viable team ministry of three or four churches—I say "three or four" because the last chapter of this particular story is still being written.

Strong identity

A few weeks ago I joined the people of Christ Church for worship. I was wondering how they were feeling after the reorganization which Lynne described. I discovered a healthy, loving community with a strong sense of its Christian identity and direction.

Fortunately, Christ Church was able to recognize that, whatever its own problems, two other churches in Niagara Falls were facing worse. St. Martin's and St. Stephen's were closing. Christ Church reached out to them.

After the service I spoke to a woman who had been the Sunday school superintendent at St. Stephen's, and had every reason to be disappointed when it was getting ready to close. Then at a meeting of synod she was approached by folks from Christ Church who warmly invited her into the congregation. She gave it a try, liked it, and made friends.

A year and a half later, a position opened at Christ Church for a Sunday school superintendent! Often when God closes one door,

faith will discover another door opening. She took the job. "I realized that God had a purpose for me here," she told me.

Stranger welcomed

I also met someone who had belonged to St. Martin's. She recalled that the first Sunday she came to Christ Church she could barely muster the courage to enter—Do you know how difficult it can be to enter a strange church by yourself? I do.

Afterwards, as she was leaving, several women came after her, introduced themselves, and invited her to coffee. As it happens, they quickly discovered a common bond: they were all recent widows. And she knew she had found a new church home.

Let me tell you an experience I had at Christ Church that encapsulated its spirit. When I was walking back to my pew after taking communion, I glanced at the people who had already returned to their places. A very large number of them were smiling in a quiet, peaceful way. That probably sounds like a small thing. But seeing so many people glad to be there, taking in the sacramental assurance of God's love and pardon, really struck me.

A little history

Christ Church has a stone building in gothic style on River Road, just north of downtown Niagara Falls. The core of the present building was completed in 1865, when the area was called Clifton. Transepts and chancel were added in 1894, substantially increasing the seating. Two church halls were added in 1910. A ten-bell carillon was installed in 1912.

In 1988 a large legacy came to Christ Church, and serious renovations and repairs were undertaken on the roof, interior walls, and pews.

If you visit, you'll find a long, handsome gothic interior with fine stained glass windows and a high peaked ceiling in warm dark woods. The plaster walls are relatively chaste and unadorned, except that on the north wall there's a very tall frame containing a meticulously executed brass

rubbing. A parishioner made it from a life-sized monumental effigy of a Clunian monk in Sussex.

At the communion rail you'll find five exquisite kneeler cushions, handcrafted by two dozen parishioners between 1986 and 1990. They were dedicated by Bishop Jo Fricker, a son of Christ Church.

Conservative tradition

Liturgically and theologically, the congregation is on the conservative side of the spectrum, although in my youth it would have been called centre-church. Since St. John's, Niagara Falls, steers in a more liberal direction, Anglicans in the northern part of the city have the choice of two equally fine churches with distinct styles.

The Prayer Book Eucharist is used two Sundays out of four. When there's a fifth Sunday in the month, the "page 230" Eucharist is used from the *Book of Alternative Services*. This was the service when I visited. It's our Prayer Book Eucharist, but re-ordered according to the precepts of the Liturgical Movement, which was popular in the 1970s. The liturgy was led with perfect reverence.

I particularly liked the choir's "Nothing can trouble" before the sermon. This is the translation of a Spanish hymn by St. Teresa, set to a Taizé tune, found in our *Common Praise* hymn book.

Gospel sermon

Since I hear too many sermons telling me what I need to do in order to be a better Christian, it was a welcome thing to hear the preacher proclaim the good news of God's assured love and surplus mercy.

After the service, I joined a very large fellowship in the parish hall for some fine fresh pie, unusually good coffee, and friendly conversation.

I didn't ask anyone what they thought of the rector, but several volunteered that he was pretty wonderful. I'm sure that he deserves at least a little share of the credit for the positive social chemistry of this historic Christian community.

The grace of giving



LINDA MOORE
CANADIAN CENTRE FOR LEADERSHIP AND
HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

A grandmother places a gentle kiss on the soft spot of her new granddaughter's tiny head. In a refugee camp a boy no more than four, shares his nutritious bowl of milk with a friend. A thirteen year old student reaches across the table to hold the hand of a school mate who cries silently in despair. A young woman massages the feet of her tired husband. A man stooped with arthritis joyfully picks a riotous bouquet of spring flowers from his garden to give to his sweetheart. A concerned father wraps an arm around his teenage son in comfort for his defeat on the football field. An old woman crawls into a hospital bed to bring solace, as her dear husband takes his last breaths. Through the whole cycle of life there is a reverend graciousness in giving, for us to discover and rediscover in the course of every day.

This grace is gentle and enfolded, spacious and effortless. It is as if, in the cupped hands of Spirit, we were bathed in unconditional love; and faith in ourselves and one another renewed. It is intimate and precious. The grace of giving also opens up an unlimited groundswell of prosperity in a mystical way that heeds the principles of the law of circulation. Give with grace and love, with attention to "other", and we begin to live in

gratitude. By living in gratitude we see the gifts our lives hold and find ourselves acknowledging our blessings in an unceasing way. In this boundless and joyful place all is possible and giving is the prime intention of our life.

Giving with personal commitment

I am struck by the juxtaposition of this intention of giving and that of the material "giving" fraught with the stress of shopping, limited finances, guilt purchases and ritual responsibilities. Perhaps we can consider shifting our perspective so that the grace of giving can be present. Imagine what might be possible if instead of buying a material gift for another we asked if we could provide them with an experience meaningful to them that did not cost money. A friend of mine, Dorothy asked her five year old what she could do with her that would make her especially happy. Her daughter replied, "You're always so busy. Please stay home and play with just me, all day!" There was plenty of room for the grace of giving in that reply!

There is also quite a difference when we simply write a cheque to a favourite charity and experience no sense of personal involvement. With this evolved perspective an amazing woman, Anne has found the grace of giving that comes with personal commitment. Her contribution is part of a sequence of gracious giving that continues to unfold into this moment.

The human capacity to give

Last February my young seven year old friend Meghan took her Barbie dolls and clothes to a newly opened home for abandoned young girls in Lucknow, India, started by

mutual friends. This generous act led to the forming of new relationships. In addition, another friend, Laurel, gave up her future in the family business and went to India to assist in the set up and running of the home. Meghan and her dad, Brad, began having weekly story times with Laurel and the girls through video conferencing. In this way the girls stayed connected and also are improving their English. All this and there is more!

Meghan's school friend, Natalie, went home and told her mom, Anne, all about the adventures in India. Anne was so touched by the story and the commitment of others that she felt a great desire to give. She immediately wrote a substantial cheque which helped to refurbish part of the home for the girls. She did this quietly and with love. She was being drawn into the magic of it all because it was a personal story involving individuals she knew and cared about. Since then she has taken the time to speak to her own friends and family and has solicited their support in this endeavour as well. This connection to one another is simply fostering the desire to contribute. Anne has discovered the grace of giving and in doing so, has brought joy to those who are the direct recipients of the giving. Frankly she has also given as much to those of us who have witnessed the story unfolding simply through her actions!

Each day I am stunned by our human capacity to give. May we find the grace of giving in those intimate and precious moments throughout our day to day lives. May we transform into a place and space where graciousness and gratitude guide our way to giving, always.

EDITORIAL

A season of hope

CHRISTOPHER M. GRABIEC
EDITOR

At the time of writing, there is a kind of weariness that seems to be weighing upon me and perhaps many others. Things are going on in the world—and we don't seem to have much control.

A few months ago I wrote about my opposition to war and in particular to the war in Afghanistan. There have been a few folks write in (and I respect their opinions) about my extreme form of pacifism. Perhaps it is an extreme form, but more young people have come home in body bags since. It just doesn't make any sense to me.

Recently the Rev. Ted Haggard, a strong opponent of same sex marriage and homosexual relationships in general had to resign because he has been involved with

felt when he spent time thinking alone, but I imagine that he felt as confused as some of us. But there was something that kept on driving him—it was indeed his faith in the establishment of the reign of God on earth. He knew that people of "good" will had the power to make that real and he spent most of his time encouraging us to do that.

He knew that hypocritical religious and political leaders would continue to exert power over the masses, but he also knew that the masses could find hope in God's reign and would be ultimately victorious.

We are very fortunate, in faith, to have discovered the value of our "seasons" and their power (through symbol) to make a difference in our lives. We'll be starting Advent in a few days. There are choices

WE HAVE NO REASON TO ASSIGN POWER to political and religious leaders who do nothing but create hopelessness and despair among us.

a gay prostitute. Frankly, I don't really care about his personal life, but he has been doing so much to destroy other people's lives in his political and so-called religious opposition to the gay community over the years. This man was in regular contact with the president of the United States, counseling him to legislate against gay marriage and any furthering of gay rights. Yet, he himself has been seeing a gay prostitute and buying drugs from him!

This past week, the newspapers have said that Saddam Hussein will be hanged for his crimes. What a horrible criminal he has been. He's destroyed so many lives and threatened the peace of our planet. Having said that, does it make any sense for us to take his life, the very same thing that he has done to others and for which he stands accused? The president of the United States, a staunch opponent of abortion, feels that Mr. Hussein's sentence is a victory for the world of goodness. I am so confused.

I could go on, but perhaps these examples are enough. The world around me seems so wrong, in so many ways. Good young Canadian men, coming home in body bags, moralistic and extremist religious leaders accused of the very thing that they condemn in others, and people rejoicing over the capital punishment and murder of a man who murdered others. It doesn't make sense.

But then again, when has the world ever made sense. It didn't make any sense to Jesus either. He battled the church (of his day) and a government that was imposed upon him and his people by a foreign nation. He battled complacency and warped views of religion. Yes, he battled extremism both religious and political. I don't know how he

here. One is to ignore the power of the symbol, and it will be rendered powerless in your life. The other is to engage in the power of that symbol and to allow it to change your directions and indeed your very life itself.

Purple or blue candles, wreaths, greenery, lights and trees are all symbols of hope in a confused world. When Advent hits, we have the opportunity to transcend political and religious influences that are threatening to destroy our inner selves. There is a hope that comes with faith and creates a love that is beyond imagining. Advent is the great meditation leading us to understand and experience the incarnate presence of God in our lives. Yes, it's true that God does not live in the distance, but God is incarnate through his Son Jesus and chooses to walk among us.

We have no reason to assign power to political and religious leaders who do nothing but create hopelessness and despair among us. When we realize the immanent presence of God among us, we need only look to and rely upon that presence. In so doing, we find hope and that hope combined with our faith, drives us to live the life of love. That love can be lived out in our every day lives and ultimately, that love will change our world and the world well beyond us.

In all of this, I'm saying that I do get overwhelmed by what appears to be some pretty evil structures in our society. I need Advent. I need the power of this symbol help me (and us as a church) to gain perspective. The perspective that I gain is about the true power on earth, which is God's loving presence. I can only hope and believe that this perspective will drive me joyfully through another year in this world of confusion.

— PLUM CHRISTMAS PUDDING —

Submitted by Carol Summers

This is a Canadian recipe by Doris Cummings. People line up for her elderberry pies at Caledonia Fair. She and her husband Jack are still energetic workers and involved in all we do. I would not organize anything at the church without talking to Doris first. This recipe might be good for those of you who want a recipe that is a little lighter than the Kings Pudding... but still good.

Ingredients

1.5 cups of flour
1 cup of brown sugar
1 cup of raisins
1 cup of nuts
1 cup of breadcrumbs
1 cup of suet
1 cup of milk
1 tsp of baking soda
1 tsp of cinnamon
Half cup of molasses

Method

Mix all together.
Put into pudding bowl or casserole dish
Steam for three hours



YOUR OPINIONS

Niagara Anglican - December 2006

Closure of ABC walk-in bookstore



QUENTIN JOHNSON
ROCKWOOD, ONTARIO

I am writing to you regarding the recommendation to close the walk-in bookstore of The Anglican Book Centre (ABC) in Toronto. This news was posted on the Anglican Journal website in October 2006.

I am disturbed and concerned that this recommendation has been made for the following reasons.

■ There has not been any opportunity for customers to provide feedback and comment on the current format for the ABC. Well-run organizations and commercial companies always take measures such as customer surveys and feedback to determine that customer service remains at the client's expectations.

■ The move of the ABC to Hayden Street can only be described as ill planned and ill conceived. It is astonishing that the ABC in the current location is so difficult to find that the neighbouring United Church had to place a sign on its doors saying "This is

not the ABC!"

■ This brings to mind that the senior managers, not the bookstore staff, have ignored Christ's message from St. Matthews Gospel (chapter 5, verses 14-15) about not lighting a lamp under a bushel basket!

■ At a time when more people are searching for spiritual guidance as Anglicans we appear to have missed the boat by not looking at the ABC as a major asset and an opportunity to raise the profile of Anglicans and as a tool for Evangelism. I am surprised that with a little planning and some thoughtful advocacy by senior Church House managers to senior corporate managers and senior executives who are Anglicans that the ABC could not have lobbied for assistance to get a retail location in a high traffic area such as Union Station/Front Street and Yonge/Bloor or at least in a visible nearby location.

■ It is surprising to note that in Guelph with a population of 100,000 people there are two Christian Book/Gift Stores which seem to be thriving. Yet we cannot make a go of it in Toronto where there is a population many times the size of Guelph.

From my viewpoint it is clear that to run a retail operation successfully you need to have managers who have retail experience. I am not convinced that this has been the case in the past few years for the ABC. A properly run retail outlet could be a source of

revenue to the National Office to help fund other programmes of outreach and evangelism and not general running expenses.

Finally I am disturbed by the quote in the online edition of the Anglican Journal by Archbishop Hutchison who is quoted as saying "Some of the staff, should they decide to look elsewhere [for employment], there is nine months in which to do it."

This sounds as if he is encouraging staff to leave so that the church will not have to pay severance packages and save more money on the backs of employees who have worked hard to make the ABC work under less than ideal conditions. The working conditions for the staff over the past few months can hardly be called ideal and they need to know that some Anglicans feel they deserve better treatment—and our prayers!

Will those in senior management positions who seemed to have mismanaged the ABC over the past few years be called to account for their actions as well?

What assurances do Anglicans in Canada have that the planned on-line store will be properly managed?

I urge that the committee members meeting in November pay very close attention to the ramifications of the closure and that the plans for the proposed new format have been properly drawn up. Is there a viable alternative?

MAILBOX

E.M. HANBURY
BURLINGTON, ONTARIO

Your editorial, "They are coming home in body bags," denouncing our involvement in Afghanistan, cries out for rebuttal on so many grounds that it's difficult to know where to begin. But here are a few points in response to your statements.

You say "We are more peaceful than almost anyone else in the world." Nonsense! Our Canadian forces have as proud a record of fighting in support of freedom as any in the world. Even in peacekeeping operations, many have died.

"The Middle East absolutely hates our interference. How much longer until we become the targets of hatred as well?" We already are the targets of hatred and attempted attacks by the Islamicists who are dedicated to the destruction of western civilization and the forcible conversion of the world to Islam, and who hate us simply for being non-Muslim. And we have been warned by Osama bin Laden himself to expect attacks. Our troops are in Afghanistan in support of a rebuilding effort. Should we back off in fear of the Taliban, who ran one of the most brutal and murderous regimes in the world, and who denied basic human rights, including medical care and education, to women and girls in Afghanistan?

"We don't need military toys." No, but what we do need is military equipment—including suitable aircraft—so that our military can do their jobs effectively; equipment that has long been denied to them.

"The church should cry out in a loud voice that God does not want war and killing." Sadly, there are a lot of Islamofascists in the world today who believe that is exactly what Allah wants.

"Maybe the church should try to broker a peaceful settlement, no matter who we need to talk to. It's time to turn over the tables of our government..." Well, you can certainly advocate that, but I would think it's doubtful that you'll find many takers, except in some political circles, for this extreme pacifism.

Challenging the New Assessment Formula

WILLIAM LIDKEA
DEPUTY PEOPLE'S WARDEN - ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST,
THOROLD

I have studied the document submitted by the Financial Advisory Committee and the Diocesan Treasurer and CFO at the Regional Budget Meetings held from September 20 to September 28 at length. I feel that I must write to you about my concerns. I feel that this Assessment Formula, without intending to be, is terribly unfair.

I know that the FAC was trying to simplify the Diocesan Mission and Ministry formula and make it fair to all parishes. But all they have proven is that good intentions do not guarantee good results. In

due to dwindling membership and/or lower average contributions.

It is important to note that the last institution I can recall proposing a flat tax rate was the Canadian Alliance Reform Party. That institution has since faded from the Canadian scene, partly due to its far right fiscal policies—like robbing the poor to enhance the rich. Heaven forbid that the same should happen to the Anglican Church of Canada.

I studied the DMM Income Summary comparing the net income and DMM assessments for the various parishes of the Diocese of Niagara under the old system and the newly proposed flat tax system. I was both

Now, if this isn't robbing the poor to enhance the rich, pray tell me what is?

I also found fault with the new formula's intention to tax all additional sources of income beyond what is put on the collection plate. Much of this income comes from the less well-to-do people of the community, and is depended upon by parishes that cannot get enough income from the collection plate. For example, members of AA, CA and Alanon groups who are seeking sobriety and straightness in their lives have not been known for their wealth. The parents of youngsters attending teen dances do not come from wealthier classes. Many people attending our bazaars are people desperately seeking bargains. When a church puts on a dinner for its parishioners, it has to be careful that the price is not too high as to exclude those in the community who are on fixed incomes.

In view of the above picture I would suggest that it's a good time for the FAC to go back to the drawing board.

Perhaps they could look at the progressive taxation as a fairer and better method of levying taxes through the DMM. My 2004 income tax form tells me that my tax level goes up from 16% to 29% as my taxable income increases from \$35,000.00 to \$113,804.00 in four stages. Under this system deductions are allowed for eligible expenses and incomes.

I believe that if FAC would apply progressive taxation as in the above example, most of our parishes would end up with a DMM that was more easily within their means. Our churches, suffering hardship would receive a welcome reduction in their DMM. The well-to-do churches, who could afford to pay more for their DMM, would in fact pay more. This system would be much fairer than the FAC current proposal.

THERE IS CONSIDERABLE VARIATION among the parishes in terms of yearly income and in their profit levels after basic expenses.

its preamble, the FAC states that the DMM submitted by the parishes of the Diocese of Niagara tended to vary from 10% to 25% of their net income. The FAC stated that this was unfair to those paying the higher percentage and that a 20% flat tax would be much fairer.

There is a problem however with the flat tax rate. This is the assumption that all parishes have an equal ability to pay and that their profit levels after basic expenses (salaries, utilities, etc.) are all relatively equal.

We all know that this is not true. There is considerable variation among the parishes in terms of yearly income and in their profit levels after basic expenses. Some parishes are comfortable financially with numerous parishioners giving a high average contribution. Other parishes are struggling to survive and threatened with disestablishment

amazed and horrified at what I found.

I found that 27 parishes had a reduction of their DMM under the new system. This list included some of the wealthiest parishes in the Diocese of Niagara some of whom would enjoy huge decreases in their DMM Assessment. One large parish, for example, would receive a whopping \$16,000 in their DMM, a parish that is not currently suffering financial difficulty.

I also found that there were 76 parishes being forced to increase their DMM up to 5% each year under the new system. Many of these parishes only receive one quarter to one third of the net income of the more well-to-do parishes in the first list. Included on the second list were a number of parishes who are having tremendous difficulties with meeting their expenses including their DMM, and are literally hanging by their fingertips.

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EVENTS IN THE DIOCESE

Niagara Anglican - December 2006

Pre-Xmas Giant Penny Sale

Parish of St. Luke, Hamilton

The Ladies' Guild is holding a party and penny sale extravaganza. There will be the usual great prizes, food from the roaring kitchen, bake table, crafts, draws, fun and good times for all the penny sale fans of Hamilton.

December 2, 10:00 am - 2:00 pm

Christmas Bazaar

St. George's, Niagara-on-the-Lake

We will have mixed gift baskets, crafts, jams, chicken pies, a bake table, a deli, books, children's items, and a candy sale available. Lunch will be served at a cost of \$7 per person.

December 2, 11:00 am - 1:30 pm

Christmas Bazaar

St. Philip-by-the-Lake, Grimsby

Crafts, jewelry, baked goods and penny sale

December 2, 9 am - 12 pm

Building in Faith: Christmas Market

St. Luke, Burlington

With a theme of "Christmas Traditions at St. Luke's" this event will bring old and new opportunities to get into the spirit of the season.

December 2, 9:00 am - 2:00 pm

Rummage Sale

All Saints, Hamilton

December 2, 9:00 am to 10:30 am

St. Nicholas Day

St. Cuthbert's, Oakville

Join us as Cuthbert's K.I.D.S. remembers the man behind the legend. Food drive for the less fortunate in our community and surprises will appear in our young people's shoes. Learning, fun and prayers as we commemorate the Patron Saint of children.

December 3, 10:00 am

Bishop Ann Tottenham Visits

St. John the Evangelist, Niagara Falls

On Advent 1 join us in welcoming Bishop Ann to St. John's to kick off our year of celebrations in honour of the 50th anniversary of 'new' St. John's. A reception will follow the 10:30 worship service.

December 3, 10:30

17th Annual Wassail Party

Grace Church, St. Catharines

Grace Church Choir invites you to join them in welcoming the festive season with refreshments and song.

December 3, 2:00 pm - 4:00 pm

Advent Parish Supper

St. Andrew, Grimsby

All are welcome to our Advent Parish Supper. After the supper, join us for our traditional Advent Carol Service at 7 pm.

Cost: Optional donation

December 3, 5:45 pm - 6:45 pm

Christmas Lounge

St. Simon, Oakville

Come for an evening of Christmas music featuring Sidebar. There will be a good mix of traditional carols, and old and new contemporary Christmas music. A great opportunity to wish friends a Merry Christmas and have some Christmas Cheer.

Cost: \$15.00 per person

December 3, 7:30pm

Best Kept Secret

Church of the Ascension, Hamilton

Forget the worry about all you need to do for the Holiday Season and let us do it for you!

For more details, see page 4.

Redeemer Express

Redeemer, Stoney Creek

Join the Redeemer Express Bus Trip for Romantic Castle Ancient Melodies. Enjoy a holiday buffet meal followed by entertainment and a wine tasting.

Cost: \$81.00 per person

December 8, 8:30 am

St. John's Christmas Tea

St. John the Evangelist, Niagara Falls

Join us for an English High Tea. We will be serving sandwiches, scones with cream and jam, assorted desserts, coffee, and of course tea! Please call Wendy at 905-371-2335 to reserve your table!

Cost: \$7 per person

December 9, 1:30 pm - 3:30 pm

Victorian Christmas Celebration

Holy Trinity, Hamilton

The celebration will include a family Christmas variety show, games, activities in Father Christmas' workshop, High Tea, a country store, and Christmas carols. All ages are welcome. Add to the fun by wearing a period costume. Ticket will be available in advance.

Cost: \$7 per person, \$15 per family (2 Adults, 2 Children), \$1 per child (Ages 5-12), Children ages 4 and under are free.

December 9, 2:00 pm - 4:30 pm

Community Carol Sing

St. George, Guelph

Take a break from your Christmas shopping and join St. George's Choir and the Salvation Army Band for an hour of carol singing. Refreshments will be served in Palmer Hall following the carol singing. There will be a free-will offering in support of the Salvation Army Christmas Hamper Fund.

December 9, 2:00 pm - 3:00 pm

English Folk Music Benefit Concert

St. John's, St. Catharines

St. John's Anglican Church in Port Dalhousie, St. Catharines is thrilled to be hosting this benefit concert. The concert will be performed by Patricia Tothe of Granby, Montréal, a professional folk singer and guitar player. The concert is a fundraiser for the St. John's Building Fund, which supports the new addition completed in 2003 and dedicated in January of 2004 by Bishop Ralph Spence. Patricia is offering her time and talent at no charge in the true spirit of ecumenism to help raise funds to support St. John's, which is the home church of her mother Betty Tothe. The event is being hosted by the St. John's Women's group, there will be refreshments and goodies served in the Lower Hall during intermission and the concert itself will be performed right in the church. Tickets are available by calling the church office at 905-935-6021.

Cost: \$10.00 for adults and \$5.00 for children under 10.

December 9, 7:00 pm

St. Andrew's Christmas Dance

St. Andrew, Grimsby

Come along for a fun evening of dancing, door prizes, cash bar, and a light snack. Our DJ, John De Jager, will have music for everyone.

Cost: \$10 in advance, \$12 at the door.

December 9, 8:00 pm to 12:00 am

Christmas Tree Lighting

St. Christopher, Burlington

December 10, 6:30 pm

Blue Christmas

St. John, Burlington

A healing Eucharist for those needing comfort during this season, due to a loss or grief in their life.

December 13, 7:30 pm

Building in Faith: Three Cantors

St. Luke, Burlington

The annual Christmas concert for children in need. All net proceeds go to St. Matthew's House and PWRDF. Call Jackie Maver at

905-681-6097 for more details.

Cost: \$20.00 plus a non-perishable food item.

December 13, 8:00 pm

A Christmas Carol

St. Columba, St. Catharines

A dramatic reading of Charles Dickens' A Christmas Carol starring our Bishop, Ralph Spence, as Scrooge. Tickets will soon be available through the church office. All proceeds will be donated to a community charity.

Cost: \$10.00 per person.

December 14, 7:00 pm

Social Night

St. Columba, St. Catharines

Another night of cards, fun, laughter, snacks, and prizes. Couples and singles welcome!

Cost: \$2.00 per person.

December 18, 7:00 pm

The Feminine Face of God

Christ's Church Cathedral, Hamilton

An exploration of biblical images of God, the role of women in the medieval Church, our own spiritual journeys in the church and the vital role of women in the Church today. On December 13 we will have a special guest, The Reverend Canon Lucy Reid.

December 6, 13 and 20 at 7:00 pm and December 7 and 21 at 11:00 am

Family Christmas Party

St. Cuthbert's, Oakville

Join us for pizza and a visit from our friends at Reptile Party. A Christmas party like you've never seen before!

Cost: Donation for food, crafts, entertainment.

December 22, 5:30 pm

Annual Carols on the Green

St. John the Evangelist, Niagara Falls

There's nothing like singing Christmas carols outside under the stars. Throw in some candles, hot chocolate and a live donkey and you've got the makings of a great Christmas tradition. Join us on Stamford Green (across from St. John's) for a night of wonder.

December 23, 6:00 pm

New Year's Eve Party

St. Cuthbert's, Oakville

Join Cuthbert's K.I.D.S. for worship when we will ring in the New Year with some special activities for children, grade 6 and under. Activities will include a countdown, snacks, games, singing and prayers.

December 31, 10:00 am

A Pilgrimage

Parish of St. Luke, Hamilton

New Year's Eve and what a better way to start the festivities than high tailing off to our sister high church, Saint Luke's of Brantford on Elgin Street for the first Sunday after Christmas Mass. Our own Father Hudson will be up in the pulpit with one of his end of year sermons that makes one sit up and take notice and afterwards we all get to gather in the cozy hall, where tea, coffee, and other snacks and refreshments will be served. All sorts of friendly spikes will be there and our lot will be in the thick of things. Rides are being laid on and everyone is welcome.

December 31, 7:00 pm

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How to Simplify Christmas

TIPS TO HELP FAMILIES escape the excess and focus on Christ's birth

KAREN STILLER
WORLD VISION

In the national lampoon film *Christmas Vacation*, a weary Ellen Griswold turns to her complaining daughter, Audrey, and sighs, "I don't know what to say except, it's Christmas and we're all in misery."

Many of us can relate to seasonal misery caused by too much of everything. Whether it's decorations and demands, presents and pageants, even too much family and fun, we get buried under to-do lists longer than Santa's and credit card bills higher than a Newfoundland snowbank. Even the effort to simplify can seem like just one more thing on the list. Further, if we are concerned with global poverty, then the way we do (or

old daughter sat by the tree and cried. "No matter how much we gave her, there was always one thing she didn't get. We seemed to be chasing a rainbow," remembers Cynthia.

The Roscoes and the Callaways decided to cut back on gifts and look for ways to give to people who really need it at Christmas. Both families emphasize the importance of parents or grandparents presenting a united front. "Do it together," stresses Phil. "Be as agreed as you can be on [gift-giving]. Then sit your children down and tell them they're not going to get a whole bunch of presents, but a few really good things that they're going to love." Phil suggests helping children or grandchildren focus on people who don't

Catalogue has changed how Cynthia gives to extended family and co-workers. A card with a goat on the front and a witty note such as: "I bought you a goat for Christmas, and then gave it to somebody else," amused recipients and made the Roscoes feel better about their gift-giving. The Callaway family looks for ways to reach out in their hometown of Three Hills, Alberta. Christmas Eve finds them dropping off surprise packages on the doorsteps of those in need. "We ring the bell and then run away," says Phil.

Find strength in numbers

Most churches and local charities welcome volunteers during the Christmas season to assist with outreach programs in their own communities and overseas, such as organizing Christmas toy drives or collecting toiletries for the homeless. That is one of the ministries that changed Christmas for Linda Rivera of Halifax. Members of her church have been involved with a Sunday supper for homeless men and women for years, but at Christmas they wanted to do something a little extra.

Linda and her team contacted 50 local churches and asked them to donate toiletries and treats. They collected enough items to stuff work socks and gift bags for 350 men and women. "To see adults who are wounded or hurt and have no big plans for Christmas receive these gifts was really something. It really got down to being about love," says Linda.

Keep love simple

Focus on spending time with your family instead of attending every event or even entertaining at home with perfection. "What's really going to matter years down the road?" asks Phil. "That I spent time with the people who are going to cry at my funeral, or that I went to a bunch of parties? I only remember one or two gifts I got as a child.

What I remember is sitting around

FOCUS ON SPENDING TIME WITH YOUR FAMILY instead of attending every event or even entertaining at home with perfection. That's really going to matter down the road?

overdo) Christmas can seem even more incongruous with our everyday values.

Simplifying Christmas does not need to make us Scrooges or take anything away from our children or grandchildren. Instead, it can help us realign our celebration of the season with what is truly important to us.

Whose birthday is it anyway?

That's the question Phil Callaway, Alberta-based speaker and author of *Making Life Rich Without Any Money*, and his wife, Ramona, asked themselves as well as their three teenaged kids. "We were crowding Christmas with gifts for the wrong people," Phil explains. "This really isn't my child's birthday. Things were out of balance." Toronto mother Cynthia Roscoe had her wake-up call one Christmas morning when her five-year-

old daughter sat by the tree and cried. "No matter how much we gave her, there was always one thing she didn't get. We seemed to be chasing a rainbow," remembers Cynthia.

Give gifts that really do keep on giving

Kathy Mitchell-Hay and her husband, Bob, decided to reform their Christmas and ended up transforming their children. The St. Catharines, Ontario, couple wrapped up the address of the World Vision website and put it under their tree. On Christmas morning, Sarah and Nicholas, then aged nine and 10, opened their gift and headed to the computer to select two children to sponsor. "Realizing that there are children out there with so much less has transformed our children's lives," says Kathy. "I highly recommend it to parents who want to change Christmas."

The World Vision Christmas



a big table with friends and family. The things that matter have nothing to do with big Christmas presents. They have to do with people."

That's the approach Cynthia takes as well, as she battles every year against "the biological imperative to turn into Martha Stewart at Christmas." She puts perfectionism on the shelf and invites her young daughters to help her prepare food, gifts, and decorations. "Christmas Day is still fabulous, even if I don't have gold oak leaves lining my mantel and the stockings are hung crooked," she says. "You can't make this event perfect."

Eschewing perfection and cutting back on gifts for people who don't need them—while giving to those who do—is not a one-way ticket to Scrooge-ville. Talking with our families and friends about what we do at Christmas, and why, can help us forego expensive and stressful customs, and replace them with new, enriching traditions that our kids, grandkids, and friends will remember long after the sweater we gave them shrinks and the Lego has been sucked up by the vacuum.

Karen Stiller, a writer in Port Perry, Ontario, does her Christmas shopping in August.

Marketing and the Church

Continued from page 4

lame, He would offer the message in an accessible, softer and personal manner. And to His disciples He would implore, teach, challenge and prod in the hope that they might soon be bearers of that same message. Jesus' innate ability to adapt in a manner that would allow the hearer to relate on a personal level, regardless of circumstance, is something from the Gospels that we might begin to utilize for our selves when dealing with marketing and evangelism.

With any successful market-

ing campaign, the most critical factor to the success of such a program is to remember the importance of truth in advertising. So as this marketing 'experiment' in our diocese unfolds, it is critically important that all parishes in Niagara prepare themselves to welcome the stranger and to provide the warmth and love that the message of the Christmas season promises. Greeters and hosts should be prepared to provide information and direction about our parishes. Newcomer information packets should be current and available. Everyone in the congregation should be prepared

to look out for new faces in our midst and make a point of greeting them. Make an extra special attempt to have the social time after worship reflect your commitment to being a warm, welcoming Christian community. Lastly, in this season as the word of our Church spreads across the airwaves, take the time and find the courage to invite someone you know and care for to church this Advent and Christmas season. There is no better time of year to be a Christian and there is no better time to invite people into the joy we experience through these seasons. Peace be with you!

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People in the news

■ Mr. Jim Newman submitted his resignation as Director of Stewardship in Niagara. Thanks for your special ministry to us and for your wisdom to so many parishes in this diocese.

■ Her Excellency the Right Honourable Michaëlle Jean, Governor General of Canada, announced on October 27 the appointment of three new Heralds Extraordinary within the Canadian Heraldic Authority. Mr. Roger A. Lindsay of Toronto, Dr. Helen K. Mussallem, C.C., of Ottawa and Vancouver, and the Right Reverend D. Ralph Spence, of Hamilton, have received the titles of Herald Extraordinary for their particularly notable contributions to Canadian heraldry over many years.

■ Canon Kristine Swire, Rector of Church of the Ascension, Hamilton, was sworn in as Regimental Padre for the Royal Hamilton Light Infantry (RHLI).

■ The Reverend Diane Beaman was elected Regional Dean of Brock, effective October 10 and the Reverend Dr. Michael Thompson was elected Regional Dean of Trafalgar effective October 10.

■ The Reverend Donald Eustace was issued a Bishop's Permission as Honorary Assistant a St. John the Evangelist, Hamilton, effective October 25. The Reverend Dr. Peter Widdicombe and the Reverend Tom Wilding have been reissued Bishop's Permissions at St. John the Evangelist, Hamilton.

■ The Reverend Carman Wilson was relicensed at St. John the Evangelist, Hamilton, effective October 25.

■ The Reverend Dr. Richard Ruggle submitted his resignation from St. Paul's, Norval, and retired October 31. The Venerable Peter Moore has been appointed Interim Pastor at St. Paul's, Norval, effective November 1.

■ Canon Marni Nancekivell has been appointed Interim Pastor at Church of the Epiphany, Oakville, effective November 1.

■ The Very Reverend Marcus Germaine, Dean of Moosonee and Rector of St. Matthew's Cathedral, Timmins, has accepted the position to be Rector of the Hamilton East Ministry, effective January 7. We welcome

Marcus, his wife Karen, and their daughter Monica, to Niagara.

■ Canon Laurence Duby submitted his intention to resign from Grace Church, Watford on January 31. He will be retired from full time ministry on February 1.

■ Lay Reader's License issued to Lynn Brubaker from Grace Church, St. Catharines on October 1, and Kate Snider and Sylvia Farrell from St. Paul's Church, Hamilton on October 29.

■ Five new Canons were installed on Sunday, November 5: Paul Charbonneau, St. Hilda's, Oakville; Robert Fead, St. George's, St. Catharines; Sharyn Hall, St. Luke's, Burlington; Lynda Kealey, St. Michael's, Hamilton; Stuart Pike, St. Andrew's, Grimsby; and Lynne Thackway, Hagersville and Cheapside.

■ Joyce Rogers, a long time and faithful member of St. John's, Ancaster, died on August 20. Joyce is the mother of Diane Taylor (spouse of Canon Paul Taylor). The graveside service was held on October 7. Our belated sympathy to Diane and the bereaved family.

■ Archdeacon Paul Jackson, retired from full time ministry, died on November 7. Paul Jackson continued with interim ministry, Director of the Continuing Education Plan and Chair of the Bishop's Task Force on Church Buildings. Our thoughts and prayers are with Judy and the Jackson and Walton families.

■ The Reverend Roger Forster, on medical leave from full time ministry, died on November 7 in Burlington. Roger resigned in 2005 as Rector of St. Elizabeth's, Burlington. Our thoughts and prayers are with Kathy and the Forster family.

■ The Reverend William Phipps, Deacon at Nassagaweya, died suddenly on Friday, November 3. In addition to his ministry at Nassagaweya, Bill Phipps was Deputy Director of Deacons for the Diocese, and a Justice of the Peace in Milton. Our thoughts and prayers are with Wendy and the bereaved family. The funeral service was held at Christ's Church Cathedral on Wednesday, November 8. Interment was held at St. John's Church Cemetery on November 9.

INVITING ANYONE TO YOUR HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS?



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