



# Niagara Anglican

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

## Bishop of Niagara lily dedication

TRISH MCCARTHY  
RECTOR - ST. JOHN'S, YORK  
AND ST. JOHN THE DEVINE, CAYUGA

On Sunday, July 30, Bishop Ralph Spence came to Cayuga to dedicate a beautiful deep red and bright yellow lily to the Bishop of Niagara. Around seventy-five people were in attendance at the Potting Shed Lily Nursery on Highway #3 East.

Jack Kent, with partner Paul Bolland and mother Dorothy, was very attentive and friendly, giving us information about the long process of developing this new strand of lily. It was a warm day but this did not deter enthusiastic gardeners from all around the diocese, including Ancaster, Burlington, Caledonia, Dundas, Guelph, Hamilton, Oakville, Orangeville, Shelburne, St. Catharines, Stoney Creek and Thorold, making it a real diocesan gathering.

### Consider the lilies

I, personally, welcomed the travelers and locals, inviting them to the refreshment time at St. John the Divine Church several blocks away. Then the Bishop led us in a

brief and meaningful service. Canon Charles Stirling read the gospel from Matthew 6: 28-33 in which Jesus says: "Why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow. They don't toil, nor do they spin, yet I tell you that even Solomon in all his glory was not dressed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field which today exists, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, won't he clothe you, you of little faith? Therefore, don't be anxious saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'With what will we be clothed?'... Your heavenly father knows that you need all these things. But seek first God's Kingdom and his righteousness; and all these things will be given to you as well."

The Bishop then dedicated the special flower to God's honour and glory. He prayed that it would remind us all of the beauty of God's whole creation and creative generosity. He prayed that it would "henceforth stand as a reminder of our ministry and mission to walk humbly, witnessing to God's presence on earth." The words,



From left: Paul Bolland, Trish McCarthy, Bishop Ralph Spence (holding the Bishop of Niagara daylily), Dorothy Kent and Jack Kent.

sights, sounds and botanical smells touched many and have given us a special memory to cherish in our hearts.

This happens to be one of my favourite gospel texts and has often been appointed in our daily office cycle of readings especially when I have been given to 'sweat-

ing the small stuff'. What a wonderful way to celebrate God's love in a relaxed context with our dear Bishop. Shall we as a church try to do more of this kind of low key event that helps people of different interests come closer to God? This reminds me of the Special Interest Groups that Canon Harold Percy's

Church, Trinity Streetsville has formed. We could seek to draw others to God through their hobbies and interests.

### Graceful hospitality

Tours of St. John's York were of-

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## Walking with each other

A DISCUSSION ON GAY AND LESBIAN ISSUES in the diocese

CHRISTYN PERKONS  
CHAIR OF DIALOGUE TASK FORCE

All over the world, wherever Anglican leaders and adherents gather, one issue hounds us. We are haunted by our struggles to respond to a move in the churches of the West towards the blessing of same gender unions, and the ordination of gay and lesbian priests and bishops.

For those in favour, the full inclusion of gays and lesbians in the life of the Church (meaning access to all the sacraments) is happening far too slowly. They feel that their fellow gay and lesbian Christians are being treated like second class church members; that their cherished Church still espouses a bigotry that much of the secular Western world has long since relegated to the annals of history; that the Church is sitting on the moral fence rather than responding faithfully to the call of the Holy Spirit to transform the body of Christ. They are hurt and frustrated by the many times that our decision-making bodies have postponed their full inclusion in order to have

more discussion and consultation. They are wounded by those who respond to same gender blessings and Episcopal and priestly ordinations with words of condemnation and alienation.

Those who believe that homosexual behaviour is wrong feel equally marginalised and misunderstood. For them, the Church should not be moving towards embracing a cultural shift that is outside the limits of authentic Christian faith. They believe that sex between people of the same sex is not God's intention for the human race, and while they may welcome gays and lesbians into their congregations, it is with the understanding that homosexual activity must be avoided. They see this challenge as being in a different category from that of women's ordination or the remarriage of divorced persons, and so, on this issue, they feel called to stand against many of their brothers and sisters in Christ...some to the point of severing ties with churches and provinces that endorse the blessing of same gender unions and/or the ordination of gay

and lesbian priests and bishops.

Many, both inside and outside the Church, wonder when we are going to make up our minds; when will we commit one way or the other. For the Anglican Church in Canada, that time is approaching. In June 2007, General Synod will consider the clause that was deferred from General Synod 2004; namely "That this General Synod affirm the authority and jurisdiction of any diocesan synod, with the concurrence of its bishop, to authorize the blessing of committed same sex unions". In the three years since General Synod 2004 "affirm[ed] the integrity and sanctity of committed same sex relationships", the St. Michael's Report was produced by The Primate's Theological Commission, and the Faith, Worship & Ministry Committee produced a list of resources to support a continued dialogue in parishes and dioceses across the country.

The Synod of the Diocese of Niagara passed a motion in 2004,

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## Doing the unthinkable

GORD ARCHBELL, ON AND PETER SWIRE, ON

Over the past few years, there has been a growing chorus of concerns from parish treasurers, wardens and volunteers such as ourselves that the formula for allocating the Synod approved budget to the parishes was cumbersome. Parishes used different methods to calculate allowable deductions. In certain cases, claims made by parishes for certain deductions were challenged for reasonableness.

In order to alleviate the frustration and errors at both the parish level and within the Finance Department, the Financial Advisory Committee has asked that we attempt to revise the formula to make it simpler and yet remain fair.

However, FAC was very clear that the amount of monies raised by the revised formula should equal the amount presently raised. If there are to be reductions in the diocesan budget that will need to be forthcoming from Synod.

Under the present formula, a tax is levied at a rate of approximately 33% on the net assessable income averaged for the three previous years. In addition, the to-

tal income reporting in the general fund was reduced by all amounts paid to third party outreach, major building repairs and debt reduction. The costs associated with clergy and licensed lay workers were deductible within limits.

### Something was amiss

Upon careful examination of the broader revenue and expenditure patterns as well as individual parish returns and financial statements, it was patently clear that something was amiss! We saw cases where one parish was remitting nearly 25% of its income to pay for its fair share of the diocesan mission and ministry costs. At the same time, we saw parishes pay as low as 10% of their income for their fair share.

After several months of analysis and 'what-ifs' we developed a formula which addressed the paramount need for fairness. Further, the proposed formula is objective leaving very little to interpretation or manipulation. Better yet, it is considerably easier to complete.

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# YOUNG AND PROPHETIC

Niagara Anglican - September 2006



## Lincoln youth sleep with the saints

JUDY STEERS  
COORDINATOR OF YOUTH INITIATIVES

A long time ago, I heard of an event at the Cathedral of St John the Divine in New York City, called 'sleeping in the holy places', where youth are invited to a sleepover/retreat experience in the cathedral. This story was the catalyst to the year-end Lincoln Youth Fest in June. While not quite as grand or auspicious as the Cathedral in New York, St George's St Catharines became the site of one of the most unusual events it has seen in recent history.

Over 20 youth from across Lincoln Region participated in this event. Leaders Reverend Val Kerr, Brenda Chatterton, Matt Cutler and Judy Steers led the group through an evening of cooperative games, biblical charades, clay sculpture

and epic muffin making for the St. George's Breakfast program the following morning. At the end of the evening, we gathered on the chancel steps for singing and prayers. Air mattresses and sleeping bags were set up in the chancel and aisles and by the light of the altar candles, the group listened to an evening story-reading and drifted off to sleep in the holy place surrounded by a 'cloud of witnesses' in the form of the streetlights shining through the stained glass windows all around them.

In the morning a slightly sleepy group had an early breakfast together and a number of the youth helped out with the St. George's breakfast by setting tables, making toast, washing dishes, serving muffins. "See you in September" was

the enthusiastic response from all participants as we look forward to another year of Youth Fests.

### Coming events

Lincoln Youth Fest is a recent addition to the youth programming in our diocese. One Friday per month, youth in grades 5-8 gather at one of the churches in Lincoln Region for a variety of activities, often themed to the time of year or church season. The kickoff event in September is at St. George's again, on September 22 from 6:00-9:00 pm and includes supper. The October event is an All Saints party at St. Andrew's Grimsby. Watch for announcements of other activities later in the fall and bring youth from your parish to make new friends and become part of the fun at Lincoln Youth Fest.

## Anger, drugs, justice, peer pressure, sex, and values

RUTH ANNE MARTIN  
DIOCESAN RESOURCE CENTRE

Learn all about it in the new resource available for loan from the program department, *TalkSheets*.

*TalkSheets* is resource consisting of 300 instant discussions for junior high students to high school students, dealing with a wide variety of topics from abortion to worship.

The program comes with step by step instructions in a user friendly

and flexible format to be used in youth group meetings, Church School classes and/or small groups. It's very adaptable, topics can be covered in 20 minutes or delved into more deeply for an extended discussion. The entire discussion can be built around *TalkSheets* or it can be used to supplement other materials and resources as a springboard to initiate a discussion. The program lends itself to diversity, as liberal or conservative as the par-

ticipants, themselves.

*TalkSheets* will challenge youth to think about their opinions, learn about themselves and grow in their faith journey. The program is designed to encourage kids to take part and interact with each other while talking about real life issues.

For more information on this great new resource available for loan, free of charge from your very own Diocese Resource Centre call Jane Wyse at 905-527-1316 (ext. 420).

## Looking Forward

YOUTH LEADER'S TRAINING WEEKEND is coming back to Niagara for the second straight year.

JOYCE WILTON  
PROGRAM CONSULTANT, YOUTH MINISTRY

For the second straight year, Looking Forward, the youth leader's training weekend is being held at Canterbury Hills from November 3-5, 2006. This weekend event is hosted jointly by the dioceses of Niagara, Toronto and Ottawa, but we are hoping for participants from across the Ecclesiastical province of Ontario and beyond.

Last fall, just over 20 folks gathered at Canterbury Hills for a weekend of rejuvenation, learning and support for their work and passion for youth ministry. This year we hope to double that number. Our special guest speaker this time around is Ms. Maya Landell, who is a passionate youth worker in the United Church who has completed the certificate program in Youth Ministry at Princeton and teaches with the NEOS program at Five Oaks in Paris Ontario. Maya is eager to engage with the participants about how to not only survive but thrive in a vital part of God's ministry. Maya was a workshop leader at last fall's event, was clearly a hit and favourite of all the participants, so she is back by popular demand with new insight and information this year.

Workshops this year include the topics *How to talk to teens about tough subjects*, *Single digit youth ministry*, *Cooperative youth ministry*, *Multicultural youth ministry*, and *Using arts in a youth ministry setting*. The weekend will also include amazing worship, incredible music provided by a Diocese of Toronto band, resource sharing and lots of time to mix and mingle with other folks working professionally and volunteering in the challenging ministry.

Teams that include youth members are also welcome. Remember that no experience is required or you may have done this for years but need your 'tank' refilled to keep going. Either way we have something for you. The cost is \$125.00 for 2 overnights, 5 meals, several resources, lots of support, spiritual renewal and so much more. If you are in need of a bursary to attend this event or if you would like to hear more, just call Joyce Wilton at 905-527-1316 (ext. 430) or email at her at joyce.wilton@niagara.anglican.ca

It promises to be a wonderful learning, sharing and networking opportunity for youth leaders of all shapes and sizes, ages and experiences, ordained and lay to learn more about working in Youth Ministry.

## A presentation of By the Sea



On Pentecost Sunday, St. John's Junior Choir presented their performance of the musical, *By the Sea* to the congregation of St. John the Evangelist, Niagara Falls. They were joined by St. John's Senior Choir and many members of St. John's Youth Group. Cynthia and Paul Maynard accompanied the choir on piano and flute. The sanctuary was transformed into a seaside village by the creativity of Andrea Fisher. Under the brilliant direction of St. John's Music Director, Cynthia Maynard, the children and Youth brought this musical drama to life. The cast attended extra choir practices and memorized lines for the many weeks leading up to the Day of Pentecost.

*By the Sea* (of Galilee) is the story of three people who are seeking Jesus. These three "seekers," played by Andrea Fisher, Mathew Fisher, and Kaitlin Gibson, are

tired, hungry, and in need of friendship. They travel from place to place along the Sea of Galilee never quite catching up to Jesus, but meeting many of his friends and followers along their way. In their travels, they learn how loving and compassionate and how merciful and giving Jesus is. The children's pure faith shines through in their performance. They were not merely saying lines or singing lyrics; they were declaring their faith. Kohdy Rusk brought tears to many an eye with his vocal solo and the finale with the entire cast singing "By the Sea" received a standing ovation. The director and cast hope to take their production 'on the road' in the fall of 2006; visiting any congregations that would like to host them. For more information on their tour schedule, please contact Cynthia Maynard at St. John the Evangelist Niagara Falls.



### Empowerment for Pastoral Care Course: Enhancing the Ministry of the Baptized

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With inquiries contact Rev. Dr. Trish McCarthy by phone at 905-772-5077 or by email at [tmccarthy@mountaincable.net](mailto:tmccarthy@mountaincable.net)  
Register by Monday, November 13, 2006

# Guelph churches share financial strategies



ALAN L. HAYES  
THE ITINERANT CHURCHGOER

To do ministry effectively, churches need to be realistic about money. Taking finances seriously even though we're not in business to make a profit is obedient, I think, to our calling to be "in the world but not of it." Paul, too, gave a great deal of attention to raising money from the saints for the saints.

Recently I visited three of the four Anglican churches in Guelph (I've taken a rain-check on the fourth), and I was really impressed with how they all took finances seriously as a way of doing ministry effectively. And they said I could share their stories with you.

## Three different churches

The three churches are fascinatingly different. St. George's has a large congregation of 900 households, a generally traditional and unelaborate approach to worship, a beautiful old building in great condition in the downtown core, and an annual budget of close to \$600,000, which is at or near the top of the diocese.

St. James' has a middle-sized congregation of 280 households, an Anglo-catholic approach to worship, an historic building which has needed a lot of attention in recent years, a location a little west of downtown, and an annual budget of \$300,000.

St. Matthias' has a smaller congregation of 100 households, an informal, family-type, untraditional approach to worship, a 22-year-old building in the newer south part of the city, and an annual budget of \$175,000.

All three take systematic approaches to meeting their annual budget. As it happens, all three have also successfully raised extra funds for capital purposes this year.

## Secrets of success

I spoke recently with the three rectors, Tom Greene, Kevin Bothwell, and Margaret Murray. All three tell me (though not using exactly these words) that meeting their financial responsibilities requires several things: a vision for mission, strong lay leadership, lots of communication, consultation, and transparency, an affirmation of Anglican diversity, energy and preparation for Sunday morning, and good planning.

They're too modest to say so, but strong clergy leadership is also important. All three of these churches have this, too.

Now, if you say that these are the requirements of a financially healthy church, there's a corollary that will be uncomfortable for some. When a church does have financial problems, it's not usually just bad luck. It's a sign that something is wrong at the level

of management.

As with most Anglican parish budgets, the large items in their parish budgets are building and utilities, salaries, diocesan assessments, insurance, and the Primate's World Relief and Development Fund. All of these support ministry directly. At many churches, the residential school settlement fund is also connected with the annual budget.

## Raising annual revenues

St. George's keeps so systematically focused on its operating expenses and income, that it will be starting work this fall on its 2008 budget. Financial needs will be presented clearly and freshly, and being fresh every year can be a challenge. Members will receive their pledge cards later in the fall.

So if you thought that it was easy keeping a big and successful church big and successful, think again. In fact, I can name some big and successful churches in this very diocese that, at some historical moment, went downhill quick.

At St. George's, stewardship is regularly presented as part of Christian discipleship. The rector gave me a copy of an eight-page pamphlet called *Stewardship: A Way of Life* dated 2005 that was distributed with a commitment card. It included a message from the wardens, a message from the rector, a clear summary budget, and an analysis of givings for 2003. It's a really well conceived, well executed, informative, and helpful little publication.

He also showed me the new 2006 version which is similar but, well, fresh. Instead of including a wardens' message, it describes the church's mission, goals, programs, and people under the heading "St. George's: a spiritual home (and more) for all." It makes a very solid case for the impressive contribution the church makes to Guelph and the wider world.

Stewardship is presented not only in this pamphlet but also in the parish newsletter, through mailings, in meetings, and in diocesan educational events. The rector doesn't usually preach "stewardship sermons."

## Pre-authorized payments

Here at St. George's and also at the other two churches, pre-authorized payment programs have become an essential part of parish financial management. (Members let the church take something directly out of their bank account every month.) These plans are especially important for maintaining a cash flow in the summer, when church attendance typically declines.

Now, PAP members might feel embarrassed about appearing stingy when the offering plate passes. So St. George's gives them a token to put in the plate.

Like the other two churches as well, St. George's works hard at attracting new members. Without new members, decline is inevitable since, after all, some people die and some move away. Among many strategies, the three Guelph churches accommodate diverse liturgical preferences. St. George's

has three services on Sunday morning, each with its own particular character.

At St. Matthias', the rector acknowledges that revenues chronically fall short of budget. In particular, it came as a big financial shock last year when they lost a very significant source of rental income. The United Church which had been meeting at St. Matthias' decided to strike out on its own.

But the rector works on the principle that problems can be opportunities. Having her church available all Sunday morning, and not just part of it, has allowed her to begin two additional services which may appeal to somewhat different constituencies. She says that an increase in membership of twenty to thirty households would definitely help St. Matthias' meet its budget.

One of the new services is an 11:30 worship which has appealed to University of Guelph students who like to sleep late on Sunday mornings. True, poor students may not feed the offering plates, but they do strengthen the community in other ways that can indirectly help the financial picture.

St. Matthias has quite a number of fund-raisers, which bring over \$13,000 to the annual budget. The most notable fund-raiser is the long-time annual Christmas tree sale, which has a high profile in the wider community. I live in Oakville, where St. Cuthbert's does the same.

## Capital campaigns

So much for the annual budget. Each of these churches has also undertaken capital campaigns this year.

At St. George's, it was finally time to replace the slate roof from 1883. In addition, the carillons needed repair. There are only eleven carillons in all of Canada, so this is really a resource for the wider community. These two projects cost \$700,000, and the congregation's share of that was \$400,000.

The campaign kicked off in March. The money was raised by July.

Sounds easy, but it involved a carefully designed, highly consultative process for approving the financial goals in the first place, followed by an even more elaborate process of visitation under the supervision of twenty team captains. A layperson in the congregation effectively managed publicity, and the media took a lot of interest in the bells.

Experience helps, too, the rector told me. This was his third capital campaign at St. George's.

At St. James', when the rector first arrived he discovered a heavy debt load of about \$350,000. As it happened, he had some business experience himself, and could think of ways to begin to tackle the problem. But he also found some helpful advisers in the diocesan office.

Like the rector of St. George's, he preferred not to preach about stewardship. He felt it might get in the way of his building up strong relationships with people, especially since he was a newcomer. But in focus groups, meetings of commit-

tees, and publications, the needs were identified by the congregation itself, which accepted them as their own.

## Financial transparency

Maybe fifty years ago church leaders could manage parish finances confidentially among themselves, the rector told me. Not any more. Members want an accounting. But when they know what the situation is, they take responsibility.

The result at St. James' has been a three-year fund-raising program from the fall of 2005 to the fall of 2008. The second mortgage on the church was burned a few weeks ago. Then will come paying down the first mortgage, and then restoring the organ, and then building up an endowment fund.

It's an ambitious plan, but they're doing fine.

As at St. George's, individual visits to members have been an important part of the process. Oftentimes, those from whom little was expected gave surprisingly much. On the other hand, others were less generous than anticipated.

St. James', like St. George's, had the talent to do the work itself. No professional fund-raisers were called in from outside. St. James' produced all its own publicity in-house.

Similarly to the other Guelph churches, one important strategy for fund-raising at St. James' has been congregational growth. A good website has been one instrument for attracting new members.

Still another financial strategy has been bequest planning.

## Money and mission

But the rector emphasized that, as much as some of this resembles marketing, it's also a particular dimension of being the church. A big part of his task as a priest, he says, is to help people see how they fit into God's plan for the world, and the specific roles they may be called to play in the life of the church community. And when God calls people, God gives them the gifts.

Over at St. Matthias', the capital fund-raising campaign this year was directed to a new roof and a new keyboard. The target was \$40,000, of which \$35,000 was raised.

The success of the campaign can be assessed two ways, the rector said. On the one hand, the roof was indeed replaced and a new keyboard was indeed bought. The

congregation can feel very gratified at raising so much money, especially given that its history for fund-raising hasn't been strong.

On the other hand, it's disappointing to fall short of the target. If you set a goal, she says, it's usually important to meet it.

Here, too, as at St. George's and St. James', personal visitation was an important strategy in the capital fund-raising. Many of the visitors enjoyed doing the visiting more than they expected they would. But some visitors ran out of steam, and didn't quite finish their lists.

## Cooperation and competition

A sufficient problem prevented me from visiting the Anglican Church of St. David and St. Patrick in Guelph, but they, too, have successes to share in both annual and capital fund-raising.

Now, dear reader, you may have occasionally noticed competitive instincts among your clergy. The rector and wardens of church 'A' will sometimes like to feel more successful than the rector and wardens of church 'B' cross-town.

So I was delighted to discover that the rectors of the four Guelph churches meet together once a week to share, pray, and support one another. And they give every impression of enjoying one another's company.

In fact, if a visitor comes to their church looking for something that another church in town can provide better, the rectors have been known to recommend the other one. It reminded me a little of *Miracle on 34th Street* where the Macy's Santa surprises people by encouraging shoppers to look for something at Gimbel's.

I wondered whether the rectors' sense that they are collaborating in the ministry of the Anglican Church, rather than competing, as well as their openness with their colleagues about the joys and tribulations that they're experiencing in their parishes, has strengthened their ministries in ways that might actually increase the black ink in their budgets.

But the main inspiration I brought home from my conversations with the three rectors was their effectiveness in connecting finance with ministry. They follow most of the same principles, though in distinct ways, since their church communities are different, and their own styles of ministry are different.

Caralei Peters MSc, ND  
DOCTOR OF NATUROPATHIC MEDICINE

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# Impact of a Cursillo weekend

NANCY WOOD  
ST. PHILIP THE APOSTLE, BURLINGTON

In the fall of 1998 I casually mention to my rector that I would love to attend a Cursillo weekend. I had been approached several years before but at that time if you were married, both husband and wife needed to commit to attending a weekend. Since my husband was not interested in attending this type of event I was not eligible to attend. I was disappointed as I had seen first hand the positive impact Cursillo had on many of my fellow parishioners.

At some point in time the requirement for both spouses to attend a weekend was changed. So when my rector agreed to sponsor me to attend an upcoming weekend I was very excited. I still did not know exactly what to expect or what impact Cursillo would have on my life but off I headed along with three other ladies from my parish to St. Ignatius College in Guelph.

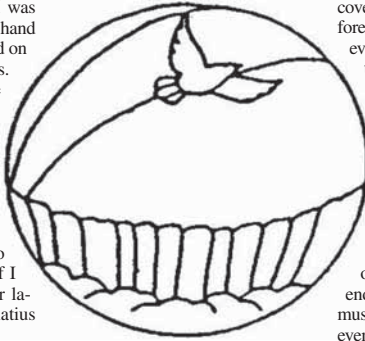
To say that I found the weekend extremely powerful would be an understatement. Most of the people I met were virtual strangers at the beginning of the weekend but there was something very powerful and comforting for me to be with what I would call like minded people, people of faith. Many of those people shared their faith journeys and it was inspiring to hear others speak so openly and passionately about their faith.

## Surrounded by love

The main thing I had heard about a Cursillo weekend was that as a participant I would feel surrounded by love. And it is true; I did feel surrounded by love: Love of the team members who worked so hard on our behalf, and truly lived out Jesus' words "love one another as I have loved you," the love of the other participants as we got to know one another and as we shared the Cursillo experience together, and most of all, God's love for me and for all His children. I felt a real sense of belonging, not just to the Cursillo community but to the Christian community. I understood what it was to

be part of "the people of God."

But no matter how great an experience the Cursillo weekend was, it was just a weekend. Sure I made new friends. Sure I enjoyed the wonderful music. Sure I felt anew God's love for me. But what would I do with this experience and these feelings once I started my fourth day—when I was back to reality—back home



back at work?

Well that's the beauty of the Cursillo Movement. It teaches a way of life that is aimed at helping each of us continue our own personal journey. During the weekend we learned that faith, study and action are an essential part of that journey. The recommended method to help focus on these components is to meet regularly with a small group of people and share with each other where we are in our faith, study and action. These meetings are known as group reunions.

## Changes

So what has changed for me since attending my Cursillo weekend? Well for starters, I immediately began to attend "group reunions" with several ladies from my parish. Although the group members have changed over the years this is still a valuable tool to keep me focused. During group reunions, I share when I felt closest to God since we last met, and sometimes when I felt furthest for Him. I also share what type of study I am involved in that will help me to grow in my

faith and what action plan I have to serve God. Meeting on a regular basis really helps me to continually examine my faith, to be more committed and intentional in my study and to think about what action I can take to grow in my journey or help someone else grow in theirs.

Study was an area where I definitely fell short and so I decided to begin by reading the Bible from cover to cover, something I had not done before. And I was amazed at how relevant some of the words were in today's world. Before attending my weekend I was hesitant to attend study sessions and if I was persuaded to attend I was certainly hesitant to express my thoughts or views. Now I enjoy attending educational events and am an active participant. I have even been an Alpha leader as well as serving on team for two Cursillo weekends. Joining with others, I provide music at Ultreya's and educational events and I am currently serving on the Cursillo Secretariat. I have also sponsored other parish members so they may attend a Cursillo weekend and hopefully have as positive an experience as I did. I have a more active prayer life. And most of all I am more willing to talk to others about my faith.

## New purpose

I have to say that prior to attending my Cursillo weekend, I had already been quite actively involved in my parish in a variety of areas. This has not changed. However, I find I have a renewed sense that what I do in the church is a way for me to serve God and to enhance my relationship with Him. Just as Christ commissioned the disciples, I feel it is my responsibility to be involved at the parish level and in the community to do what I can to serve God and spread His word.

For me attending my weekend was a like a gift from God. God worked through the Holy Spirit and through Cursillo to enhance my spiritual life and for that I am truly grateful.

# The challenge of belonging



PETER WALL  
DEAN - CHRIST'S CHURCH CATHEDRAL

Belonging in and to the Church has always been a challenging thing. It encompasses how we are with each other as well as what we do. I have always found the story of David and Absalom one of the most haunting and emotional stories of the Biblical text. It is a story of pride and ambition, of intense yearning, and of deep sorrow. David's lament in 2 Kings 18, 'O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! Would I had died instead of you, O Absalom, my son, my son!' moves me deeply each time I hear or read it. It speaks of that amazing bond that exists between parent and child, and also is a wistful and incredibly sad comment on both what could have been and what we all too often find in the realities which surround us.

It is not an overstatement to say that I have been feeling many of those same emotions over these last few months, particularly in the events which have followed the 75th General Convention of the Episcopal Church, USA (ECUSA). This triennial event, much like our General Synod, met in Columbus, Ohio and, among its important work, included the election of the 26th Presiding Bishop of that Church, as well as a number of resolutions in response to the *Windsor Report*. The Anglican world watched closely as the American church met in Convention for the first time since the release of the *Windsor Report*, the subsequent meeting of Anglican Primates at Dromantine, and other important events. Similarly, our General Synod will be under the same scrutiny when we meet as the Canadian church in 2007. Since the world and other provinces of our church were observing, and carefully what happened in Columbus, there have been many responses, some temperate, some less so. All of the responses speak to what it is to 'belong' to this Church of ours; many make me want to echo King David of old and cry, 'O Church, o my Church...'

## Some of the opposition seems vitriolic

For many, the election of the new Presiding Bishop Katherine Jefferts-Schori has been dire news. The reasons for their opposition—which has in certain parts of our Church, been vitriolic—seems to focus on her 'lack of suitability' and on the fact that she voted for the confirmation of Bishop Gene Robinson of New Hampshire at General Convention 2003. So alarmed are some that a number of American dioceses have asked for "alternate primatial oversight." So vicious has some of the response been that one cannot help but wonder if the issue is not Bishop Jefferts-Schori's experience nor her voting record, but rather her gen-

der. For many, I am afraid that the reactions have confirmed a long held suspicion that there are parts of the Church for who women in Episcopal leadership simply is anathema. How, really, does one belong to such a Church?

ECUSA's actions with regard to the *Windsor Report* also pleased some and angered some. For many, the American church did not repent sufficiently (or at all) for its actions in electing and confirming an openly partnered gay man as Bishop. For others, ECUSA's resolution to urge the church to "exercise very considerable caution in the nomination, election, consent to, and consecration of bishops whose manner of life presents a challenge to the wider church" simply went too far by way of appeasing the conservative right.

## The guise of unity

And so, again, our Church is all over the news. Reactions to what the American Church has or has not done; fear about what the Canadian Church may or may not do next year at General Synod; a recent decision by the Eastern Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada to authorize local, congregational option for the blessing of committed same-sex unions. All of these things put belonging into a very difficult light. It is a significant challenge belonging to a church wherein those voices calling for caution and for a denial of basic rights, all under the guise of the 'unity of the church' are the very voices who are leaving the Church. I am strongly committed to staying in the Church, even amongst those with whom I deeply and fundamentally disagree. Surely the current issues surrounding human sexuality are neither more potentially divisive nor more difficult in terms of scriptural interpretation than several other difficult issues with which we have dealt in the past 30 years. While supporting very firmly the right of those who make appropriate and carefully deliberated decisions to honour their reality—the Diocese of New Westminster, the Diocese of New Hampshire and the American church—I also want to equally honour those who take a different position and need to reflect their own reality. Surely belonging to a family requires nothing less of us. The ways in which we speak with each other, debate important issues, and ultimately respect each other is a crucial piece of this belonging.

## Unthinkable not to belong

In a recent charge to the Eastern Synod Assembly, Bishop Michael Pryse made the following observation: "In some ways, the witness we provide while engaging our differences is more compelling than that of the decisions we will make." It is the way in which we move ahead which is critical, rather than the individual, local decisions which we make.

"O Church, o my Church..." I cry, at times feeling much of the same anguish which David must have felt over the death of Absalom. Together, I believe that we can continue to belong. Surely anything else is unthinkable.

## Men's lunch in Oakville



A group of men at St Cuthbert's in Oakville, most of whom are retired or semi-retired, meet for a monthly lunch at a local restaurant or pub. It's a great opportunity to build a community of friendship and support. Special care is also taken to ensure that members with mobility problems are also able to attend. A favourite haunt is the Mandarin where they can not only eat all they want, but don't have to worry about the volume of their conversations and laughter either.

# Doing the unthinkable: Simplifying the assessment formula

continued from page 1

In essence, the new formula will see the Diocesan Mission and Ministry Assessment (DMM) levied at a rate of 20% of the General Fund revenues. Receipts for building projects and flow through items will continue to be exempt from the fair share levy. For a three year period starting in 2007 monies given for historical debt reduction will also be exempt.

In order to protect parishes, whose DMM will rise due to this change, we have recommended that a maximum year over year cap be placed on the fair share levy at the time of transition. We have also recommended that a transitional provision be made to assist parishes with stranded or historical debt by not levying any assessment of new dollars raised to reduce old debts!

## Frequently asked questions

In order to make it easier for everyone to understand what we propose and how it will benefit the wider church, we have prepared a list of Frequently Asked Questions:

### Is the current formula fair?

We have conducted an analysis of parish spending patterns from the mid 1990's into the new millennium. We have found that the proportion of expenses for staffing, buildings, program, etc does not materially change based on the size of the parish budget. If every parish proportionately invests their treasure more or less in the same manner, then, it would stand to reason that the assessment as a percentage of reported income should be more or less the same. Regrettably, the use of cash versus accrual systems coupled with the inherent reporting problems involving manual versus computerized systems means that the base for which the assessment is levied are not comparable. Further, there is ample evidence that accounting systems change nearly every time a new treasurer is appointed. Finally, despite improvements in the Treasurer's Handbook and the availability of topical workshops, there is a wide gulf in the understanding of what is an allowable deduction under the present formula. The net result is that some parishes pay slightly over one dollar of assessment for every ten dollars in income while others will pay one dollar of DMM for every four dollars on the collection plate!

### Will the elimination of the three year average hurt my parish?

For the vast majority of the parishes, there is no appreciable difference in using the most recent fiscal year over the trailing three years. Regrettably, we do observe a number of parishes that are in a financial decline. In these parishes, the elimination of the trailing average will better match the parish's ability to contribute to the ministry of the wider Church. For parishes that experience financial growth, history has shown that it will plateau after a few years. Once the plateau occurs, the fair share levy continues to rise under the trailing average method. Parishes that have not anticipated the impact of the trailing average often find that it creates undue anxiety and ill-will.

### Will the elimination of the deductions for outreach and debt repayment hurt my parish?

The greatest difficulty in understanding parish financial statements is that many parishes commingle regular operating income statement values with balance sheet items. At present, the formula uses all of the income

funds raised by church groups not reported within the operating accounts will now be considered income for assessment purposes provided that the intended outlays are not for capital or outreach purposes.

### What differences will there be in parish accounting practices?

Region	Date	Place	Time
Mohawk and Undermount	Wednesday, September 20	St. John's, Ancaster	7:00-9:00 pm
Greater Wellington	Thursday, September 21	St. James, Fergus	7:00-9:00 pm
Brock and Lincoln	Wednesday, September 27	Holy Trinity, Niagara Falls	7:00-9:00 pm
Trafalgar	Thursday, September 28	St. Elizabeth's, Burlington	7:00-9:00 pm

taken into the operating accounts and allows deductions for outreach and debt repayment. Under the new formula, the receipt of funds for flow through items becomes a balance sheet item and is not included as income in the operating accounts. Similarly, fundraising for a major repair and the actual outlay for the new roof or furnace, etc. would not be considered as income for DMM purposes either. The net result is that operating account statements would be comparable year over year and would no longer be impacted by major fundraising and spending swings. This should assist parishes to focus on stewardship without having the reported numbers clouding the underlying issue.

### Will the elimination of the outreach deduction on building and staffing costs affect my parish?

The underlying concept of the present deduction was based on the premise that parishes should only be taxed on the net benefit from rental activities. This is very much similar to that rule used for fundraising activities. However, this newer deduction is very problematic. Firstly, many parishes do not claim this deduction. Secondly, even if they did claim the deduction, they generally do not know how to develop a fair assignment of costs to the revenues earned. Thirdly, there is often no agreement between the parishes and the Diocesan Resource Centre on the basis to allocate costs fairly. Finally, under the Canada Revenue Agency guidelines, rental receipts should not exceed 10% of the income for a charity otherwise the charitable status could be challenged.

### How will the new flat tax approach impact our present deductions for curates and licensed lay workers?

By eliminating all deductions with a corresponding reduction in the tax rate, the net change in parish assessments for those parishes having curates and licensed lay workers will fall slightly. By extension, the elimination of the deductions equitably addresses the issue of the existing cap on rector's salaries and the unrecognized ministry benefit from qualified music directors.

### How difficult will it be to calculate the fair share levy?

It should only take about a minute!

### At present, we report fundraising on a net rather than a gross basis. Will this change and, if so, what is the impact?

Parishes will continue to report the net income derived from a fundraising activity. It should be noted that

We have observed that parish accounting practices change with every treasurer. They change whenever a parish migrates from a manual cashbook system to a computerized system. Quite often, the reporting between the general fund and all other funds is different in its layout and the frequency of reporting. Under the proposed formula, we will recommend that parishes will keep only one set of books. The books should be segmented between the receipts and disbursements for the ongoing ministry of the parish without any intent for the accumulation of capital (the operating accounts) and the receipts and disbursements for the future ministry of the parish and those special situations authorized by Synod Council (the bal-

ance sheet accounts). Perhaps the greatest change will see parish treasurers producing a balance sheet.

### What will the Diocese do to minimize any negative impact on the assessment formula change?

In order to minimize any increases, the new formula will place a maxi-

mum year over year cap of 5% on increases caused by the change in the formula, at the time of transition, when the new formula is implemented. There be no limit on any decreases. Over all, the variation between the parishes on the percentage of income that they pay to support the mission and ministry will be significantly narrowed and eventually eliminated.

### What other benefits will the parishes see under the new formula?

We have heard the frustration amongst parishes that for every three dollars in debt owing the Diocese that parishes need to raise four dollars due to the impact on the current assessment formula. In order to assist parishes in dealing with older historical debt, any new income tak-

en in to reduce the debt will be exempt from any incremental assessment during the period 2007 through 2009. Parishes would be encouraged to dovetail this unique opportunity with year round stewardship planning. In the long run, this window will strengthen parishes and reduce the associated interest burden on the Diocesan line of credit.

### How will the new formula be introduced?

The proposed new formula has been reviewed by both the Financial Advisory Committee and Synod Council. We intend to make presentations at each of the fall regional budget meetings. We warmly invite all clergy, wardens, lay representatives and treasurers to attend.

At the October 2006 Synod Council meeting, FAC will make a final presentation based on the results of the Regional Budget Meetings and request approval to implement the new formula. The revised assessment formula will be implemented on January 1, 2007. We will run one workshop for treasurers only to explain the new formula and to provide helpful advice on improving reporting systems.

At the 2007 Synod the FAC will ask for an amendment to the Canons clarifying the role of wardens, financial reporting and auditors.

## Belonging to the Church

IAN DINGWALL  
RETIRED EXECUTIVE ARCHDEACON

The word from our esteemed Editor is that this issue of the Niagara Anglican will focus on the word 'Belonging'. I could not be more delighted if it brings to mind all sorts of thoughts and images.

Perhaps the best way to describe its meaning would be to say what it is not. Belonging is the condition of not feeling alienated. Alienation means not having a sense of belonging. Belonging means having a sense of security in friendship with other people. Belonging suggests companionship in secure relationships.

For those of us who are members of a faith community, this provides an invitation to reflect on the Church and the Gospel. All human beings have a deep longing to feel that we belong in a relationship which is warm, tender, secure and sure. We have a longing for God, although different people might wish to use different words to describe the experience. That sense of longing, I believe, exists simply because the creator is the holy one to whom we belong now and always. And our longing for God is predicated by God's longing for each of us.

Belonging to this thing we call "church" is, or ought to be, a dynamic, life-giving experience. It is not a club that we "pay" our way into. It is not a convenience to which we "attach" ourselves on any given Sunday for an hour or so. It is not an exclusive organization only for those fortunate enough to be its members. It is,

in fact, only a means to an end. The end or the goal is God. The Church, at its best, is a society of friends. It is community of friendship or belonging.

Now this is dynamic stuff, if only we could be at our best as a church or family. If we could more effectively convert this kind of thinking into action and reality, think of what that might do in terms of our Christian presence in this alienated, violent world in which we live.

"Radical inclusion," a phrase used by the biblical scholar Walter Brueggemann, describes this kind of belonging. Brueggemann says, "the arc of the gospel is always bent towards radical inclusion". The Gospel seen and understood in this way will convert the church from an insulated and exclusive community into one committed to those people on the margins of life, who live there because of the injustice and inhumanity of our present world with all its acquisitive greed.

When you read about Jesus and the 'Kingdom' to which he pointed, you find a radical inclusion that embraces all people; the poor and the rich; the unfortunate and the fortunate; those who suffer from neglect and alienation and those who seem more blessed, at least in terms of possessions.

For Jesus, his sense of belonging included lepers, foreigners, prostitutes, widows, innocent children, and poor people. You could continue with your own list of suggestions for our day and our society and identify all sorts people who have been margin-

alized and who live outside our exclusive barriers. I'll allow the readers to fill in the gaps. For me, for example, there is that large group of people we refer to as gay or lesbian. In my view they ought not to be excluded in any way from the church or society.

And if, or when, our Anglican Church moves to celebrate that inclusiveness in real and concrete ways, then we need to let the chips fall as they may. In my view, we should not allow the possible Rift, or Schism, to hinder us from expressing this divine inclusiveness as any kind of peril to the Anglican Communion.

After all, is not God the divine authority of radical inclusion of whom Jesus of Nazareth spoke, "God so loves the world", including all of it, not just convenient tiny parts of it? I am not suggesting all of this to disturb or alienate those who might think differently but we all need to be challenged by radical inclusion for the sake of the Gospel of Christ.

Belonging, being an integral part of the company of the faithful, is what we are called to. We are companions on the journey towards God and Meaning and Justice. The root meaning of 'companion' is one with whom we break and share bread on the journey. Our companions on the journey of faith should never be compromised for there are no bounds to membership in the Church; nor are there limits of exclusion to God's love. We all belong. I know I need to belong and to know that I am loved and accepted. I am sure that you do too.

# DIIALOGUE TASK FORCE

Niagara Anglican - September 2006

## Leading up to Diocesan Synod 2006

**AN INTERVIEW WITH BISHOP RALPH SPENCE** by Michael Patterson and Christyn Perkons

*You brought together the Dialogue Task Force to facilitate conversations about same gender blessings in the spring of this year, and now the Niagara Anglican is running a three-part series of dialogues focused on the topic. What's the reason behind more discussion about this topic?*

We're going to be dealing with this issue at General Synod in 2007, and we will be discussing it at our Diocesan Synod in November. I want everyone to have had the opportunity to have these conversations in their parishes before then. I'm not trying to push a particular viewpoint or agenda. I just don't want to hear from any Synod delegates that they haven't had the opportunity to participate in this conversation in their parish. It's really important that everyone has the opportunity to listen to each other and to express their own opinion. I want people to use the parish resource binder thoughtfully, read this three part series in the Niagara Anglican and engage each other in conversation.

My hope for Synod then is that many of the delegates, particularly those we haven't heard from in the past, will take the opportunity to engage in civil, respectful dialogue. We need to listen to each other's stories and allow the Holy Spirit to work in our community.

*So you're hoping for a different kind of dialogue at Synod this year?*

I know that human sexuality can be difficult to talk about; even in our intimate relationships, sex can be challenging to discuss. We bring all kinds of baggage to the conversation—fear, old feelings from bad sexual experiences as children and young adults. We have an unwillingness to talk about risky subjects when we've felt burned in past discussions. But we have to put all that aside, and have a conversation about how we understand our human relationships in the context of our relationship with God. There's no need to try to change each other's minds. It's just important to listen to each other. Each one of us needs to feel heard, to have the opportunity to ask questions and to educate ourselves. People in Niagara know that it's always been a theme of mine that we should have respect for each other's beliefs and be faithful to the unity of the church.

*Can you talk about your sense of how this dialogue has progressed?*

I first became aware of the inclusion of gays and lesbians in the Church as an issue in 1997. The House of Bishops discussed and eventually passed a statement that said that God loves everyone; we do include gays and lesbians in our church... but within very specific parameters. The

division in the Church immediately crystallized in front of me; there was so much passion and very strong opinions on both sides of the House. Then, in 1998 at Lambeth, I saw the same scenario played out again. There were many bishops who still did not ordain women as priests and there were very few female bishops. Sometimes in the midst of these very heated conversations, it's hard for all of us to remember that we're all about Jesus and loving each other. We had fairly civil discussions at our 2002 and 2003 Synods. Then in 2004, when the vote was taken and it became clear how solid the support in Niagara was for the local option of blessing same sex unions, I got some fairly nasty emails and letters from people who were unhappy. I remain convinced that we must continue this conversation and the only way to walk this journey is for all of us to listen to each other with kindness and dignity.

*You took a risk in declaring your position at that 2004 Synod.*

I'm not sure that everyone really heard what my position is. I said clearly that I am the Bishop for all people in this diocese and that remains my priority. I did not assent to the motion because I made a commitment to the House of Bishops to take no action on the matter until after General Synod 2007

but I felt I had to state what I felt personally. Let me be clear, while I am theologically conservative, nothing in my personal theological journey leads me to believe that we are called to be anything but fully inclusive of gays and lesbians, and that includes blessing committed same sex relationships or marriages. We live in a country where marriage between same gender partners is legal. The big question for us in the parishes and in the Church is the way in which we address pastoral care for legally married same sex couples. How do we welcome them into our parishes? How do we celebrate their significant milestones with them? How do we treat their children?

*What do you see happening in the Niagara Diocese?*

I hope that if everything is in place, legally and canonically, that Niagara can be a leader. I know that many were surprised that the number who voted in favour was so high in 2004. Actually, many people came to me afterwards and said that they would have voted in favour but they didn't want to cause a problem for me as Bishop. If you factor in those votes, it's even clearer that the majority of people in Niagara are prepared to see some parishes blessing same gender committed relationships.

I know that we're not all in the same place about this, and that's true for many issues. Just as when

the remarriage of divorced persons became a reality, some rectors married them while others chose not to. When women were able to become priests, there were many in this Diocese who refused to participate in their ordinations and there were parishes that refused a female rector. For many people, their belief around both of these issues has changed. For those who still have a problem with either, there are parishes in Niagara that reflect their beliefs. We will have the same situation with the blessing of same gender committed relationships; a few parishes and rectors will be comfortable doing it, others will be tolerant of those parishes but won't do it themselves and others won't be comfortable... and we can all live with that just as we live with our parish differences now.

*So what's important at this moment?*

We need to be using all our resources to have respectful, safe conversations in our parishes... this Fall if it hasn't happened already. Then, we need to encourage our Synod delegates to share their perspective in November in a way that honours our faith and our commitment to unity. Each of us needs to remember that we care for every other person in this Diocese no matter what their beliefs. We are the body of Christ no matter what our differences and we need to keep that foremost in our minds as this matter unfolds.

### Relevant definitions for same gender blessing discussions

**RESOURCES** Faith Worship and Ministry Committee (FWM), Anglican Consultative Council (ACC), Lesbian Gay Bi Trans Youth Line (LGBTYL), The Canadian Oxford Dictionary (COD).

**BLESSINGS** We bless people not to increase their spiritual dignity but to give thanks for the role they have been called to play within the reign of God and thus to release them to play their part. For centuries the church has blessed people, places, and things apart from celebrations of the Eucharist, and this is appropriate as long as the Eucharistic context of the Church's whole life is remembered. Every prayer of blessing is thanksgiving for creation and redemption, offered in petition for the fulfillment of the divine purpose in God's people and in the entire world. Like the Eucharist itself, prayers of blessing are the return of refracted light to its source. Blessings are always extensions and applications of the church's central prayer. (*Book of Occasional Celebrations*, Anglican Church of Canada, 1992, 119-120)

**CELIBATE** Committed to abstinence from sexual relations and from marriage, esp. for religious. (COD)

Abstaining from sexual relations. Members of religious orders make vows of celibacy as part of their commitment to Christian community life, seeing it as part of their vocational calling. Other people may live in celibacy as a social requirement prior to marriage but do not see it as a permanent vocation. The Church expects those who are not married to be celibate. (FWM)

**CIVIL UNION** The commitment of two same-

sex persons to one another as recognized by local legal standards. A couple can be joined in a legally recognized civil union in several provinces of Canada at the present time. (FWM)

**GAY** A term for someone who forms physical and emotional relationships with persons of the same gender. Gay can be used to talk about both men, women and the 'gay community' in general, but commonly refers to men. (LGBTYL)

**LESBIAN** A woman who forms physical and emotional relationships with other women. (LGBTYL)

**LESBIGAY** A frequently heard contraction of lesbian-bisexual-gay to indicate all three kinds of sexual attraction. (FWM)

**MARRIAGE** The legal or religious union of a man and a woman in order to live together and often to have children or an act or ceremony establishing this union. (COD) Marriage for civil purposes, is the lawful union of two persons to the exclusion of all others. (Bill C-38, Government of Canada)

The Anglican Church of Canada affirms that marriage is a lifelong union in faithful love, and that marriage vows are a commitment to this union, for better or for worse, to the exclusion of all others on either side. This union is established by God's grace when two duly qualified persons enter into a covenant of marriage in which they declare their intention of fulfilling its purposes and exchange vows to be faithful to one another until they are separated by death. The purposes of marriage are mutual fellowship, support, and comfort, and the procreation

(if it may be) and nurture of children, and the creation of a relationship in which sexuality may serve personal fulfillment in a community of faithful love. This covenant is made in the sight of God and in the presence of witnesses and of an authorized minister. (Anglican Church of Canada, General Synod Canon XXI)

**SAME-SEX BLESSING** Although there is no official definition, the Commission understands the term 'committed same-sex unions' to mean committed, adult, monogamous, intended life-long, same-sex relationships which include sexual intimacy. (From the St. Michael Report) The following are found in rites for blessing such a union as practiced in Dioceses that have already granted permission.

**Diocese of New Westminster**

To request this Rite of Blessing each member of the couple must:

■ be free to enter into such a covenant. That is, they must not be in an existing covenantal relationship, including marriage.

■ enter the rite with an understanding that the relationship is to be exclusive of any other partners and have the expectation of permanence.

■ satisfy the requirements of any previous relationship. This involves appropriate support of dependants from any previous relationship and the appropriate dissolution and meeting of obligations that arise from the same.

**Diocese of Washington, ECUSA**

Our intent is to provide faithful same sex couples and families in our congregations with the same affirmation and blessing we offer to opposite sex couples and their families. We hope this rite will strengthen the faithful, uphold the couples who come to us seeking God's blessing, promote the stability of couples and families, and

confirm in us the traditional values of fidelity, monogamy, mutual affection and respect, open communication and steadfast love. This rite is a covenant marked by sacred trust and commitment, witnessed and blessed in the presence of God by the community of the faithful.

From the rite: Each one of us is called to live out the Covenant of Baptism in our daily life and work. For some this includes a special relationship of fidelity and mutuality with another person that becomes a sign of God's steadfast love.

**Diocese of Vermont**

Intention Form for Same Sex Union: We believe that the union of two partners is intended by God for their mutual joy, for the encouragement and support given one another in daily life and changing circumstances, for the deepening of faith as they experience God's love in their love for one another, and (if it may be) the physical and spiritual nurture of children. Such relationships are nurtured and characterized by fidelity, monogamy, mutual affection and respect, careful, honest communication, and the holy love which enables those in such relationships to see in each other the image of God. And we do engage ourselves, so far as in us lies, to make our utmost effort to establish this relationship and to seek God's help hereto.

**SEXUAL ORIENTATION** There is ongoing discussion among professionals as to the origins of the sexual orientation of an individual. Some evidence points to biological/genetic factors; other studies show the influence of social factors. Current discussions outline a complex web of contributing factors that determine our primary sexual orientation along a continuum. (FWM)

# Walking with each other



Christyn Perkons



Susan Wells



Kevin Block



John Bowen



Peter Wall



Judy Steers



Sandy Copeland

*continued from page 1*

"that the Bishop grant clergy permission to exercise their discretion in blessing the relationships of gay or lesbian couples who have been married civilly, once they with their congregations have petitioned the Bishop for permission to be a "blessing community"" but the Bishop withheld his assent because of his commitment to the House of Bishops. Synod 2005 saw the discussion on same gender blessings evaporate with an immediate tabling of a motion re-affirming the integrity and sanctity of committed same-sex relationships.

At Synod 2006, while there will be no vote due to the Bishop's continued commitment to wait until after General Synod 2007, there will be an opportunity for delegates to discuss the issue. Bishop Ralph has been adamant that Niagara should continue to have a respectful, civil dialogue about this issue; a dialogue that upholds our commitment to be sisters and brothers in Christ, maintaining the communion into which Jesus continually calls us. Continued dialogue, the sharing of our stories and ourselves powerfully binds us to each other and enhances our inclination and ability to care for each other with compassion.

To develop further opportunities for dialogue, parishes were provided with binders of resource material by the Dialogue Task Force which describe the issue and offer supportive reading for all aspects of the discussion. In addition, the binder offers a model for a parish discussion. Rectors have also been offered the use of facilitators to run parish discussions about same gender blessings.

As well, the Bishop's Dialogue Task Force is offering the following three part series of conversations along with supporting articles. The aim is to model dialogue between folks who disagree about the issue, to offer more resources, to stimulate discussion in the parishes, and to encourage you, the reader, to respond to the conversations through emails to the Niagara Anglican or in an online conversation on the Diocese of Niagara website. This month, the panel addresses The Worldwide Communion.

On the panel are Kevin Block (Rector, Christ Church, Niagara Falls), John Bowen (parishioner, St. John the Evangelist), Sandy Copland (Rector, St. Peter's, Hamilton), Judy Steers (parishioner, Church of the Transfiguration), Peter Wall (Rector and Dean, Christ's Church Cathedral) and Susan Wells

(Interim, St. Philip's, Burlington)

Each participant also invited an observer whose role was to listen to the discussion, to comment when there was a lack of clarity, and to offer a different viewpoint if it appeared something had been missed. The observers are Leonel Abaroa (Cuban divinity student, Trinity College), Margaret Bienert (St. Luke's, Hamilton), Wendy Newman (Christ's Church Cathedral), John Pennylegion (St. Philip's, Burlington), Geraldine Wilson Black (Christ Church, Niagara Falls) and Ailed Villalba (President of the Youth Council of the Episcopal Church of Cuba). Christyn Perkons (Congregational Support) served as facilitator.

John B: I think "what is the worldwide Anglican communion?" would be a good place to start, and I think Peter should address it!

Peter: I think the communion has become an overblown model of something that has never existed. The communion is just that; it's a communion of 38 or 39 provinces (depending on how you count the provincial churches) using the province in the Anglican sense that the Church in Canada is a province, the Church in England is a province, the Episcopal Church in the US is a province. Each one of those churches enjoys its own independence, each operates within its own sense of authority, and each has a greater or lesser national or regional kind of structure. I think the history of Anglicanism is a loose (in the best sense of the word) association of provincial churches with some common understandings of who we are and how we operate. While the Archbishop of Canterbury is the spiritual "centre" of the communion, it in no way implies a hierarchical structure nor any kind of magisterium (papal-type structure and infallible authority). The Anglican communion has always been identified more with the creative and dynamic tension with which we have lived than by our sense of uniformity. The communion is unified without in any way being uniform.

John B: It may be worth adding that, as the Anglican family has grown, there has been this desire to stay in relationship with one another, and that is symbolized among other things by the Lambeth Conference of Bishop every 10 years but, as in any family, while you want to hold it together as it grows, at the same time there is more diversity which makes it harder to hold together.

Peter: I think the Anglican communion is very much like the Lutheran World Federation and the word federation may be a helpful image. There are more Lutheran churches than there are Anglican provinces held together in a kind of federal system in which they meet together regularly but each church lives on its own. As John has pointed out, the Lambeth Conference and the Anglican Consultative Council which is an international body that brings Anglicans together from all the provinces, and the Archbishop of Canterbury's office which is a symbol of unity, are things that hold the church together. I think quite deliberately, we do not have very much beyond that which we are all going to climb onboard and say that - yes, we believe this together. We hold certain things to be true and we hold certain things in common but we are very careful not to give that any sense of rigidity that makes us something other than a communion or a federation.

I think that's a very misunderstood part of Anglicanism. There are lots of Canadian Anglicans, and I think there are probably lots of Niagara Anglicans who believe that the Primate of Canada has authority over the Bishop of Niagara, the Dean of Niagara or a worshipping member of St. Swithun's. In fact, the Primate of the Canadian Church is the quite powerless: no cathedral, no diocese, and no jurisdiction; however, like the Archbishop of Canterbury, the office has enormous influence, respect and, indeed suasion in the church but no jurisdiction.

Kevin: Peter, you described the Archbishop of Canterbury, the diocese, the provinces. Can you describe the parish in the diocese and what kind of sovereignty it has or doesn't have?

Peter: Well, I think parishes have less sovereignty than they want to have most of the time. The unit of Anglicanism is the Diocese. The Diocese finds itself existing in a number of local communities, but parishes have little independent autonomy, and even less authority that they might want. In some ways, parishes exist with each other, in orbit with each other in a way that is not dissimilar in the way provinces within the communion exist with each other. Parishes are different sizes and different flavours, and espouse different points of view. We exist together in this diocesan family in a kind of dynamic tension that allows us to be who we are and where we are.

I think one of the great strengths of Anglicanism has been that we can have the wide variety of parish experiences that we do - even in a diocese as compact as the Diocese of Niagara and still be part of the same church. An interesting aspect of this is that clergy don't work for the parish; they work for the diocese and happen to find themselves in a particular parish. Does a parish priest have authority; do I have jurisdiction as a priest who has an incumbency? No, I exercise the incumbency on behalf of the bishop who is the visible symbol of unity in the church.

In our tradition, the local Diocesan bishop has authority over order; in other words he or she has the virtual final authority liturgically within his or her diocese - in terms of the authorizing of texts, the permission for using both authorized texts from the church and beyond. Similarly in a parish, the incumbent has the responsibility for the worship of the community. As a priest, and I think the other priests around the table would agree with me, I have final say over who I will marry, for example. Within the laws of the land, and the canons of the church, no one can force me to marry anyone or baptize anyone. Nor do I think clergy have to give reasons why they won't marry or baptize someone. We are expected to act with authority and to be informed by prayer and with grace but that doesn't change the fact we do have some final authority over the worship life as parish priests, but the ultimate authority rests with the Diocesan bishop.

Judy: I wonder if the rhetoric around the nature of the Anglican Communion comes from some desire for some authoritative body to step in and solve the problem. When we're fighting, we long for some structure or we want to create that structure because then somebody could just come in and tell us what to do, one way or the other. For a whole multiplicity of reasons, we're not living in the tension well right now. Has there ever been this sort of wrangling with what is the communion, what is its authority, what is its purpose? Have we ever had that wrangle before in the history of a communion? Does it only come up because we need somebody to solve the argument?

John B: The image in my mind is that the Anglican Communion has been a circle. It has been said that there are certain things that we have in common, beliefs that we have held in common, traditions,

liturgical practices, and so on that all Anglicans hold, and we have made that as wide a circle as we can, and stretched it to encompass as rich and varied an expression of faith as is possible. I think, particularly in the global sense, there are people saying there is a circle, we are happy for the circle to exist and for it to be as big as it possibly can, but if we feel that people are stepping outside the circle, what do we do about it? And Judy is right that there is then that feeling of helplessness. We think we don't know how to resolve the dilemma without some kind of structure or source of authority to guide us.

Sandy: One of the questions that I often get from parishioners is "why can't somebody rein in this diocese or that bishop acting in another diocese?" I think Peter has clarified that it's the nature of our structure that creates the authority or lack of it; it's not any particular person. So for folks reading this, that may be helpful to them. There is frustration when there seem to be folks, priests, a bishop, who move outside either the diocese or their province according to what the House of Bishops has agreed, and there is no other authority to tell them otherwise. It's a strength in the Anglican church in the sense that we are, as a diocese, free to move within our culture and do what is best, as we see it within that particular culture, but it is also a weakness because if as a diocese or as a province we move beyond what the rest of the communion finds acceptable, then we are stuck. There may be lots of folks that look at North America, or South Africa, or Kenya, or Nigeria or wherever and say they have moved beyond what we are comfortable with and there isn't a way at this, of hauling it back together. There is no external mechanism for achieving this. There might be a way internally from within each province but I don't think there's an external process.

Kevin: Maybe this is shifting things a little, but talking about the internal reasons for unity, every Sunday morning we say, "I believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church." That is on a belief level and on a creedal level, and so it is very important that it is reflected in our structures. Therefore, for me, when it comes to an issue like same gender blessings, referring to and hearing from the rest of the church and then moving together in whatever direction we are going

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to move, becomes very important. It is a matter of belief for me that I consider not only the people in my parish and diocese but the people in the rest of Canada and even the people in other churches: the Roman Catholic Church and so on. I believe in one holy, catholic, and apostolic Church and therefore I have to listen to all of these other people.

Susan: There is another issue for me at the parish level and that is people in each parish seem to have at some level their own theology. People at one parish can't understand how somebody else holds a different view than they do because they think that the uniformity within the confines of their own parish is the uniformity within the diocese and is the uniformity within the church. This narrow perspective makes it appear that other people are outside what they could consider norm. This kind of discussion is a good way for people to see that there is diversity within what may appear to be uniformity at a parish level.

John: We struggle with Anglicanism in that we try to be Catholic and Protestant. So the Catholic tradition that we want to honour does have a structure and a degree of uniformity, and obedience is not a dirty word in that tradition. But the Protestant tradition is Martin Luther saying, I don't care what the rest of the church says: here I stand, I can do no other. I think we have embraced that tradition as well, and somehow we have managed to hold the two in tension. But that tension involves a sense of fair play. It was just watching the movie *Chariots of Fire*, where one of the athletes gets himself a professional trainer. And other people protest: This is not cricket; athletics is supposed to be done by amateurs with a sense of honour, and you don't use a trainer. So there has been that trust in the Communion that we can play together as long as everybody understands the rules of the Anglican game, and they are bound by honour to follow them. But now there is this feeling on the part of some that we are not playing cricket any more. Someone has changed the rules and we're not even sure how that happened.

Kevin: I would like to learn more about how that has been blended within Anglicanism. I am new within Anglicanism and to a large extent, it was the catholic side that was so attractive to me, so I am more enamoured with that.

Sandy: It's a dilemma of perspective, isn't it? Teresa of Avila and St. John of the Cross and other reformers within the Roman Catholic church managed to do reformation/transformation without either being turfed out or leaving. Yet I don't suppose that Luther himself wanted to leave the Roman Catholic church any more than Wesley wanted to leave the Anglican church; reformers whom the church didn't want any part of. And I guess that is a question that we have, who is leaving - at what point are we viewed as leav-

ing or who is leaving when there are differences?

Peter: The marks of the church—the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic—those four great credal marks of the church help me to understand that this isn't the matter of different plants in the garden; this is the matter of hybrids. This is one kind of rose which has added to its family another kind of rose. The church is one because it has developed shoots and sent out other plants and developed a different colour and developed a different shape of petal and developed a different way of hanging on a vine but that still is one. And I think that, just as Susan talked about different theologies, I think the ecclesiology of the church needs to be that it can contain a diversity of theologies and still be one, holy, catholic, and apostolic in whatever way a Roman Catholic and Anglican and a free Pentecostal understands those terms and there would be a great variety of interpretations of each of those words. We have blossomed in very different ways. I mean one could argue that there could be no more different organisms if you looked at them carefully than the Church of England, the Anglican Church of Canada and the Episcopal Church of the United States of America and yet we are the three most similar provinces. Nonetheless we remain fundamentally different in terms of origin, structure, self-understanding, operation, and composition. It should not be a surprise, as the church has spread around the world, that we have become even more diverse and even more different in our self-understanding, in our self-acceptance and indeed, in our theologies. Whereas I think our ecclesiology, our understanding of the nature of the church, is basically the same.

Kevin: Meanwhile, the Episcopalian Church is having its general convention and seems to be considering the wishes of the rest of the Communion. It seems to me that Episcopalians are trying very hard to find some kind of accommodation and compromise and a way to continue together. So they are feeling this tension between their rights and privileges within the Anglican Church and their obligation to the larger Communion and the rest of the Church.

Peter: And indeed the Episcopal example is a good one because it reflects the nature of the unity of the church in the case of one of the sticking points, which is the election, consecration and affirmation of a particular bishop which happened entirely within the Episcopal church's rules and regulations and entirely within synodical structures and guidelines both at the diocesan and at the national level of the Episcopal church. The Episcopal church knows that it cannot nor should it indeed change any of the things that led to the results that has upset so many people, and yet I think the Episcopal church genuinely and sincerely wants to behave in such a way that the church is not rent asunder by that act which was in itself proper but can hold the church together and

walk beside each other with that act which so many have found so heinous. I think the Episcopal church provides us with a good example.

John B: So Peter, a question would be, is there anything that a province can do, as long as it follows its own rules that would cause it to be out of communion with other provinces? Is there anything it cannot do as long as it follows its own rules?

Peter: That's a very good question. I don't know if there is anything a province can do that would put it out of communion except in retrospect. I guess I would want to say that as long as individual provinces are behaving within their limits of acceptable behaviour (and presumably because they are part of the family we have some understanding of their self-understanding) then I guess we can't "know" that. If something happens that trouble the other provinces; then we sit there, ponder and pray and consider if we can continue to sit at the table together.

John B: And in the end the answer may be no, we can no longer sit at the same table. You need to know that I hate sport, but I am going to use another sports image anyway, and that is the way the rugby was invented. Soccer came first but, at some point, someone picked up the ball and ran with it. People said, that's not soccer, and I am sure the guy didn't turn around and say no, it's rugby. But at some point it became a separate game.

I think that is our feeling about what is going on at the moment, that we have been playing soccer, a game with rules that all the players understood, and now someone has picked up the ball and run with it. So people want to say, That is an interesting thing to do, but if you want to pick up the ball, either that is a penalty and you get back to playing by the rules, or it may be that you just need to go and start a new game and call it something different. So that is the question: at what point does picking up the ball become an infringement of the rules, and when does it become just a totally new ball game.

Judy: And that is an interesting analogy. You might well say that this is actually still soccer with new rules or a new understanding or you might say, this is a new game and we are going to call it something different and so we are no longer part of the soccer federation, we are part of a new federation. Do same gender blessings really make it a different game? Or do we say it is the difference between 5-pin bowling and 10-pin bowling? And it is a question of how and who makes those decisions? Who decides which players are still part of the game?

Peter: Historically, we have examples that we can look back on and say - here is a moment when soccer could have become rugby or when what was could have become something different and it did not. If we didn't identify a new

## Relevant Church Terms

### ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY

The head of the Church of England, appointed by the crown. Symbolic head of the Anglican Communion but with no legal jurisdiction in any Anglican-related Church outside of England. He is however considered *primus inter pares*, 'first among equals' among the primates and bishops of the Anglican Communion.

**ANGLICAN COMMUNION** The 38 provinces of churches with historic links to the Church of England and adherence to the Lambeth Quadrilateral.

### ANGLICAN CONSULTIVE COUNCIL

The ACC membership includes from one to three persons from each province, including bishops, clergy and/or laity. Both the USA and Canada have three members each. Each province pays toward the inter-Anglican budget for the ongoing work set forth by the ACC and the other instruments of unity as required. The ACC's purpose is to share information about developments in the provinces and to serve as an instrument of common action, often by resolutions or initiating programs, to advise on inter-Anglican relationships and formations of new provinces, to share resources of all kinds and support for the mission of the global church, and lastly, to engage in important ecumenical dialogues and inter-faith work on an international level.

**AUTHORIZED RITES** The diocesan bishop authorizes which rites of liturgy may be used within his/her diocese.

**CANON 1.** The title used by a clergy or lay person appointed as an honorary official of the cathedral of a diocese.

2. The canon of Scripture is the list of books to be included in the Bible, agreed upon by historic councils of the Christian Church.

3. A regulatory statute of the church. Canon law provides the legal framework for the life and ministry of the Church.

**EXEGESIS** The process of careful study of a biblical passage in relation to its historical setting; its setting in the overall collection that makes up the scriptures, specific questions of language and literary form, and how it has been understood by past interpreters, in order to provide a foundation for hearing what the passage may have to say to us today.

**GENERAL SYNOD** A triennial gathering of all bishops in the Anglican Church of Canada and the elected clergy and laity from every diocese. The General Synod governs the work of the national Anglican Church of Canada, which consists of 30 dioceses organized in 4 ecclesiastical provinces.

**INSTRUMENTS OF UNITY** The Virginia Report (1999) identified and suggested the Lambeth Conference, Primates' Meeting, Anglican Consultative Council, and Archbishop of Canterbury as the world wide vehicles for maintaining communion.

**LAMBETH CONFERENCE** A gathering, every 10 years, of bishops from across the Anglican Communion at Lambeth, England, called together at the invitation of the Archbishop of Canterbury. It is a conference with no binding legal authority over national churches, but with the moral authority of the Anglican desire for unity.

**LAMBETH QUADRILATERAL** Defines four things as essential for the Anglican Church. They are the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, the ecumenical creeds (Apostles' and Nicene), the divinely ordained Sacraments (Baptism & Eucharist), and the historic episcopate. It is important to understand that these four pillars were originally conceived within the Anglican Communion as a framework to define membership. They arose in the late 19th century in response to the growth of the church throughout the world and the requests by autonomous churches in foreign parts for recognition as Anglican churches. They remain the only defining criteria for membership in the Communion.

**LOCAL OPTION** The possibility for local segments of the church to choose a course of action not chosen by other segments. For example: dioceses in Africa were granted leeway to allow the practice of polygamy to coexist with the preferred teaching on monogamy while the culture was adapting to monogamous marriage; Some provinces of the Anglican Communion permit the ordination of women as priests and bishops while others do not.

**PRIMATE OF CANADA** Diocesan bishop elected by General Synod to serve as the head of the Anglican Church and General Synod.

**PRIMATES MEETING** Regular meetings for the senior archbishops and bishops of the 38 Provinces called approximately every 3 years by the Archbishop of Canterbury.

**ST. MICHAEL REPORT** The May 2005 report of the Primate's Theological Commission on whether or not the issue of blessing same-sex unions is a matter of doctrine. The report is commended to the church for study.

**SYNOD** A gathering of bishops, clergy and laity for decisions concerning the life of a diocese, province or national Church. Governed by ecclesiastical laws (canons); chaired by the chief bishop.

**VIRGINIA REPORT (1994-1998)** A report summarizing the work of the inter-Anglican doctrinal commission as it reflected on the nature of communion and how Anglicans might live together in the highest degree of communion possible while different views and practices concerning the ordination of women continued to be held within the Communion.

**WINDSOR REPORT** The final report produced by the Lambeth Commission on Communion. The Commission was mandated by the Archbishop of Canterbury to review the actions in the Episcopal Church of the USA and the Diocese of New Westminster and report specifically on the canonical understandings of communion, impaired and broken communion, and the ways in which provinces of the Anglican Communion may relate to one another in situations where the ecclesiastical authorities of one province feel unable to maintain the fullness of communion with another part of the Anglican Communion. To include practical recommendations on maintaining the highest level of communion together. The Commission included bishops and laity from across the provinces of the Anglican Communion.

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game then, how do we distinguish between those things that can live within the orbit and those things that can't live within the orbit? Using the example of open communion, (communion of all people that certain parts of the communion either officially or unofficially are moving towards), it strikes me that that is a fairly basic sort of understanding of the way the church/game might operate. If a province said we will only live in a world in which there is absolutely an open table, does that force other members of the communion to say well that is a different game? How is it that the question of the ordination of women, the Episcopal ordination of women, and the remarriage of divorced people were not issues that triggered other provinces to say we were no longer playing the same game?

Another example is the way in which foundational documents have been amended province by province, without any sense of uniformity. We in the Canadian church are one (perhaps the only one) of the provinces to have (some would say radically) altered the Nicene Creed in our revisions of texts by taking out the 'filioque' clause—that is, the statement that the Holy Spirit comes from or

proceeds from the Father and the Son—in the BAS. Surely this was a doctrinal statement. ECUSA did not do the same thing, so that when one worships using the Episcopal rite, one notices the difference because all of a sudden that phrase is there again. It seems to me that's pretty basic.

I think that is the horns of the dilemma upon which we find ourselves. We live in this tension of trying to make these decisions, trying to live with each other, trying to move ahead with one foot and step back with the other and all the time trying to discern when, because I think the analogy is a good one; of when the basic fundamentals have been so changed that the basic is something else.

Judy: And I think by and large for people within the church, the doctrinal theological changes that we make are kind of ripples in the stream, they happen and people kind of go "okay, so we understand things differently." When it comes down to the questions of human behaviour and human relationships then we yelp, the brakes go on and we all say "whoa, wait a minute."

Christyn: Let's talk a bit more about why this issue seems to be different than the remarriage of divorced

people, the ordination of women, and so on.

John B: Thirty years ago, I did not think the ordination of women was a good idea, and what changed my mind was being helped to read the Bible and the tradition in another way and to see that in fact there are seeds or signposts that actually pointed in that direction. That was very helpful. So, on the question of blessing same sex relationships, that is what I am looking for. I have read and I have listened, and I am still waiting to see something in the trajectory of scripture and tradition that says yes, this is the logical way God's story is unfolding; I do see it with women's ordination; I do see it with slavery and many other issues, but not with this one.

Sandy: That's also the sticking point for me. I think how we look at scripture is very important. Is it a living, energizing, birthing kind of thing and do we live with that and let it change us or not? We see all kinds of seeds or early indications and we change along the way because the word of God is dynamic. It does change us. It changes how we think and how we feel. But that requires obedience and listening. It requires one of the words that I really like to use, 'confess'. Yes, God

wants these things in my life and doesn't want other things in my life. That is where I have trouble with homosexuality. I see women in leadership all the way through the scriptures and I see the rules about slavery in Israel mitigating the rules of slavery elsewhere. So we work through that towards a place that we finally realize the Book of Philemon is just a ticking time bomb and Onesimus is your brother in Christ - we better do something about slavery! But I really don't see those seeds with homosexuality.

Susan: With all the words that are written in the Bible and all of these years of history, I find it very unnerving to think that there is one issue in all that which threatens to divide the church. We almost divided over the ordination of women and yet somehow we managed to stay together deciding that it was just a change in rules; that it was still the same game to use our analogy. For me, this is the same game with a rule change.

Judy: What would the church look like if there is a progression towards the full inclusion of gays and lesbians? What would those 'seeds' be? How would we grow from there? Where would the trajectory be taking us?

In reality, gays and lesbians are fully part of the life of the church in that there are countless gay priests, bishops, lay people around the world who are living in committed relationships, are members of communities and congregations and have to hide it. I think it is extraordinary that we looked for another gay voice for this discussion in this diocese and we couldn't find an openly gay or lesbian person who is involved and deeply connected to the church, and who wants to be in a discussion like this? You can't find them in this diocese. And yet, we are perceived as a very liberal diocese. It saddens me that there are countless gay and lesbian people in everybody's congregation who still have to hide. Is this really an inclusive church?

Stay tuned next month as Sandy, Susan, Judy, Kevin, Peter and John discuss the authority of scripture. You'll also read a perspective from a United Church minister about the experience of that church body whose individual churches have been marrying same gender couples for several years. Please share your comments/responses with the Niagara Anglican by emailing [news@niagara.anglican.ca](mailto:news@niagara.anglican.ca) or participate in an online conversation at [www.niagara.anglican.ca](http://www.niagara.anglican.ca).

# The sexuality debate

## MILESTONES ON THE JOURNEY of same-sex blessing

**1976** The Canadian House of Bishops commissioned a taskforce to provide an advisory document on homosexuality. The first draft was presented in 1977 and the final document was submitted to the Bishops in 1978. It was never published.

**1979** The Canadian House of Bishops issued a statement on homosexuality which upheld the principle that Holy Matrimony is only valid between a man and a woman. Persons of homosexual orientation could be ordained, but must commit themselves to a celibate lifestyle.

**1985** A Study Resource on Human Sexuality was presented to the House of Bishops and made available to the wider church.

**1990** The Bishop of Toronto suspended the license of a priest who refused to give up his relationship with another man.

**1991** A study resource, *Our Stories, Your Story*, was published by the Human Rights Unit of General Synod to give voice to the experience of gay and lesbian people in the church.

The House of Bishops upheld its 1979 statement.

**1992** General Synod included a hearing on homosexuality and commissioned a study resource on homosexuality and homosexual relationships.

**1994** General Synod published *Hearing Diverse Voices, Seeking Common Ground*, a study program for use in congregations.

**1995** General Synod debated homosexuality and homosexual relationships. It passed a resolution affirming the presence and contribution of gay and lesbian people in the life of the church.

**1997** The Canadian House of Bishops redrafted its 1979 statement in four sections covering gay and lesbian persons in society, gay and lesbian persons in the church, blessing of covenanted relationships and ordination of gay and lesbian persons

**1998** The Synod of the Diocese of New Westminster passed a resolution by a slim majority asking the Diocesan Bishop to authorize a rite to bless covenanted same-sex unions. Bishop Ingham withheld his consent.

**1998** General Synod considered a statement on human rights which included safeguards for gay and lesbian people. It was passed by the House of Clergy and Laity and defeated by the House of Bishops.

The Lambeth Conference of bishops from every diocese of the Anglican Communion passed two resolutions on the issue: one stating that homosexual behaviour is incompatible with Scripture and one encouraging dialogue with gay and lesbian persons.

**2000** The Primates of the Anglican Communion, meeting in Porto, Portugal, reflected on how the Lambeth 1998 resolution had been received by the church. They re-affirmed the Lambeth Quadrilateral as the sole basis of communion, urged caution and restraint by those provinces who wished to pro-

ceed with the blessing of same sex unions or the ordination of openly-gay clergy, and expressed deep concern over the consecrations of bishops for the USA by bishops in other parts of the Communion.

**2001** The Synod of the Diocese of New Westminster passed a resolution by a clear majority asking the Diocesan Bishop to authorize a rite to bless covenanted same-sex unions. Bishop Ingham withheld his consent.

General Synod considered a statement on Dignity, Inclusion, and Fair Treatment which was passed by clergy, laity, and bishops representing a majority of dioceses. It stated, "all persons seeking spiritual care and nurture, as well as those pursuing employment and those people employed by our church, shall be treated with courtesy, compassion, fairness, and integrity by our church and its representatives or officials, without discrimination on the basis of age, sex, sexual orientation, family or marital status, race, colour, ethnic (or place of) origin, ancestry, disability, creed or social-economic status."

**May 2002** The Synod of the Diocese of New Westminster passed a resolution by a 62% majority asking the Diocesan Bishop to authorize a rite to bless covenanted same-sex unions. The resolution included a conscience clause. Bishop Ingham consented to the motion. Members from 9 of the 80 parishes walked out of the Synod

Thirteen Bishops representing 13 of the 29 dioceses in Canada signed a letter of protest.

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### Letter from Bishop Michael J. Pryse to the Eastern Synod

Dear Synod Family, grace and peace be unto you!

I am writing to you having just concluded the closing worship service of our Eleventh Biennial Convention, Synod Assembly 2006. The service was wonderfully inspiring and uplifting and now our delegates are returning to their homes having participated in a full and challenging five days of inspired work on behalf of our church.

In the coming weeks, your delegates will provide you with their individual reports on our total convention experience. Several, however, have requested that I communicate with you regarding our synod's significant action concerning the blessing of same gender unions.

On Thursday July 6, 2006, 72.4% of our registered delegates voted in support of the following resolution:

*That the Eastern Synod of the ELCIC recognizes that the blessing of same-gender couples who want to make a life-long commitment to one another in the presence of God and their community of faith is a matter of pastoral and congregational discretion. Authorization to perform such blessings shall require the consent of the pastor and the consent of the congregation or calling agency, as expressed by a 2/3 majority vote at a duly called meeting of the congregation or calling agency, and in consultation with the bishop.*

By virtue of this action, same gender couples may now have their unions blessed within the context of those Eastern Synod ministries which are willing and able to meet the conditions speci-

fied within this motion.

This action is, of course, quite controversial and will be received with both happiness and distress by individual members of our synodical family. While

I am mindful of this reality, I am very supportive of the action taken by our synod. In my view, it represents a reasonable accommodation that allows for a diversity of pastoral practice.

Those congregations who wish to offer prayerful support to persons in committed same-gender partnerships now have a responsible means of doing so. At the same time, this resolution protects the rights of pastors and congregations who do not wish to be partnered in actions that they cannot, in good conscience, support. While this action does not answer the broader questions before us, it does provide a responsible process that allows pastoral decisions to be made by those who will be most affected by them.

In my report to the convention, I made the following observation. "In some ways, the witness we provide while engaging our differences is more compelling than that of the decisions we will make." In this regard, I am pleased to tell you how proud I am of the way in which our delegates—regardless of position—prayerfully and respectfully engaged one another around this challenging issue. It was, I think, a compelling witness; a witness who I trust to be similarly evident as our conversations continue throughout the synod in the months ahead.

Remember, those who would claim the greatest truth must always seek to demonstrate the greatest love!



## The sexuality debate

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**June 2002** The Canadian Primate, Archbishop Michael Peers, wrote to other Primates of the Anglican Communion outlining the process in the Diocese of New Westminster and requesting respect for principles of canon law. He said, "all the same, I ask you to respect the authority of the Bishop and synod within the Diocese of New Westminster. During our recent meeting in Canterbury, we explored a number of principles common to our canon law across the Anglican Communion. Among those principles was the understanding that a bishop has no authority to intervene in the life of a diocese other than his or her own, unless the bishop of that diocese has given permission to do so."

**October 2002** The Canadian House of Bishops discussed the blessing of same-sex unions and agreed on a statement which asked Dioceses to refrain from action on the blessing of same-sex unions until after General Synod 2004 urged caution and sensitivity if New Westminster proceeds affirmed its 1997 statement on homosexuality.

**November 2002** The Synod of the Diocese of Niagara held a hearing on homosexuality.

**May 2003** First blessing of a same-sex union in the Diocese of New Westminster.

Several bishops declared "impaired communion" with New Westminster but not the Anglican Church of Canada.

**June 2003** After the highest courts in British Columbia, Quebec, and Ontario declared the prohibition of same-sex marriage to be contrary to the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the Federal Government announced its intention to legalize same-sex marriage and proposed referring the legislation to the Supreme Court of Canada.

An openly-gay priest, V. Gene Robinson, was elected Bishop of New Hampshire, which would later be confirmed by a majority of Deputies and Bishops at the General Convention of the Episcopal Church USA.

**October 2003** Jeffrey John was nominated as Bishop of Reading. After his sexual orientation was made public, he removed himself under pressure from the Archbishop of Canterbury. The Primates of the Anglican Communion urged that New Hampshire consecration not proceed and the Archbishop of Canterbury established an international Commission under the chairmanship of Archbishop Eames of Ireland.

The Canadian House of Bishops established a Taskforce on Alternative Episcopal Oversight and proposed a mediation process in New Westminster.

**November 2003** V. Gene Robinson was consecrated Bishop of New Hampshire. Several bishops of the Anglican Communion declared impaired communion with New Hampshire and/or the Episcopal Church of the USA.

The Synod of the Diocese of Niagara held another hearing on homosexuality.

**Winter 2004** A series of hearings on homosexuality were held in the Diocese of Niagara.

**June 2004** General Synod passed a resolution affirming the integrity and sanctity of committed, adult same-sex relationships. The Synod also asked the Primate to refer the issue of blessing same-sex unions to the Primate's Theological Commission.

**October 2004** The Eames Commission published its *Windsor Report*.

**November 2004** The Synod of the Diocese of Niagara passed a resolution by a two-thirds majority which said that the Bishop grant clergy permission to exercise their discretion in blessing the relationships of gay or lesbian couples who have been married civilly, once their congregations have identified themselves as "blessing communities" by Vestry decision. Bishop Spence withheld his consent.

**February 2005** The Primates of the Anglican Communion, meeting in Dromantine, Ireland, asked the Canadian and American Churches to withdraw voluntarily from the Anglican Consultative Council, to which both churches agreed. Their delegations attended the subsequent meeting of ACC-13 in Nottingham in June 2005 as 'observers' and each made a presentation on their church's position on homosexuality.

**May 2005** The Primate's Theological Commission published the *St. Michael Report*, its report on blessing same-sex unions, which stated that the issue was a matter of doctrine, and not of "core doctrine."

**April 2006** The Canadian House of Bishops expressed grave concern over the Nigerian church's support for proposed legislation in that country that would seriously impair the civil liberties of homosexual persons and negate the possibility of dialogue with homosexual persons, noting that such dialogue had been commended by the Lambeth Conference in 1998 resolution.

# Polity in our church

CHRISTYN PERKONS  
CHAIR OF DIALOGUE TASK FORCE

Writing about 'polity' in an Anglican context is no easy task. It is much easier to describe the organizational and operational realities of the Church in terms of what they are not rather than what they are.

The Anglican Church is not, for example, a hierarchy with a centralized authority, as one finds in the Roman Catholic Church. Similarly, it is not a congregational model, in which each local congregation can make its own decisions. There are times when either of the above models seems attractive; there are other times when we act very much like one or the other.

The Anglican Communion is a loosely held together group of national or regional churches, called provinces. The Anglican Church of Canada, The Episcopal Church of the United States, and The Church of England are each provinces of the Anglican Communion. Each province has its own structures, its own organizational realities, and its own set of Canons (ecclesiastical laws). Each, however, operates as part of and honours the shared history and ethos of Anglicanism.

The basic unit of the Church is the Diocese, and the basic authority in the Church is the Bishop. While a diocese may have suffragan or assistant Bishops, the diocesan Bishop is the symbol of unity in the church. You and I have only one Bishop, Ralph Spence. Neither our Metropolitan—the chief bishop of our ecclesiastical province of Ontario, Archbishop Caleb Lawrence of Moosonee—nor The Primate, Archbishop Andrew Hutchison, has any jurisdiction over Bishop Spence nor over this Diocese. Nor does any other province of the Church, or Bishop of the Church, have jurisdiction over Bishop Spence nor over this Diocese.

There is an enormous amount of influence resting with the Archbishop of Canterbury. Indeed, in

our own Primate of the Canadian church, there is a similar kind of influence, particularly given the important role that Primates play, on behalf of their own provinces, in terms of the unity of the Church and our sense of being connected to Anglicans around the world.

The significance for us of a national structure in our church cannot be overstated. It is the place where our shared ministry and the shared work of the larger church take place. Through the triennial meetings of General Synod and Provincial Synods, the work of the Church, particularly in its international scope, is carried out. The Solemn Declaration of 1893—the first meeting of General Synod—stated, "We declare this Church to be, and desire that it shall continue, in full communion with the Church of England throughout the world, as an integral portion of the one body of Christ." Therefore we continue to be an important part of the worldwide Anglican Communion, and our Anglican identity, as part of that global family, continues to be an important defining piece of who we are.

However, being part of the Anglican Communion does not impart a global authority nor any sense of jurisdiction beyond that of the local Diocese, other than those aspects of ministry which we share nationally. Normally, our Bishops, at the invitation of the Archbishop of Canterbury, attend a decennial meeting of Bishops in England—The Lambeth Conference—and we are members of, and financial contributors to, The Anglican Consultative Council, a body representing all of the provinces of the church. Like all Anglicans, we hold as important and foundational the Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral from the latter part of the 19th century, a document which helps define us by saying (1888):

That, in the opinion of this Conference, the following Articles supply a basis on which approach

may be, by God's blessing, made towards Home Reunion:

The Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, as "containing all things necessary to salvation," and as being the rule and ultimate standard of faith.

The Apostles' Creed, as the Baptismal Symbol; and the Nicene Creed, as the sufficient statement of the Christian faith.

The two Sacraments ordained by Christ Himself - Baptism and the Supper of the Lord - ministered with unfailing use of Christ's words of Institution, and of the elements ordained by Him.

The Historic Episcopate, locally adapted in the methods of its administration to the varying needs of the nations and peoples called of God into the Unity of His Church.

These documents and this history do not, in any way, support a sense of a magisterium nor of a pyramidal structure, with a particular Primate or prelate as the authority. Rather, authority is shared, through synods, and bishops. While it would be easier for some to simply have an ultimate earthly authority in place, Anglicans can only look to Jesus, to our own interpretation of scripture, and to the time-honoured realities of tradition and reason as the underpinnings of our church structure.

We like to say that we are synodically governed and episcopally led. Like all families, we agree or disagree upon things because we discuss them. As in all families, certain branches have their own way of doing things, follow their own patterns of behaviour, and, indeed, live by their own norms.

So it is in the Anglican world. The authority rests with the local Bishop. The way of being a church around the world rests with all of us, working hard at listening, agreeing and disagreeing with each other, being both relevant and faithful, living out the Gospel in our times and in our world.

## A plea for unity: Contradicting tradition

KEVIN BLOCK  
REVEREND - CHRIST CHURCH, NIAGARA FALLS

Conservative theologically and cautious by nature, I was among the minority at the 2004 Diocesan Synod that voted against same-sex blessings. I voted against the resolution because same-sex blessings would contradict thousands of years of religious tradition. Yet for me this was a difficult stand. I saw many of my friends voting in favour and, even more, I have gay family members who wish I would endorse the sort of change offered by that resolution.

For me, the issue of same-sex blessings creates inner conflict and potential conflict with people I love. But while I fear that this issue will injure my personal relationships, my greater fear is that it will kill the Anglican Communion. Again, this is deeply personal. My ancestors were Mennonites who kept dividing into opposing factions throughout their five centuries of existence, always in the vain attempt to preserve the purity of Christian faith. I treasure my Mennonite heritage despite its tragic

sectarianism, but among the several reasons I became an Anglican was the fact that the Anglican Church had found ingenious ways to stay together. Moreover, Anglicans nurtured a global Communion during the same half millennium that my ancestors were bitterly dividing. But now, tragically, Anglicans are also in danger of shattering their Church and splintering their Communion into sects; the 'pure' on each side pushing away the 'impure' on the other.

As a newcomer in this Anglican family, I am already disturbed when I hear Anglicans arguing about the exorbitant cost of unity and quoting biblical verses or human rights for which they would shun their brothers and sisters. I feel like a child overhearing its parents on the brink of their divorce. Furthermore, when our Diocese considers steps that could sever our relationship with Canterbury, I feel as if my own new identity is at stake because I was told that to be an Anglican is to be in communion with the Archbishop of Canterbury.

But I pray a family catastrophe will not happen. Hoping against fading hope, I pray that Anglicans will find an elegant or even an awkward way to fulfill Christ's prayer that "they may be one." Maybe Christ's prayer, my prayer, and many other people's prayers will be answered if we conservatives realize that Christian unity is at least as important as Christian purity, and therefore prepare ourselves to accept the compromises necessary in every human union and communion. Likewise, many prayers will be answered if those who call themselves progressives stop setting deadlines and prepare to be patient, possibly for many years, while participating in the quest for a holy, Communion-saving compromise.

My plea is for the unity of our Church. Although conservatives like me will probably accept change over time, it is doubtful that any length of time could fix the catastrophe of sectarianism. My plea and my prayer are for the unity of the Anglican Communion.



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# PARISH NEWS

Niagara Anglican - September 2006

## The power of parish planning days



From left: Rev. Sharyn Hall, Canon Michael Bird, Rev. Peter Case, Bishop Ralph Spence, Rev. Rob Hurkmans.

KEITH BRAITHWAITE  
ST. LUKE'S, BURLINGTON

The arrival of a new rector at St. Luke's Burlington in the fall of 1998 was the catalyst needed to start a year round stewardship programme. After much thought and at the recommendation of Steve Jones the parish decided that the David Gordon year round programme would best meet our needs. One of the key elements of the David Gordon programme is the parish-planning day. Planning day is an opportunity for the parish to be challenged to dream their wild-est dreams and to plan to make these dreams come true. The first parish-planning day at St. Luke's Burlington took place on May 8 1999 and since then, planning day has become a vital part of parish life. From suggestions made at the first and subsequent planning days, a Columbarium has been installed, a flourishing Memorial Flower Garden has been planted, and a new roof has been built in addition to the many outreach projects now in place; projects that include many youth and family events, newcomer and evangelism initiatives, and Christian education programs are now in place.

### Demolition of hall

However, it was a suggestion at the May 2001 planning day led by Steve Hopkins that caused the stewardship chairman of the day to

later write this item in the Newsletter. "One initiative, the Parish Hall demolition and replacement has been the cause of concern within the parish. It is important to stress that this is only an initiative for discussion at this time and that there will be no plan for the demolition and replacement of the parish hall without a full and open discussion with the whole parish."

It is a pleasure to report that those full and open discussions did take place with the result that Bishop Ralph will dedicate the new building and unveil a memorial plaque at a special service at 10:00 am Sunday October 22, as we celebrate St. Luke's Day.

The original parish hall was built in 1922 as a memorial to the parishioners who served and gave their lives in the 1914 to 1918 war. The building was renovated in 1956 and again in 1986. At the vestry meeting in January 2002 approval was given for the commissioning of an architect to prepare various concepts that might meet the needs of a thriving parish in the 21st century. The full and open discussions culminated at a special vestry meeting on September 26 2004, when, a unanimous vote approved the Building in Faith capital campaign to raise 2.3 million dollars to ensure that this dream came true. A builder was chosen, contracts were signed and at a special service in the hall on Sunday

February 27 2005 parishioners said a fond farewell to a building that had served the parish well for many years. On Sunday April 9 Bishop Ralph officiated at a sod turning ceremony. The office staff was relocated, the contents of the hall were moved into storage and the parish learned the power of patience and prayer. The entire critical path scheduling in the world is no match for planning bureaucracy and community objections but with patience and prayer all the obstacles were overcome and now is the time to share our joy as the dream has come true.

### Time capsules

During the demolition of the 1922 Parish Hall a time capsule was discovered where among other things we found a letter from the rector of the day. A quotation from the letter written by the Reverend George Tibbs echoes the thoughts and prayers of the present parishioners of St. Luke's. "May the generations to come carry on the good work begun and continued by those who love our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ in sincerity and truth in the parish of St. Luke's Church, Burlington?"

Following the tradition set in 1922 the 2006 cornerstone contains a time capsule, which includes a letter from the present rector of St. Luke's. The complete letter from the Venerable Michael Bird

is available on the parish website [www.stlukesburlington.ca](http://www.stlukesburlington.ca) but here is an edited excerpt from his letter:

"In April of 2001 members of the congregation gathered for the annual parish planning day and in the course of those sessions a dream was articulated that would help the parish meet the challenges of a rapidly changing world and to provide a parish centre that allow us to engage more effectively in the work and ministry that God was calling us to carry out. It was clear on planning day and it is even clearer to us now, that over the course of these challenging five years we have been blessed by the leading of the Holy Spirit.

I want to pay tribute to the people of St. Luke's for their courage and dedication in responding so faithfully to this great mission; for the thousands of hours of planning and preparation work in countless meetings that took place; for the spirit of fellowship, good humour and cooperation; for the support, advice and encouragement that was so freely given from those members of the congregation at large. Not at least was the incredible financial support that so many of our parishioners have pledged. A number of those donations have represented sacrificial giving on the part of the donors and without their commitment and sacrifice this great project could never have become a reality."

### Difficult but rewarding times

During construction the various parish groups continued to flourish as they met in member's homes, in the church or in facilities lent to us by other Burlington Churches. The thing that we did miss however was the fellowship coffee hour between services.

The project cost will finish up at around \$2.6 million and the congregation is well within range of having an outstanding debt on the building of less than \$200,000 by the end of this year. In 2009 the parish will be 175 years old and there is no question that St. Luke's will have paid off the entire amount ahead of this date. This will be our anniversary gift to future generations of St. Luke's members.

### Time to celebrate

A wide variety of events are planned

to celebrate the completion of the new parish hall and the Building in Faith Festival Committee invite fellow Anglicans to share in our joy. On Sunday September 10 at 10:00 am a Welcome Back Service in the new parish hall will kick off the celebrations. Our Harvest Festival Services and community food drive will take place on October 1. Other celebrations and outreach to the local community include, an open meeting of our Senior's Phoenix Group to hear Mrs. Marilyn Myers talk about her experiences working with Mercy Ships, a Pancake Brunch, a Seniors Celebration Day, and an Open House on Saturday October 13 when the parish and other community organisations will display their talents, expertise, highlighting their contribution to the city.

A Royal Ascot Black Tie Dinner and Dance could be the highlight of the social season in Burlington. The Wine and Cheese evening on Wednesday October 25 promises an evening of music, fun and fellowship for family, friends and neighbours. We have not forgotten the children and youth. The kids are invited to a Halloween Fun Day on October 28 followed by The Burlington Anglican Youth Service on Sunday October 29.

Yes, we are celebrating but we have more spiritual events planned. On Sunday October 1 Hamilton's Citizen of the Year, Dr. Gary Warner will make a presentation entitled Motivated by Faith. A parish retreat led by Bishop John Bothwell will take place on Saturday November 18.

A Giant Bake sale, a Family Potluck Supper, two "Music at St. Luke's" Cabaret Nights, the Annual Christmas Market and the Annual Christmas Concert for Children in Need featuring the Three Cantors round out our celebrations for the year.

All this from a year round stewardship programme and a parish-planning day. Try it, you never know what the power of the Holy Spirit will empower you to do.

We want to share our thanks and joy with as many people as possible so check on the parish and diocesan websites for the full details of all the Building in Faith Festival events.

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## St. Columbus, St. Catharines



St. Columba, St. Catharines recently inducted eight servers ranging from nine year olds to adults. Following the ceremony, the server's guild held a campfire and barbecue with activities, food and fellowship. Shown from back left is Brenda Brodeur, Colleen Meade, Archdeacon Bruce McPetrie, Laura Anderson, John Baxter, the Rev. Kay Baxter (Guild Co-ordinator), Tyler Wilson, Alexandria Meade, Rob Anderson, and Ethan Wilson.

## St. Michael's, Hamilton



SUE CRAWFORD  
CHAIRPERSON - ST MICHAEL'S, HAMILTON

What better way to celebrate the 10th Anniversary of your ordination than to be surrounded not only by the children of the parish but three of your own grandchildren. Ann Macdonald did just that at St. Michael's Church on Sunday, May 27, 2006. Ann is filling in for Lynda Kealey who is on sabbatical. After their Sunday school lesson, the children joined Ann at the altar to celebrate the Eucharist. This picture is a reenactment of the celebration. We were pleased that Ann was with us on her 10th Anniversary. She was deaconed on May 26, 1996 and became part-time curate at St. John's Ancaster and St. Matthew's House.

## St. James, Fergus

The congregation of St. James Anglican Church in Fergus observed the National Aboriginal Day of Prayer by recognizing Aboriginal culture in an outdoor worship service. We sat on chairs in a circle around the altar. Alana, Zoe and Morgan Dunbar and Michael, Thomas and Christopher McDevitt led us in prayers and readings. At each reading, the congregation faced in turn, one of the four directions. We were reminded of the beauty and worth of each and every race. Our petitions were for God's help in appreciating the gift of life, for the care and healing of Mother Earth, and for guidance in helping one another grow in our lives as Christians.

We thanked God for the beauty of the earth around us. Reverend Nigel Bunce further expanded on these themes and then blessed containers of strawberries, the first fruits of the season. After the Communion, each person took and ate a strawberry, symbolic of the seeds of friendship, and a reminder that we must live in love, respect and tolerance towards those of a different culture. Gwen Orr and Erica Dyce provided crafts and other activities for the children who would normally be in a church school class. Canon Stephen Witcher on guitar and the Gospel Acclamation Band provided the music for our outdoor worship. Outside the church and outside ourselves was our teaching for this day.

# Mission to Seafarers Sunday service

This year marks the 150th anniversary of the founding of the world-wide Mission to Seafarers. The Parish of St. Luke's in Hamilton has an historical connection with the Mission to Seafarers at the Port of Hamilton. We share our priest, The Rev. Canon Robert Hudson, with the Mission, and a number of our parishioners are volunteers there.

This shared ministry has broadened the life of the parish and connected us to the workings of the St. Lawrence Seaway and the Great Lakes' shipping industry. St. Luke's has an annual service (usually in March) for the Blessing of the Harbour and to inaugurate the beginning of the shipping season. We traditionally celebrate Sea Sunday in July.

This year's Sea Sunday service, held on July 9, was particularly special for parishioners because it was at the Mission and it was the first time many had seen the beautiful triptych designed by parishioner Christopher Van Donkelaar. The triptych panels which measure 2 feet by 3 feet each, depict Sts. Nicholas and Michael, the patron saints of seafarers, on either side of Christ.

Van Donkelaar, who studied under Father Nathaniel of St. Theodore's Monastery in Ohio, started the St. Michael panel first during the St. Michael's Youth Conference in 2003. The three panels were completed and dedicated in 2004.

Rev. Hudson says that due to an increase in the number of Orthodox Christians working on international cargo ships, it makes sense to incorporate some Orthodox sym-



Triptych panels, created by St. Luke's, Hamilton, parishioner Christopher Van Donkelaar, adorn the Mission to Seafarers at the Port of Hamilton.

bols into the chapel decor. The chapel, he explains, is used mostly for quiet reflection, for meditation and for confessions.

"I am very pleased with how these icons have been written," says Rev. Hudson. "They add a wonderful dimension to this special space."

In honour of the anniversary year, Archbishop Terence Finlay, the liaison bishop for the Mission to Seafarers in Canada, has asked each diocese to designate a date in

2006 as Sea Sunday. The Diocese of Niagara will observe Sea Sunday on September 24. Please take time to remember in your prayers the seafarers who leave their homes, their families and their countries for long periods of time, to bring food and materials from around the world to Canada for our benefit.

For information about the Mission to Seafarers email [missiontoseafarershamilton@bellnet.ca](mailto:missiontoseafarershamilton@bellnet.ca)

## Parish priests, a mixture of pastor and CEO

GRAHAME STAP  
RECTOR - ST. ALBAN, GLEN WILLIAMS

I read with interest the article entitled, "Pastors need some pampering," in the *Hamilton Spectator*, on Monday May 1, 2006. I suspect most of us do need a shoulder every now and again. Certainly it is difficult to be all the things our parishioners need us to be and we are pushed and pulled in directions we do not always want to go. However, sometimes we do create unnecessary difficult situations ourselves by our own actions or lack of action. The article centered upon clergy woes such as Clergy having a bad habit of playing the lone ranger, doing everything themselves and avoiding co-operation because maybe "some of my people will start going to your parish." Others wish we could get past seeing our parishes as boundaries of the world and understand we are part of something much bigger, the kingdom of God.

The article also said 77 percent of priests surveyed, said they felt more like CEOs than pastors. I believe the article was partly right. We do tend to be lone wolves and we are very parochial in our dealings with other church-

ers. As an ex CEO with 35 years of business experience ordained only eight years I offer the following realizing it will be controversial.

If in the business world we acted as lone wolves we would not last long. If we were leaders of our companies, the companies we led would wither and die. However, as leaders we would be responsible for all aspects of the company from production to the bottom line. Perhaps the time has come for the church to change and take some of the leadership techniques from business and incorporate them to the running of the church. Perhaps it is time for priests to become both Pastor and CEO. Perhaps it is time for our congregations to accept this changing role. After all we have many examples in the bible starting from Abraham right through to Jesus who was both pastor and CEO. While Jesus was with us on earth he was a leader who led his disciples with love, compassion and understanding but he was the leader. He also led by example and trained his followers to be able to take over when he was gone. (Matthew 10:5-15) to be self-sustaining and self-continuing lead-

ers in their own right. Jesus also could be persuaded to change his mind (Matthew 15:21-28). He stood for no nonsense from those who thought only of their own position in the world and maintaining the status quo (Matthew 12:1-8).

Jesus was defiantly not a lone wolf. He was the head of a team that worked together to accomplish the predetermined goal and while he listened to others of the team all the time, He led! Team members that tried to reach for their own glory were quickly chastised (Matthew 20:20-28).

We should also not forget that Jesus got tired and needed, from time to time, to be by himself. He also got grumpy when the enormity of his task seemed impossible and people just did not get it (John 3:1-21). However none of this stopped Jesus from doing God's will. Long hours, hard days, and below expectation results were the norm just as they are today. If in business we stopped pushing ahead because of problems, bankruptcy would follow. In the church if we do not keep reaching out into our communities and inviting others to the love of God, will we suffer the same fate?

## A book checks out: Serving St. Philips in many ways

TREVOR JONES  
INTERIM RECTOR - ST. PHILIP BY THE LAKE

Arlene Book, that is! Arlene has announced her retirement from her position as secretary at St. Philip's as at the end of May. Arlene may be checking out of her job but not out of St. Philip's. A goodbye dinner was planned for May 27 as a means of thanking Arlene for thirty-five years of service to St. Philip's as Church Secretary, and as Church Secretary to St. Luke's out of the St. Philip's office for perhaps seventeen years.

Of course Arlene has served St. Philip's and Grimsby in many other ways as a parishioner of St. Philip's, in the ACW, for one,

and as Lady Mayoress to Ron when he was Mayor of Grimsby for another

Arlene trained, whipped into shape, sorted out, acted as unpaid advisor, coached, guided, and scolded when necessary, five rectors and a bunch of interims. The rectors were Bob Gardiner, Derek Pringle, Jim Powell, Roger Forster and the present incumbent, Trev Jones.

Whatever Arlene has done has been with a keen sense of duty to the parishes she served, her rector and the people of St. Philip's and St. Luke's. She has provided a sympathetic ear to many a parishioner, a soothing influence to those who have needed it.

Arlene joined the church when the 'copi-

er' was a Gestetner and moved smoothly and willingly, if with a little trepidation into the electronic world when the church purchased its first computer. She bravely tackled the complexities of Word, and Excel and is now an acknowledged expert in how a church office should be computerized. Maybe she can help Ron organize his office at home now.

She and Ron plan to travel some more; perhaps to the space station. They seem to have been everywhere else!

I will miss Arlene very much, as I know you will. We wish her continued health and vigor, and many happy times with her grandchildren. She deserves all the blessings that God can send her way. Arlene, thank you.

# St. Michael's Hamilton celebrates 50 years

SUE CRAWFORD  
CHAIRPERSON - ST MICHAEL'S, HAMILTON

We called it a Walk Down Memory Lane and that is exactly what it was. On Saturday May 27, 2006 about 100 people walked back in time to the beginnings of St. Michael's.

As a very recent newcomer, I found it a fascinating experience. I had been approached by Lynda Kealey late last year to head up the 50th Anniversary Committee. I conjured up great images of what I thought would make our 50th year a memorable one. It is very easy to conceive an idea but it takes a team to make it come to life. As true to all other functions that are held at St. Michael's that we have held, people rose to the occasion and a super committee sprang forth. Off we went to create the trip down memory lane.

With an idea from Interim Rector, Ann Macdonald, we decided to create a time line from the very beginnings to the present day. It took lots of research, planning and copying of many pictures and many hours to complete the task. The result now adorns more than half the walls of the parish hall.

As I circled the room on Saturday May 26 with my trusty camera and notepad I unearthed some wonderful memories from the early days. Let me share those with you.

Alice May remembers the meeting in her living room with about 8 people. They had approached Bishop Bagnall about setting up a parish on the East Mountain. On a cold rainy day her husband Bill

and Canon Rigby set off to find the ideal location. Alice remembers her husband dressed in knee high boots. When they returned he announced to her the site they had chosen. She responded, "Why did you want to choose that spot?" The late Bill May was the first Rector's Warden to Ralph McKim, the first rector.

Ralph McKim who attended the celebration has been involved with International Development Work over the past few years. He remembers the parishioners taking turns transporting the altar rail in the trunks of their cars to Hampton Heights School where the church first met. Walter Manewell was one of those parishioners.

Doreen Hunt moved into the community in April just after the parish was formed. A neighbour, Hilda Richardson, invited her to go to Hampton Heights with her. Doreen said at that time it was called a Mission.

Mildred Carpendale came to the parish in 1958. The church hadn't been built yet but was in the works. She remembers meeting in the gymnasium of the school.

Gwen Rodel remembers the early days at Hampton Heights. Her son, Christopher was one of the first to be baptized.

Flossie Morgan was a Leader of the Girl's Auxiliary. With over 100 members, she had the largest group in the whole of the Diocese. Gwen didn't drive so her friend Joyce Collis helped out and drove her to the meetings.

Margery and Julius Szep ar-

rived in the parish during Ralph McKim's time. She said that no bazaars and no fund raising of any kind was allowed. She remembers a congregational dinner at Huntington Park which became the second place the church met after the parish hall was built. She remembers the cost of the dinner with full service, three course meal and all the trimmings was only \$1.75 per person!

Gerry Greenhow was confirmed in what is the present parish hall. She taught church school in the early years. Her husband, John, was Rector's Warden in 1961, 1962, 1965, and 1966.

The artist of the present cover of our bulletin, Kay Boulden was on hand. She was one of the original founders of the church.

Kay (Bamford) Purser had great memories of a parish trip to Jamaica in 1976, while Bob McIveen shared memories of being an altar boy during David Luxton's time.

Our celebration program included a self-guided tour of the church showing the combination of the old and new, which included the acquisitions from St. Augustine of Canterbury and items the church has added over the years.

Memory books were scattered throughout the beautifully decorated hall. Displays on poster boards, created by families, showing their history with the church were mounted on the walls and an amazing display by Joan Horne showing the Girl's Auxiliary uniform and badges. All her daughters attended the GA. When I say that our church



50th Anniversary Committee. From left: Joan, Gerry, Vito, Sue, Gina, Janine. In the background is the 50th anniversary banner designed and made by Janine and Sue with input from our Parish kids.

rites to the task, the refreshment committee headed up by Georgina Honeysett outdid themselves.

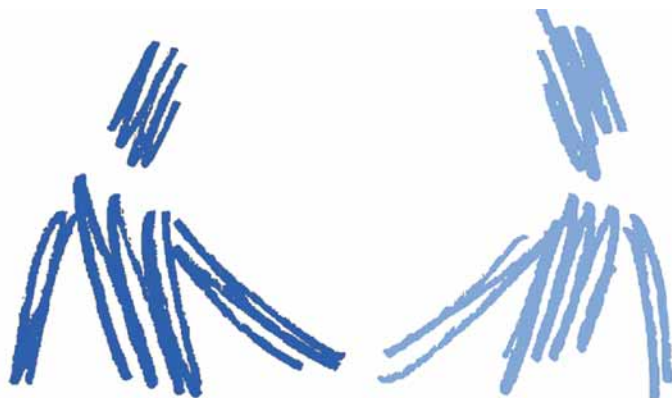
Ian McDonald put together a 50 year history picture gallery on the computer which played continuously throughout the afternoon on the screen. When it comes to decorations in our parish one person, Janine Charters, stands alone. Her tiered cake stand decorated with cupcakes was a big hit as were the year stars above the timeline.

A great deal of thanks must go to our Peoples' Warden Gina

Newhall who helped keep the committee chairperson on task. Other members of the committee who should be given recognition are Vito Marzoli, Joan Horne and Gerry McMaster.

We look forward to Bishop Ralph's visit for the actual 50th Anniversary Service on Sunday September 24, 2006. Come and join our celebration.

This article is dedicated to the life and witness of Al Beatty (1924-2006), a founding member of the parish.



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## The Order of Saint Luke

*What is the Order of Saint Luke?*

It's the order of the physician, Saint Luke. There's a Chapter in Oakville where they meet on the second Tuesday of every month and lay on hands and pray for healing.

*Who is welcome?*

Anyone. People you know. Young and old. Everybody is welcome. They welcome people of all ages, from all different sects of Christianity.

*Who does the healing?*

God. In His time. In His way. We just pray.

*I've been a Christian all my life and I never knew about the Order of Saint Luke. If I go to one of the meetings do I have to join?*  
Not if you don't want to. You can just come out and pray and be prayed for.

*Do I have to pray out loud?*

No. Some people do, but you don't have to if you don't want to. You don't have to do anything you don't want to do. Just come. Even if you're not in need of prayer at the moment, you probably know someone who is. We could pray for them.

*When is the next meeting?*

There's a meeting on the second Tuesday of every month at 7:30 pm at St. Simon's Church, 1450 Litchfield Road in Oakville. The turn off is on White Oaks right opposite Sheridan College.

The Annual Mission is coming up in October. You won't want to miss that! You can visit the OSL website at [www.oslregion8.org](http://www.oslregion8.org) or contact the registrars, Kathy Parker at [jparker145@cogeco.ca](mailto:jparker145@cogeco.ca) or June Best at [jlbest@sympatico.ca](mailto:jlbest@sympatico.ca), or by phone at 905-825-2669.

See ad on page 16

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# OUTREACH

Niagara Anglican - September 2006

## Geneva and Kosovo: Not your usual tour

CAROLYN VANDERLIP  
DIOCESAN REFUGEE COORDINATOR

Geneva and then Kosovo are not your typical summer tour of Europe. But if you happen to have an opportunity to attend meetings at the United Nations in Geneva, and if you also happen to have a friend who is vacationing in Kosovo for the summer to visit her family, it might seem ideal!

It did to me. And so on June 20 (appropriately, World Refugee Day), I found myself at the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Geneva, Switzerland. I was there on behalf of the Canadian Council for Refugees to attend the Annual Tripartite Consultation (ATC), a meeting between governments from around the world who accept refugees for resettlement, Non Government Organizations (NGOs) from those countries, and the UNHCR, who plans to refer approximately 61,000 refugees to begin new lives in 2007 in countries such as Canada, Australia, Sweden, the Netherlands, the UK, New Zealand, Australia, Brazil, the USA, and many others. Out of nine million refugees worldwide, those who are resettled represent a mere drop in the bucket.

The NGOs had an opportunity at the opening of the ATC to make a statement, and we put that to good use. Our representative spoke about our concern over the fact that UNHCR refers refugees for resettlement based on their capacity to process cases, not on the actual need, which is much greater than 61,000 places worldwide. We welcomed the opportunity to discuss the resettlement needs of refugees living with HIV/AIDS who are often particularly vulnerable. We reiterated the need for family reunification, and for building welcoming communities in resettlement countries.

### Disturbing policies

One area of particular concern to the NGOs is a relatively new policy in the United States barring anyone from admission if they have provided any form of material support to a terrorist or terrorist-like organization. This policy has denied resettlement to genuine refugees who were forced to pay money or provide goods or services under duress. For example, a ransom paid

to rescue a kidnapped child, a "war tax" imposed by a guerilla group where failure to pay would result in death, a letter delivered under duress even if the contents were unknown, and even livestock taken from a refugee's property by a guerilla group could be considered "material support." This policy has drastically cut the number of refugees the United States will accept for resettlement, and both UNHCR and NGOs are gravely concerned about the worldwide implications.

The ATC itself was an opportunity to hear updates on UNHCR operations and current refugee situations worldwide, and for governments and NGOs to respond with questions and concerns. NGOs had an opportunity on the second day to make presentations on resettlement in their countries, and we were left inspired by the wonderful work being done to help integrate refugees, many of whom have been traumatized by their experiences.

### A happy reunion

Following the ATC, it was on to Kosovo. As Prishtina came into view through the airplane window, I thought back over the last six years. I remembered my first meeting with Mervete and Sabri Dermaku and their children after they arrived in Canada from their war-torn country. I relived the shock when just a few weeks later, Sabri suffered a massive stroke. And I smiled at the memory of standing at the airport, watching as Mervete was reunited with her brother and sister-in-law and their children, after St John's Ancaster (my home parish) sponsored them to come to Canada as refugees. Now, I was the one being awaited at the airport, this time by Mervete and Sabri, and Sabri's brother Lirim, in Prishtina, Kosovo. I was thrilled to have the opportunity to finally see the country I had heard so much about, and meet the families of my Albanian/Canadian friends.

Lirim was our driver for most of my visit, and it was lucky for us that he was. Driving in Kosovo is haphazard at best, and you must be both very cautious and extremely brave to be able to pull it off. We arrived safely at our first destination, Sabri's parent's house, which was to be my home away from



home for the next few days. I had met them when they visited Canada a couple of years ago, and it was wonderful to see them again. I received a very warm welcome, and Mervete was kept busy translating as we got re-acquainted.

The next few days were spent sightseeing around Kosovo. The country is very beautiful, with picturesque villages surrounded by mountains. We enjoyed wonderful lunches and dinners at lovely restaurants where meals cost only a few Euros. We drove up a mountain to relax over coffee while enjoying an expansive view of the countryside. We followed trails to waterfalls, and even took a tour in an underground cave.

But in spite of the beauty, reminders of the war are everywhere. Destroyed homes dot the landscape, and peacekeeping troops, tanks, and trucks are seen frequently. The United Nations is still in control of Kosovo, and peacekeepers from around the world ensure that hostilities don't break out again. Landmines are still being cleared, and cemeteries are full of the graves of men, women, and children, all bearing the year of death 1998 or 1999.

### Hospitality and generosity

Albanian people are said to be known for their wonderful hospitality to guests. This would be an understatement. I was welcomed like a member of the family, each and every time we visited some-



one, which was frequently. Family is very important in Kosovo, and during each visit there was always a combination of parents, brothers and sisters, cousins, aunts and uncles, and nieces and nephews to meet. Mervete was kept on her toes translating, which sometimes proved impossible as everyone tried to talk at once.

Everyone was anxious to make sure that I was enjoying my visit to Kosovo. To my great surprise, just before leaving I was presented with gifts by some of Sabri and Mervete's family members, as a reminder of my visit to their country. Knowing that most people in Kosovo are not working and incomes are extremely low made these gifts all the more touching. Combined with the bounty from a whirlwind shopping trip with Mervete, my luggage was overflowing as I boarded

my flight back to Switzerland. My heart was overflowing too, with sadness at having to leave so soon, with memories of such a beautiful country and thoughts of what had taken place there only seven years earlier, and mostly with respect and admiration for the wonderful people I had met.

I'll never forget my short trip to Kosovo, and hope that someday I'll have an opportunity to return. Important decisions are being considered right now about Kosovo's future, and whether the region will become independent from Serbia, as Montenegro recently voted to do. Please keep all of the people of Kosovo in your thoughts and prayers!

Many thanks to the Division of Outreach, and to the Primates World Relief and Development Fund, for their generous support which helped make this trip possible.

## You can help refugees coming to Hamilton

CAROLYN VANDERLIP  
DIOCESAN REFUGEE COORDINATOR

They are from one of the world's ten poorest countries. Many have been living in a refugee camp in Thailand for more than a decade and have had little exposure to life outside the camp. They may never have experienced electricity, running water, or paved roads. Many have never ridden in a car, used a telephone, or watched television. They are ethnic Karen refugees

from Burma, Myanmar, a country from which more than two million people have fled brutal persecution. A group of approximately 800 of them have been selected to be resettled in Canada, and are now preparing to begin the long journey to a new life.

The Karen refugees are unable to return to Burma, where they are hunted and persecuted; their villages have been burned, their women raped, and their men forced into labour. In Thailand, they are not allowed to leave

their refugee camps, where conditions are over-crowded and only the very basic necessities are available.

In Canada, they will likely be overwhelmed with a culture very different from their own, the unfamiliar freedom now available to them, learning a new language, and becoming familiar with the technology that we take for granted as part of life.

Private sponsors are working in partnership with the Government of Canada to offer sponsorships

to approximately 200 of the Karen newcomers. Opportunities are available in Hamilton, which has been selected as one of the destination cities, for churches to privately sponsor families of Karen refugees. To facilitate this, the Government has offered a "cost sharing" arrangement, whereby the first four months of income support will be provided by the Government, along with immediate settlement support upon arrival and start up

costs including furniture, clothing, household needs etc. The sponsor would provide up to eight additional months of income support.

If your church is in the Hamilton area and would be interested in this exciting opportunity to make new friends, learn about a different culture, and help a family begin a new life, please contact Carolyn Vanderlip, Refugee Sponsorship Coordinator, at 905-648-5656 or cvanderlip@gmail.com.

# What does partnership in Mission mean in today's Anglican reality?



STUART PIKE  
RECTOR - ST ANDREW'S, GRIMSBY

Major discussion in both the local and global Anglican Church today seems predominated by questions of who's in and who's out. At the international level many Churches of the so-called Global South cannot conceive how some of the Churches of the west can possibly be so inclusive as to allow the blessing of same-sex unions or consecrating a gay bishop who is in a committed same-sex union. "Can they be following the same scriptures as us?" they ask.

At the local level, the debate continues as to just who we can include and what that inclusion means. Is there any way in which a progressive, inclusive Church can still see itself in some way to be a Partner in

Mission with a Church in the Global Church which renounces it? What can this mean with regard to a sense of global mission which many Anglicans feel strongly about?

## The meaning of mission

Firstly, it is important to recognize the changing focus of the word 'mission' since the second half of the 20th century. It used to be that 'mission' was thought to be an endeavour engaged in by missionaries from the Global North and West who were sent to the Global South to carry on their missionary activities. It was definitely about bringing something which we have, including the Gospel, along with expertise and wealth which was given to those poor people across the waves to help them in their lot and to bring them the Good News of God's love in Jesus Christ.

Many things have happened since those days: some of them have happened because, unknowingly perhaps, the missionary endeavour went hand-in-hand with colonialism and conquest and hegemony. You can see how unbalanced and paternalistic the missionary relationship often was.

## Principles of partnership

At its second meeting in Dublin in 1973, the Anglican Consultative Council adopted the Principles of Partnership in order to reflect the truer meaning of mission at the time. They were adopted along with the following statement as Partnership in Mission was established:

"The missionary task of the Church continues to be that of reconciling people to God, to each other and to the environment.

The emergence everywhere of autonomous churches in independent nations has challenged our inherited ideas of mission as a movement from Christendom in the West to the non-Christian world. In its place has come the conviction that there is but one mission in the entire world, and that this one mission is shared by the world-wide Christian community.

The responsibility for mission in any place belongs primarily in that place. However, the universality of the gospel and the oneness of God's mission mean also that this mission must be shared in each and every place with fellow Christians from each and every part of

the world with their distinctive insights and contributions.

If once we acted as though there were only givers who had nothing to receive and receivers who had nothing to give, the oneness of the missionary task must now make us all both givers and receivers."

## Communicating without seeking to control

This newer vision of what mission is can lead to balanced relationships of partnership between Churches within the Anglican Communion. It is important to note, however, that the primary responsibility for mission in any place belongs in that place. What this means is that it is impossible for any church to take its ideas and theology, which have developed within their own context and cultural reality, and to force them upon another church in another part of the world. What it does mean is that we need to listen to each other and to grow in a relationship which can be richer for the insights and points of view which might be different from ours. Some of those insights and points of view

might be helpful for us to adopt in our context; some won't be.

If it is true, then, that the missionary task is about "reconciling people to God, to each other and to the environment," and then we need to discern how God's spirit is calling us to do that within our own context. For many in the West, this means recognizing that God's marvellous gift of covenant love which two people can share in a life-long partnership can be for everyone, whether they be gay or straight.

So what does partnership in mission mean today? It means that there are many ways in which churches in different parts of the world can respectfully listen, learn, help and be helped, and strengthen one another as we each fulfill the mission to which God is calling us in our place. It means we can focus on the strengths of our relationship, rather than on the differences which divide us.

So who's in and who's out? My reading of the good news of Jesus Christ is that we're all in: we just need to find the ways to believe that about each other.

## Breaking the chain of infection

SUE NICOLLS  
ASSOCIATE PRIEST - ST. CHRISTOPHER'S  
BURLINGTON

So, everyone is washing their hands, right? Well, whether you are washing your hands more or not, hopefully your awareness of the spreading of infection has increased.

In this article I'd like to talk about the implications of Pandemic Preparedness on our worship. That is, how we can break the chain of infection during our worship process.

There are implications for several areas in our worship:

- Altar Guild preparing of the vessels and linens in preparation for communion.
- Sharing the Peace.
- Deacons and Servers as they set or assist in the setting of the table.
- Clergy as they set the table, prepare communion, and administer communion.
- Chalice Bearers and other Communion Ministers on Sundays and throughout the week.
- Receiving communion.

### Don't panic

Secondly, although pandemic is not here yet, these suggestions are good ways to break the chain of infection now and during normal flu season, decreasing the spread of colds and flu throughout our congregations.

The important thing is to wash our hands. For instance:

- The Altar Guild needs to wash their hands, with soap and water, before they handle clean vessels or linens while preparing the dressed chalice and paten.
- All clergy and those servers who assist in preparing the table or assist in communion in any way, need to wash their hands with hand sanitizer before handling any ves-

sels or linen when the table is being set or in the administration of communion. This is important, even if they are not specifically touching the bread or the chalice.

■ Chalice bearers and communion ministers need also to wash their hands with hand sanitizer prior to touching a communion vessel or linen.

■ During communion services where the bread and wine is passed from one to another, everyone taking part needs to have washed their hands in hand sanitizer before sharing communion.

■ It is important for all worship ministers, both clergy and lay, to wash their hands after vesting, before the service begins. If soap and water is not handy, hand sanitizer can be used.

■ It is expected that members of the Altar Guild wash their hands with soap and water prior to cleaning communion vessels, as well as when preparing communion vessels and linens.

■ Clergy: using the lavabo is a separate and symbolic part of the communion ritual, and is not to be considered the same as using hand sanitizer.

### Sharing the peace

I think it is safe to say that most folks who come to church on Sunday morning share the peace with at least one other person. It has become an inclusive and integral part of our worship practices. How do we share the peace and not put ourselves or others at increase risk of infection? Several parishes are now offering hand sanitizer so parishioners are able to wash after the peace and prior to receiving communion. Hand washing "stations" are located in some churches at the chancel steps, or at the

front pew or in several pews. The location of hand washing stations depends on the routine and structure of each parish. We are encouraging all parishes to have hand washing "stations" to enable everyone to wash their hands before receiving communion.

### Shaking hands at the door

Everyone shaking hands at the door at the conclusion of a service or on the way to coffee hour, need to consider washing their hands before eating any of the refreshments. Hand washing station(s) in the foyer or narthex or in the room where refreshments are offered is a good idea. To be effective, the hand sanitizer we use needs to have an alcohol content of greater than 60%. It is also important to be generous with the amount of hand sanitizer used, and to continue rubbing our hands, front and backs and between our fingers (not forgetting our thumbs) until our hands are dry. Hand sanitizer does not 'clean' hands that have visible 'dirt' on them, like soil, grease, food, etc.

When administering a chalice, it is important to open the purificator and to wipe both the inside and outside of the chalice with the purificator after each person, and to turn the chalice so the next person sips from a different place on the chalice. Opening the purificator allows the chalice bearer to wipe the chalice with an unused portion of the purificator. Enough purificators need to be available so anyone administering a chalice can use more than one during communion if necessary.

We all have an opportunity to break the cycle of infection in our worship services. Being aware. Being prepared.

## Longing to belong

KELLY WALKER  
AUTHOR, SINGER, SONGWRITER

I was born 65 years ago in the town of Walkerton, Ontario. I was premature and weighed under three pounds. I am the son of Lucille Letner of Walkerton and Leonard Schuett of Mildmay. My great great grandparents arrived in Ontario in the 1850s coming from Alsace and Ireland. I was the second son of Lucille and Leonard. The first boy, George, lived only for one day.

The story goes that I was so small, my mother was frightened to hold me. I was put into a shoe box in the oven door, fed with an eye dropper and bathed in olive oil.

I was called Patrick, after my two Irish great-grandfathers and Kelly after my mother's brother Kelly who was named after Father Jim Kelly who was parish priest in Walkerton. My grandmother, Nellie (Mary Ellen) Heffernan Letner was very fond of him.

So far, so good. But then, just after Christmas of 1944, Leonard Schuett, my dad, died of a cerebral haemorrhage. When I was 5, my mother married Harold Walker. I was officially adopted and became Patrick Kelly Walker. And so it has been.

It was hard to become English after having been Irish and Alsatian. But we learn. I became part of the Toronto English society, went to English-type boys' schools and belonged. However, every summer I was allowed to go 'home' to Bruce County to be with my family of origin. At the end of every summer I returned to Toronto with

a Bruce County accent, having eaten sauerkraut and summer sausage until the cows came home. I had been adopted a Walker but was always a Schuett.

Belonging is an essential human need. It can only truly happen when one is recognized as being "one of us". We yearn for this acceptance and need it in order to grow in health and embrace our own mystery as a revelation of God's image, for ourselves and also for the community we find ourselves in. We can pretend to be someone we aren't but inevitably that leads to shame-filled cover-up, lies and ultimately, disease.

It is so important in the community of the followers of Jesus of Nazareth, that we, as he did, honour each one who comes into our fold as wonderful as they are in our midst. They inevitably are different from us but come to manifest God to us in each and every epoch. They must be allowed to belong without having to pretend that they are something they are not.

That is a stretch for us who "arrived first." They might be another colour, sexual orientation, class or religious brand. We must always ask, "Why did they want to belong to us?" "Why did God send someone so different into our community, asking to belong?"

Must the other become something false to be among us? Or are we the community of Jesus? In our assembly there is to be neither Jew nor Greek, free person nor slave. A new day requires that all must be able to belong.

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# Getting to know you

## THE REVEREND LYNDA KEALEY

Rector, St. Michael's Church and Coordinator of the Mountain Ministry

FRAN DARLINGTON  
CHURCH OF THE RESURRECTION

Philosopher Joseph Campbell often advised his audiences to "follow your bliss." Our concept of bliss changes; what satisfies at the age of ten is something quite different by twenty or thirty, let alone in later years. But at any age, people need to feel that they belong, in a place, a community, a position of employment, especially in a family. A sense of not belonging can lead to loneliness, frustration, anger and despair.

The Reverend Lynda Kealey, Rector of St. Michael's Church, Hamilton, and Coordinator of the Mountain Ministry there, has, like most people, ventured down many paths to find and follow her bliss. An only child, born in St. Thomas, Ontario, she has lived "everywhere in Canada, except British Columbia," as her father's Air Force service meant frequent transfers. "The hardest move," Lynda explains, "was when I was in eighth grade. I left a set of friends I thought would be high school friends. We lived in Port Credit, had our first house and I had a sense of rootedness there." Transferred to St. Catharines, the family stayed through Lynda's high school years. She grins, saying, "in school, I had to ask for extra foolscap to list all the schools I'd been to!" Lynda describes "not only existential loneliness, but I never felt that deep sense of being at home, real rootedness."

Lynda has treasured "a counterbalance, as both sets of grandparents lived in the Beach in East Toronto, and we went there for Christmas and holidays."

Remembering happy years in Montreal, which Lynda describes

as "a user-friendly city," she decided to study nursing there. After four years of study and one as a qualified nurse, Lynda entered the University of Western Ontario, London, to earn her nursing degree. There, she met and married Jim Kealey. Back in Montreal for thirteen and a half years, Lynda gave birth to their three children, David, John and Tim: "Having three kids in three and a half years was an isolating experience." The family moved when Tim was only a few weeks old. "It was winter, I was enclosed with three little people. In the spring, we met new neighbours; it was wonderful!" She taught nursing, but, she chuckles, "We lived in four homes in that time!"

The family moved to Mississauga, but ten months later relocated to Lexington, near Boston, Massachusetts, in 1982, to stay for six years. "I thought we were going to live there the rest of our lives. I put down deep roots. It was the longest I'd lived anywhere." Lynda was also proud and protective of Lexington's historicity, as a key location in the American Revolution.

### New beginnings

Deciding that "I didn't want to be a nurse for the rest of my life," Lynda went back to school at Harvard University, taking a continuing education course on "Second Isaiah" with Paul Hansen, the "guru professor" in Apocalyptic and Eschatological studies. "It was my first course in the bible or theology, but I always enjoyed theological discussions," Lynda told Professor Hansen, "I guess I'm your token housewife." He replied, "My wife is one of those, but she's the most challenging person in my life.

Don't say that any more."

Years later, Lynda's delight in her Harvard experience is evident. "(The) two hour class once a week felt like fifteen minutes, and I had to wait a week to go back!" The course completed, Professor Hansen said, "I think you should apply for full-time studies. I'll write a letter of recommendation."

Amazed, but transferring to full-time divinity studies, Lynda experienced belonging for the first time, particularly as she got to know her fellow students, especially fourteen women, like her in their forties. "Every one of us thought it was a mistake that our applications had been put in the 'accept pile.' We all felt different, we hadn't belonged anywhere, experienced community anywhere, we'd felt different as teenagers, hadn't been interested in the usual teen things." Lynda comments wryly, "I did the normal teenage stuff, but it felt like playing-acting. Now I was in a group of women like me, bright interesting women who had done interesting things with their lives, and none of us had felt like we belonged, never had a deep sense of belonging up to that time in our lives. We all experienced solitary childhoods, but gave ourselves permission to explore a different relationship with God than most people know." When she graduated in 1988 with a Master of Divinity degree, Lynda had discovered the joy of "really belonging somewhere."

### The challenge of change

But this was not to last, as Jim's work as a business executive meant that the family moved to Oakville and David left for university. "I left all those friends, the town I loved,



all at the same time. The kids were unhappy, leaving their friends of six years. I hated everything, even kept the Massachusetts licence plates on my car till 1996!"

Picking up the pieces of her life, Lynda began doctoral studies at Trinity College, Toronto, but "there was no one to supervise the studies I wanted (to do) on Midrash (ancient Jewish commentary of Hebrew scripture) and (the Apostle) Paul." Lynda switched Medical Ethics and became a chaplain to the four Intensive Care Units at Sunnybrook Hospital in Toronto. While "on vacation" in England during her Harvard years, Lynda had fulfilled the requirements of the Clinical Pastoral Education programme, specializing in hospital chaplaincy.

The family found a parish home at St. Cuthbert's Church, Oakville, and the late Reverend Keith Glead became a wonderful mentor in for Lynda. Even though "I wasn't even sure I wanted to be ordained... (but) became part of a group waiting for a job so we could be ordained."

Lynda explained to the Right Reverend Walter Asbil, then Bishop of Niagara, that she had "only done hospital chaplaincy, but would be interested in parish ministry." Exploring that ministry with the Reverend Margaret Murray, then Rector of the Church of the Redeemer, Stoney Creek, Lynda found "another

moment of belonging. I loved the role, and I knew yes, for sure, this is what God is calling me to!"

Ordained in January, 1995, Lynda began a four year curacy with the Reverend Canon Fred Gosse at St. Christopher's Church, Burlington. In March, 1999, the Right Reverend Ralph Spence, now Bishop of Niagara, appointed Lynda as Rector of St. Michael's Church, Hamilton. Seven years into her ministry at St. Michael's, she smiles, "They are both another belonging... (and) I still have things to do (there)."

### Where does belonging happen?

Reflecting on the necessity to belong, Lynda comments that, even though the family home has been the same house in Burlington for thirteen years ("the longest ever in one place, but it's hard to trust, to hang pictures!"), the house "doesn't give a sense of belonging, but a sense of community, about people trying to live a faithful life."

She continues, "At Harvard, we were all trying to be faithful to what we believed, but community was the thing. Commonality in community is all about the journey in our lives, not about belonging to institutions, house, city, town. It's about belonging with a group of people

continued on page 19

## The Order of Saint Luke the Physician (OSL) A Conference on the Spirituality of Healing and Wholeness

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or contact our Registrars: Kathy Parker: [jparker145@cogeco.ca](mailto:jparker145@cogeco.ca)  
or June Best: 905-825-2669. Email: [jlbest@sympatico.ca](mailto:jlbest@sympatico.ca)

>> Please join us <<

## To whom do I belong?



SUSAN C. HUXFORD-WESTALL, ON  
ALL SAINTS, HAMILTON

I entered this world on February 6, 1921. Of course, I have no recollection of the event; only a birth certificate that tells me that that is when it happened. I had little awareness of possessing anything but a thirst and my mother supplied the answer. As I became more aware of my surroundings I came to realise that two people were involved in my welfare. I belonged to my parents.

As time passed and I became more fully aware of my surroundings, I learned that there were others involved: I belonged to a family of aunts, uncles, cousins and their friends. At age five I had a brief encounter with a kindergarten, but I never belonged because my family doctor recommended that, for health reasons, I should not start school until I was seven.

When I attended primary school I never belonged. I was bullied and unhappy, but I tried hard to succeed in my studies. Why? In order to satisfy those people to whom I did

belong, my parents. At the same time I came to realise that I belonged to a larger community, my hometown for which I still have affection; it has happy memories of childhood among friends and relations. I felt at home; I belonged.

At ten years of age disaster befell my parents; the Great Depression removed their independence and we had to leave the hometown to which I belonged. Belonging had to start all over again. A new school presented the need to adjust to a new environment, but initially I failed. I did not belong.

A serious illness at twelve years of age made me reassess my life. What was this business of belonging? What is life all about? I felt incomplete within myself; something was wrong, something intangible. My family had a very Victorian outlook upon life; sex was a taboo and never mentioned. I knew that I was supposed to belong in a boys' school, but I realised that I was a misfit. How could things be put right?

It was while I was in St. Thomas's Hospital, hearing Big Ben across the river tolling the hours away, that I struggled with my own belongings. If I were to belong in my school I should have to conduct myself as was expected of a young male. Inwardly, I felt that I wished to be a girl, but that was impossible. My physical attributes told me

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# Why I am Christian



JOHN BOTHWELL  
RETIRED BISHOP OF NIAGARA

In these times of so much scepticism about traditional religion and churches, I want to explain my personal reasons for being Christian. That may sound strange because during my 55 Years in Holy Orders, being Christian has been my job! However my convictions are due to deliberate choice, not just habit or circumstance. Perhaps yours are too, and these thoughts might challenge you to think about that.

## Only God can judge

Mind you, this is not about being a Christian as opposed to being a Muslim, Jew, or Hindu; I find it impossible to believe all non-Christians are damned! There is an ancient doctrine called the "Baptism of Desire" which holds that when people respond sincerely to the highest they know, that is what God expects. For while Jesus Christ is the special focus of our faith, we Christians believe He is also the light that lightens everyone. So people of other religions and even those who are secular minded may share something of His spirit too. Let God alone be judge!

Like many of you, one reason I am Christian is that I was born into a Christian family. We all have to 'bloom where we are planted', and the rich soil of Christian faith, albeit in another denomination, certainly nourished my spiritual roots. But later, the writing of an Anglican monk, Father Harry Williams, suggested three further reasons that I want to explore here.

## Real poverty is demeaning

The first is that, while physical things are very important, there is more to life than just things. Have you not noticed how often the worth of people is described in terms of money and affluence? The news media, governments, business and labour all alike, usually define 'the good life' by 'the bottom line', money to buy things.

This may seem shallow but let's face it, money and things are very important. Let's banish the illusion of 'the good old days' when life was poor but simple, because real poverty is always demeaning. "I've been rich and I've been poor," cried Pogo, "and rich is better!" For when people are deprived of adequate food, security or medicine, the result is always confusion and despair.

We are all familiar with television images of desperate victims of earth-quakes, famines and floods, but usually they are from far away places and often evoke only passing compassion. Sadly, many other tragedies just as great are more hidden; like the millions of victims of AIDS and malaria in Africa, or the hungry children in the slums of our own big cities. Therefore, most of us take our own well-being for granted, and however much we ourselves possess, often we still want more!

## Riches do not satisfy

Like drug addicts seeking another 'hit', or alcoholics hankering for another drink, we can become very easily 'hooked' on things. But as Rabbi Borowitz pointed out some years ago, "there's more to life than bread, cars and air conditioned rooms: the peculiar malaise of our times is air conditioned unhappiness!" As a Christian then, I believe that money and 'things' are certainly very important, but also that that they alone can never satisfy all of our hungers.

St. Augustine was right when he wrote, long ago, "You have made us for Yourself O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in You."

## Spiritual and physical reality

Therefore my second reason for being Christian is that the importance of physical and spiritual things can never really be separated. People keep trying to do that, but it is impossible!

On one hand, technology and business keep producing more and more new things, because innovation is valued very highly by our economy. And advertising people seem convinced that purchasing and consuming can keep on increasing forever. On the other hand, some religious folks are overly suspicious of 'worldly things' and over-stress the 'unseen' in the belief that they should keep themselves untainted by the world.

But again, in my view the unique thing about being Christian is that we affirm the importance of both physical and spiritual reality. Consider for example, the person of Jesus Christ. The New Testament teaches that in Him, God "emptied Himself and took the form of a servant," and that He "was tempted at all points just as we are." So Jesus' life on earth was truly human; a model of what our lives could be. Yet at the same time, through Christ's teaching and death and resurrection, we gain a unique understanding of the Mystery of God as well. Divinity and humanity—the physical and the spiritual—are conjoined in Jesus Christ and cannot be separated; nor can they be separated in our daily lives.

## Spiritual reality here and now

So my third reason for being Christian is that spiritual reality can be encountered here and now, in and through physical things, every day of our lives. We experience that at the Altar when we receive Holy Communion, of course. But the church's sacraments are not the only way we can experience the spiritual through physical means, because all physical things can be sacramental.

Often we are moved spiritually by great music for example, even though it comes through the medium of physical instruments or the human voice. Sorrow in our hearts brings tears to our eyes. And love, the greatest of all spiritual realities, usually is embodied in loved ones—a child, parent or spouse—or for some lonely folks, in only a little dog or cat. In these and many other daily experiences, we learn the true nature of physical things, good and important on their own and as sacramental signs through which we may receive spiritual strength.

Years ago around a beach-fire I noticed a twig that leapt onto the sand and faded into darkness; then someone flicked it back into the fire and it began to glow again. That seemed to me like something Jesus might have used as a parable, for as twigs need to be part of a larger fire to keep burning, and we Christians, warts, different opinions and all, need each other to keep the flame of faith alive as a sign of hope.

## Christian Witness

Therefore in our controversy about homosexuals and the Bible, if we Christians, including those suspicious of gays and gays themselves, could learn to practice the principle of Gamaliel (see Acts 5:33-38 for more details); surely that would be a very powerful sacramental sign of our common commitment to Jesus Christ, for He who is our model and saviour said nothing at all about homosexuality, but did clearly command us "to love one another as I have loved you" (St. John 15:12), with self sacrifice, and without judgement.

Would that not be a really impressive Christian witness in these days when most the world seems intent on tearing itself to bits?

# Talents and gold coins

## THE PARABLE OF THREE SERVANTS (Mathew 25:14-30)



ANNETTE HARRIS  
ANGELICAN FELLOWSHIP OF PRAYER

This particular parable seemed to be planted for my reflection, many times this year it has come to mind: Something that was buried perhaps for future use, or hidden for a while, to be examined more closely when the time was right. If so, 'the teacher' chose this way of showing to those that follow Him, all can become clear with enough faith and trust to journey in the word, and to follow His direction when confusion happens.

One servant was given much, and he made a hundred percent profit. Another was given less, and he made a hundred percent profit. The third servant was given little and he made nothing, just kept it safe and hidden, so nothing was made or even learnt from his gift or talent. So it was taken from him to be given to the first servant who had made much and invested wisely for the master. Jesus teaches us well, for "to whom much is given, much will be expected."

## Using our gifts and talents

We are given choices and alternatives, how we use our precious gifts and talents. We can hide them for safe keeping, or we can use them and 'spend' them selectively, or we can rejoice and share them. Be wise like the good and faithful servant and invest and bring much return.

Much was given and much was spent for all mankind, the riches of His grace, the abundance of His blessing, the saving love of His son, are all His wondrous gifts

to us, nothing spared, nothing held back. What a lesson.

Jesus tells us clearly in this parable, that talents and gifts, if not used, will be taken away, or given over to them that will use them, and will make much of them for the benefit of all. So let us be careful of what comes from the Holy Father in the gifts we are given, and let us not disappoint Him, but on the contrary let us be glad, thankful, joyful, and share what He has so wondrously given.

## Our journey and its end

We can thank Him every day, we can be thankful in prayer and practice, always being mindful of all that is given. We are given abilities, reason, skill, and talents of all kinds. We can reflect on what Jesus tells us. He is the guide we need and the teacher for the closer walk, the lamp for our feet so that we do not stray or stumble. His is the straight path, for the Father in heaven. He is our journey and our journeys end.

We are given the talents for His purpose, that they may be used and enjoyed for the closer walk... To be accompanied by Him, guided and guarded by Him, the light to the world, also our personal light. If we take the 'talents' seriously in this teaching and abide with the giver, we shall find all the treasure we need this side of heaven. Amen.

## Fellowship of Prayer

The Anglican Fellowship of Prayer, Canada is part of a world wide organization that exists within the Anglican Communion, with the purpose of serving the church by helping its members grow in the life of prayer. We welcome assistance and participation on our journey.

Should you need prayer, a request line is available at [prayer@afprayerniagara.ca](mailto:prayer@afprayerniagara.ca). For all who wish to include these in their prayers, a site is available at [www.afprayerniagara.ca](http://www.afprayerniagara.ca). Confidentiality is assured.

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# Natural church development

CHRISTINE PRIESTMAN  
DEACON - ALL SAINTS, ERIN

I'm sure many of you have been involved in the process of planning a party or some other special event. You hope and pray the people who have accepted your invitation will have a great time when they come. Most planned events have a theme such as a family reunion in the park or a baby is on the way or a young man is tying the knot in a few weeks. But still, there is always the trepidation that your event will get rained on if it is out of doors or the baby comes on the evening of the big event or the nervous fellow forgets to show up for his own party. But All Saints is glad to report that the Natural Church Development Process was a great success at every turn!

## Discussing church ministry

When we began the process of Natural Church Development in March of 2005, I had no idea it would be such an exciting time in the life of All Saints. In February of 2005 the Visioning Committee at our church invited Canon Michael Patterson, Director of Evangelism for the Niagara Diocese, to come and share with us what the Diocese had available for church growth. We were very impressed with the genuine concern he had toward our desire to discover what we could do at All Saints that would help us to draw people to the church from this community and the surrounding area.

Key to Michael's presentation

was his distinction between 'process' and 'program'. We were very excited about his explanation of Natural Church Development, so we asked him to come back and talk to the entire parish about it. His slide presentation and excellent information helped us realize that just as a plant needs specific ingredients to grow healthy so the church needs specific ingredients in its life to be healthy as well.

## Exploring church ministry

Natural church development, as described by Christian A. Schwarz in his book *Natural Church Development* provides a way to help facilitate that process of determining where a church is healthy and where it is not. Listen to what Schwarz says, "Instead of trying to 'produce' the church of Jesus Christ with human efforts, *Natural Church Development* focuses on unlocking the potential that God has already put into every congregation." And everyone knows that old saying, "a chain is only as strong as its weakest link." Well, "a church can only move at the speed of its lowest or weakest area of ministry."

The example of a barrel with different length staves is used in the Natural Church Development process to explain it best. Build a barrel with eight different length staves and the water will still only go as high as the lowest staff. The other staves may be stronger, fastened more securely and better able to hold water, but as long as one staff is lower than the rest, the other

staves do not get to do their job completely because the water will never reach the highest level. In a church, all areas of ministry need to be strong and in good working order. If it turns out that one is lower or weaker than the rest, then the other areas are deprived of being able to be filled to capacity to do their ministry best. A church can only move forward in accordance with its lowest staff or if you prefer, the weakest area of ministry.

## Learning about the staves of ministry

Natural Church Development provided all the information we needed to begin to educate ourselves on the eight areas of ministry that are needed to help a church maintain a healthy ministry life. Schwarz lists the eight areas of ministry this way: Empowering Leadership, Gift-oriented Ministry, Passionate Spirituality, Functional Structures, Inspiring Worship, Holistic Small Groups, Need-oriented Evangelism and Loving Relationships.

Here at All Saints we utilized skits, presentations, devised a bingo game and even built an actual barrel with different length staves to help us have lots of fun while we learnt what each of these eight areas of ministry were. We shared with the congregation how we naturally live out these areas in our daily lives as we share our faith with our community and family and friends in a low stress, non-threatening way. And that is what the process of Natural Church Development is

all about. It is about learning to be natural with the words and actions of your own faith while sharing it with others.

## Discovering our levels of ministry

But All Saints had yet to discover where our lowest staff of ministry in our church was. The Natural Church Development Process supplied us with a survey to fill out along with the instructions as to how to do it. The questionnaire is designed in such a way as to list each of our church ministries and how they are rated by All Saints parishioners in their manner of effectiveness from the least to the highest. It was very exciting to hear the chatter and see the earnestness with which those who attended the working lunch filled out the survey. It was even more exciting as we waited with anticipation to discover what the outcome would be. There was no way to make that determination before hand. When the results came back 3 days later it was the Needs-Oriented Evangelism that was our lowest area of ministry. It was excellent to have the guess work taken out of where to put valuable volunteer hours and energy and invest our limited resources.

## Improving our evangelism ministry

As a result the Evangelism Working Group was born here at All Saints and we have been giving birth to many wonderful changes and challenges ever since. Lots of discussion and lots of prayer went into making valuable changes. We have made our entrance ways much more welcoming. The wooden doors that enclosed in the sanctuary have been renovated by replacing the center wooden panels with beautiful tempered glass and yet leaving the original doors still in place. Now when the front doors are open our community can see the life of All Saints as it spills out into the community, welcoming all who pass by to come in. Our foyer has been revitalized with a beautiful Celtic cross hung on the wall in keeping with the ambience of All Saints and on an opposite wall a display of pictures of the life of All Saints which is kept updated for everyone who enters its doors to see.

We have formed a Greeters ministry team which meets every few months to discuss the serious ministry of welcoming people to church and how we can do that in an effective way. Some committee members have gone out and knocked on hundreds of doors in our village. Skills of other committee members were put to work to develop a beautiful post card for mailings. A unique fridge magnet was created and given out to visitors along with a welcome packet at Christmas Eve services. Welcome sheets which can be filled out by visitors were designed and put in pews, and attractive pamphlets with all our information were printed and given out at community events. A large display board was prepared with pictures of our

church life and is set up whenever opportunity allows in the community. On days there are sidewalk sales in town the BBQ and its cooks are found out front of All Saints. The church is opened and tours are given to all who wish to see what a village church looks like. All in all, All Saints is bustling with good things and positive changes that extend our welcome well into the community.

## Sharing our faith


The Evangelism Working Group also talked about ways we could learn to share our faith person to person in a natural way as well. We had discovered through the Natural Church Development process that, "talking our faith as well as walking our faith," is a very important part of Evangelism. All Saints in Erin and Saint John's in Rockwood came together to share in Via Media, an excellent learning process to discover how you can share your faith with someone else. Via Media: Sharing Anglican Journeys of Faith, was an eight week course which we did through Lent and after Easter, discussing our faith with one another and learning how to share aloud the experiences that our faith had led us through.

It has been a wonderful year and a half at All Saints and we have truly been blessed as we have gone through this excellent process of Natural Church Development. At our Wednesday Morning Prayer services, we pray for the Spirit of Evangelism to come down upon our church. We have seen stirrings of this happening in our people as they have shared stories of opportunities to share their faith with friends and families and strangers alike. As people in our community hear of our faith, some will want to discover how to have this faith for themselves. We have had people come to check us out. Some have stayed and some have yet to return.

## Thankful

We at All Saints would like to take this opportunity to thank Reverend Michael Patterson for his continued support and involvement with us in our Process of Natural Church Development. Michael was always available by email or phone or with a visit and as a result we were able to make our journey through the Natural Church Development process with much ease and enjoyment. Thank you Michael; your help was invaluable and has made this a most successful venture.

It is our hope and prayer that the Natural Church Development process will make a difference in the life of our parishioners and our church for years to come. I would like to offer this word of encouragement to any individual or group who is wondering how to discover what area of ministry in their church needs to be developed. I would highly recommend you contact Reverend Michael Patterson at the Diocese at michael.patterson@niagara.anglican.ca. You have nothing to lose but lots to gain. Soon, you could be saying, "Wasn't that a process!"



The Primate's World Relief and Development Fund

### Coordinator for the Diocese of Niagara

**What does this mean?**  
The Diocesan Coordinator's primary role is to share information, promote cooperation, educate and represent the PWRDF within the diocese.

He/she is a voting member at the Annual General Meeting of PWRDF which is held at various venues across the country. The expenses to attend this meeting are met from PWRDF/diocesan budgets.

The Diocesan PWRDF Coordinator, who may be either lay or ordained, is a member of the Diocesan Outreach Committee which meets no more than eight times per year.

This appointment is made by the Bishop of Niagara.

A more detailed job description for this voluntary position may be obtained from Karen Nowicki, Administrative Assistant to the Division of Outreach, at 905-527-1316 (ext. 380) or by email to karen.nowicki@niagara.anglican.ca.

**Mission Statement**  
PWRDF is a response by Canadian Anglicans to the gospel call to bear witness to God's healing love in a broken world. Inspired by the vision of a spirit-filled community of hope, PWRDF walks together with partners in Canada and overseas, to share in the creation of a more just and peaceful world.

In joy and struggle, the Primate's Fund engages in development work, responds to emergencies, works to protect refugees, and educates and advocates for change.

# How can I belong when my church is closing?



**MARION VINCETT**  
EXECUTIVE ARCHDEACON

As immigrants to Ontario in 1974, with two small children, Paul and I eagerly sought out an Anglican parish where we could find friends and support as we settled into our new surroundings. I suspect that this was not unusual in those days when many immigrants were from the UK.

Today, however, the immigration patterns are very different: most of the new immigrants to this province come from countries where Christianity is not the majority faith, and few look towards the Anglican Church for a new home.

## Struggling to keep the doors open

This is certainly the case in Hamilton where there is no shortage of immigrants but there is a shortage of Anglicans and other mainline Christians. Such is the shortage that all of these denominations are scrambling to find new adherents and to maintain their often large and expensive buildings.

The Anglican parishes of east Hamilton have been on a journey over the past 18 months. Representatives of the congregations of St Mary's, Grace and St Alban's have been in earnest conversation during this time and they have been joined at the table more recently by Faith Lutheran members.

## Exciting new life

In June, Vestry meetings at Grace and at St Mary's agreed that their congregations would come together to form an East Hamilton parish—yet to be named by our Bishop in consultation with Bishop Michael Pryse of the Eastern Synod of the ELCIC—which would continue to work with the congregation of Faith Lutheran Church hopefully to become one joint Anglican-Lutheran parish over the next three to five years.

The site of the new entity is yet to be determined. It has been recognised, though, that the Grace property will not be large enough to accommodate the envisioned whole. So it is to be redeveloped in some creative way such that the proceeds, after debts have been paid, may be used to enhance and redevelop the chosen property for all to share.

Meanwhile, St Peter's, situated in a large, aging and expensive Victorian building, has been talking with some of the other denomi-

nations in its area. Those talks have led to a number of joint initiatives which transcend denominational barriers and theologues as the church communities seek to do ministry together within the neighbourhoods that are their joint mission field.

And St Alban's has agreed to keep close ties with the new East Hamilton parish but to continue to operate independently at this time as it works at serving the needs of its distinct neighbourhood.

## Emotionally challenging

Each of these developments has a profound effect on what it means to 'belong' to a parish family and to a denomination. In reality, of course, it is our commitment to the Christian message and faith that should be our underpinning. However, we humans tend to identify ourselves far more easily with one particular parish family within a faith community, and with the building that is the home of that family. When these buildings are sold or redeveloped and the parish family is amalgamated with one or two others, the way in which we 'belong' needs to be examined and reclaimed in a new way. This is emotionally challenging work, especially for someone (perhaps now a senior) who has been a member of only one parish for his or her entire life.

So what does it mean to 'belong' to the Christian faith within the Anglican tradition when there seems to be so much turmoil within this particular part of the Body of Christ? How do we adapt to the new realities and find a sense of 'home' again when our building is being sold and our parish family dispersed?

## Renewed hope in new parish families

Many of our Niagara parish members could write volumes in answer to this question, and, indeed, I hope that they will respond to this newspaper with their comments and their stories.

I can only say that I am overwhelmed with pride and gratitude when I hear and see how adaptable so many of our people are in these trying circumstances. I hear from many who have made the switch to other parishes—due to closures—and there is hope and joy in their voices when they tell me about their new parish family and the friendships and support that they have found there.

There is also renewed hope because the new parish family, which now includes the combined energies of the transferred members, has the ability to do ministry in a way that a tired and spirited group of people cannot.

Suddenly, it is easier to admit

that Jesus was far more interested in seeing his disciples share the good news and feed the hungry and visit the sick than he ever was in the construction and maintenance of church buildings, be they ever so beautiful.

So what does 'belonging' mean to me now, after having myself been a member of three congregations within this diocese and having worked closely with parishes in all kinds of circumstances here in Niagara and beyond?

I would say that my parish family is still a very important part of that sense of belonging. I need a parish where I know some of the members of the congregation and I am known. I am grateful for the wisdom, experience and support of the group as well as for the contribution that I am able to make within it. Sunday mornings together are sacred and an important part of my faith and support system.

For me, it is about community and worship and mission. The building is way down there in my scheme of priorities. A home is a home principally because of the people in it, not because of the way it is decorated. I realise that this is not the majority view but I suspect that it is part of what many of our people are discovering as they make the transition from one parish family to another.

## Getting to know you

continued from page 16

who are on a spiritual journey."

Lynda's spiritual journey involved growing up in the United Church and becoming an Anglican in Montreal. Illustrating the Anglican community's identity as the Via Media, the middle way, she says, "I knew the United Church wasn't enough, but the Roman Catholic Church was too much. Exile has been a theme for me, but I have found places that have been home by virtue of the community to which I belong."

Now, Lynda continues her ministry at St. Michael's with the added responsibility of coordinating the Hamilton Mountain Ministry. Jim is retired but happily teaching business part-time at Seneca College. David works with Dell Computers, going to flight school, doing his MBA part-time, and engaged to Elaine. Jim works in Grimsby as a tool and die maker, and is "doing his own thing." Tim, a sommelier in New York City, is married to Patty; together they have given Lynda and Jim the de-

light of a grand-daughter, Sophia, almost three.

Lynda recently enjoyed her sabbatical, exploring the theme of Churches in Conflict, especially through the Alban Institute. She "makes wonky pots" and is exploring water-colour painting: "I've always wanted to do both, so I started!" she chuckles. She also enjoys "womanly arts, knitting and quilting," and, like many clergy, is a "mad mystery reader," also enjoying Jon Cabot-Zinn and other Buddhist authors.

Years of living, exploring, reflecting and study can bestow a wisdom and sense of humour on those who are brave enough to risk taking Joseph Campbell's advice to "follow your bliss." Like all the rest of us, Lynda's spiritual journey continues, she keeps looking for new ways to know that essential sense of belonging, and treasures her memories of past belongings. Like all the rest of us, she knows that in time we will come to that ultimate place of belonging in God's kingdom, but our earthly journey is the way to get there.

## Stephen G. Fricker, B.Sc. CFP Certified Financial Planner



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# May I introduce you?

**THE IMPORTANCE OF INTRODUCTIONS** and the paths they lead us down



PETER SCOTT  
RECTOR - ST. MARK'S, ORANGEVILLE

All of us have had and remember significant introductions in our lives. Whether they be to a future life partner, mentor or even a world leader, these introductions begin new journeys.

When we arrive at social gatherings we like to be introduced to other guests. It sets us at ease and helps us to feel more comfortable. We learn more about other people and interesting conversations can often follow.

## Missing the opportunity

One can imagine how many introductions Queen Elizabeth II has endured. I'm sure she has staff whose only job it is, is to brief her on the professions and backgrounds of the people she will meet.

On one occasion her briefing staff let her down. The reception was at Buckingham Palace for those in the music industry. There were many musicians and industry executives there and the Queen walked up to three men and asked the first what he did. He replied, "I am a guitarist." She asked him how long he had been playing, and he responded, "About 45 years." The Queen asked the next man, "Are you a guitarist too?" to which he responded, "Yes." The third man got the same question and answered that he, too, was a long-time guitarist in the British Rock and Roll scene. The three men were rock guitar legends Eric Clapton, Jimmy Page and Jeff Beck.

If these names don't mean any-

thing to you, these gentlemen are to Rock 'n' Roll what Beethoven, Mozart and Bach are to classical music or Oscar Peterson, Ella Fitzgerald and Dave Brubeck are to Jazz.

Even though the Queen's musical tastes may not include any of the music that those three guitarists produce, she missed an opportunity to discuss and marvel at their varied careers. How unfortunate that she was not properly introduced!

How do introductions and new beginnings happen in the church? Are we ensuring that our introductions are effective in providing opportunities for growth? Or like Queen Elizabeth, are we allowing others to miss out on something big? Does God make the ordinary extraordinary when we are talking about introducing people to Christ the church, and the people of God?

## Had not been to church in years

I like to tell the story of a young couple who were thinking of going back to church. Both of them had attended church when they were younger but, like many others, after they left home they stopped. This was a big moment for them. They had not been to church in years and the three steps into the church seemed very big that day. Once inside the church they were greeted with a smile, handed some books and a bulletin, found a pew and sat down.

After they had sat down, there was the question of what to do next. The man saw that others were praying and remembering that this was something he was taught when he was younger, knelt down and said a prayer. Somewhere in his prayers he prayed that he wouldn't mess up in the service, pick up the wrong book, stand when he should be sitting or go up to communion at

the wrong time.

A woman next to him answered his prayers. Her name was Margaret. Margaret introduced herself and helped the couple through the service. She showed them down to coffee hour where more introductions were made.

## We felt very welcomed

The couple was none other than my wife, Elizabeth and me. That simple introduction made by Margaret made us feel very welcome and we joined the church.

I remember that day well and still feel grateful for Margaret's kindness; that simple introduction was extraordinary and opened many doors for us.

In Paul's second letter to the Corinthians he calls Christians "ambassadors." Margaret was God's ambassador that morning. She was there for us, guiding us. Perhaps she sensed our discomfort and did her best to ease it.

Every Sunday we gather to celebrate the Resurrection of Christ, an extraordinary event in itself. We must remember the importance of introductions and that God makes what seems like ordinary introductions at church extraordinary.

## God's Ambassadors

As God's ambassadors we introduce people to God in Christ and to the people of his church whenever they come through the doors of our churches and when we meet them in our daily lives.

The importance of introductions at social and business events is well known. Introductions can lead us on different life paths and open our hearts to new ideas. Introductions at church can have this same impact.

We, as God's ambassadors, have been called to continue to introduce others to the loving Christ and his church.

# God outside the box

MICHAEL THOMPSON  
RECTOR - ST. JUDE'S, OAKVILLE

In the middle of September we meet Jesus at the middle of his journey (Mark 8. 27-38, September 17). And we are not the only ones who cross his path. We find him with the disciples, and he's pressing them, first of all, for the 'buzz', "Who do people say that I am?" and then for their own conviction, "Who do you say that I am?"

All the answers from 'out there' try to fit Jesus into a box; Jesus embodies what God has done in the past. John the Baptist. Elijah. One of the prophets. Reruns of a time when God used to take initiative, do new things, astonish the certain and overturn certainties. It's refreshing to discover that it's not just in our own time that people imagine God's newness mostly as a past tense sort of thing. Around Jesus swirls nostalgia—even among that remarkable race we call "bible people"—a sense that God used to do new things but doesn't anymore, that the best we can hope for is an encore as God bows and leaves the stage of history for the last time.

## Memories of a promise

Somewhere in that past, Peter remembers, there was a promise that God would do a really new thing, would send Messiah to redeem God's people and initiate God's reign of justice, peace and compassion. The God who called Abraham and Sarah on the journey, who redeemed the Hebrew tribes from bondage, who raised up judges, kings, and prophets, who used Nebuchadnezzar and Cyrus of Persia to straighten out the bent lines of Israel's greed and idolatry in the Babylonian exile and return that God is up to something new, to the keeping of a promise made in the past, but pointing to the future.

Having not yet encountered a conclusion he won't leap to, Peter—not unlike Wylie Coyote in *Roadrunner*—dives at the Truth just as Jesus takes a sharp corner, and feet flailing, hovers over thin air, ready to plunge into yet another discouraging near thing.

## A new thing

Sometimes I think I understand Peter better than I understand Jesus. Most of us would be happy to be Peter, to be even partway towards the Truth that Jesus unfolds in his living. But Peter is undone, as so often we are undone, by the fact that Jesus will unfold that Truth not only in the power of his living—his healing, teaching, encouraging, and empowering—but also in the sheer naked abandonment of his dying. It is around that curve that Peter cannot bend the trajectory of his life; not only will God keep the old promise in Jesus, but God will keep that promise in a new, strange and unimaginable way.

We share with the people around Jesus a serious limitation to our faithful discipleship. We think we know where God is headed because we imagine that God just visits the same places over and over again. We may have to run to keep up, but we don't expect the living God to take off in a new direction,

to do a new thing. We imagine that we know the itinerary. God will do what God has always done.

But what if what God has always done is to bring about something new? What if the work of re-founding the world in God's initiating vision means that again and again God will set out in directions that we hadn't anticipated, and then ask us to follow? We can forget how startling God has always been to the likes of us, how ill-equipped we are to enclose God's impenetrable mystery within the bounds of our own understanding. We can forget that it is not God's mission to conform to our understanding, but to "transform the poverty of our nature by the riches of his grace."

## Idolatry and discernment

All of this is, of course, a commentary on idolatry. The God we can imprison within our own understanding, or whose actions we can accurately predict is not the sovereign God of heaven and earth, but a fantasy.

On the other hand, not every new thing is God's initiative. Video lottery terminals and crystal methamphetamine come to mind as new things that are not God's new things. But how are we to discern? How do we know that a new direction is a direction of God's leading and not simply of some leaning or predisposition we surround with fluffy legitimizations?

The most deeply honest answer is that we don't know. But we can have inklings, and we can be watchful. And this new country is not without landmarks. Two come to mind from Jesus' encounter with Peter.

The first is that the easy way is often not God's way. Peter becomes the voice of the Adversary, and Jesus recognizes him as such, because like the temptations in the wilderness, Peter asks Jesus to evade the price tag of his humanity, to accomplish the purpose of love without risking its cost.

And the second is that the way of division is often not God's way. Jesus sets Peter behind him, not away from him. He gives Peter a chance to become himself again, to lose his presumption and recover his discipleship. As frustrating, feeble and inept as the disciples are, they are all, including Judas, invited to the founding meal of our household.

## Moving forward

We might want, in our diocese and in the wider church, to pick up the threads of the questions raised in this gospel, and to explore together, in a search together for the truth that is still and always beyond us in this earth, the touchstones and signposts by which we may discern the Spirit's leading and follow our unpredictable and saving Lord. We might want to ask what wholeness we can approach together, rather than what fragments we can defend.

And we might celebrate the founding feast, modest in our own claims to truth, but open to the truth we encounter in word, sacrament, and the communion of the (flawed, frail, humble) saints.

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# This is my story...



MICHAEL BURSLEM  
ST. GEORGE'S, LOWVILLE

I am eternally grateful for my solid Christian heritage. I was brought up in the West Indies, the Middle East and England as an Anglo-Catholic, a faith that I absorbed from my parents. It was not until I came to Canada and went up north to the Arctic that I encountered any other tradition than catholic. I lived in Frobisher Bay, now Iqaluit, for almost three years, and later in Cambridge Bay and Resolute Bay, working with the Meteorological Service of Canada. In retrospect, I was somewhat 'churchy', zealous for God, but not really knowing Him. I abhorred the excessive drinking that some in isolation got themselves into, and, like the Pharisee, thanked God I was not like other men. In Iqaluit I spent much of my spare time in the building of the church at Apex, the Inuit settlement close by. In Resolute there was an excellent library, and I read *Hakluyt's Voyages*, stories of Northern discovery, large sections of *Grey's Anatomy*, a text in physiology, H. P. V. Nunn's *New Testament Greek* that I had taken north with me, and a Greek New Testament. I was very self-satisfied, until I saw the lives of the Inuit, when something unsettled me.

On returning south I offered to serve in the Diocese of the Arctic, and studied at King's College, Halifax, where I had settled. However, the working theology of the day was not that of the Bible, but rather of Bishop John Robinson's *Honest to God*. The summer of 1963 Bishop Donald Marsh sent me to Coral Harbour on Southampton Island to build a mission house with another student. I will remember my teenage interpreter, as I was asked to do some preaching, bursting into tears as I tried to explain some aspect of this new theology. This left me so confused, that one Sunday when a boat appeared destined for Rankin Inlet, I asked to go with them, and they took me aboard.

That evening we moored on a sandy beach on the south coast of Southampton Island to eat and to wait for the weather forecast at 9:00 am. This said fair weather for sailing, so we raised anchor and set out across Roes Welcome Sound. Around midnight the wind began to blow from nowhere, totally unexpected, as there were only few clouds. As a weatherman I was baffled. I was asked to take my turn at the wheel and was told to keep the moon over my left shoulder, but it circled around us, not once but many times over. The skipper final-

ly grabbed the wheel and growled, "You idiot, don't you realize that we are in dangerously shallow water?" On examining the chart I could only see that we were wallowing in the Bay of God's Mercy.

That night the clouds became thicker, and the winds stronger. The sun rose only for a few minutes before it disappeared above the clouds, and it again became eerily dark in the spray and thrashing rain. It didn't let up till evening. The food was under the forward hatch. We didn't dare go on deck to fetch it lest we be washed overboard. By the time we arrived in Chesterfield Inlet we were exhausted. We hadn't eaten for 22 hours and were very tired. That night and day was a turning point in my life.

The next day we sailed down the coast from Chesterfield to Rankin Inlet. At Rankin I had to wait till the bishop sent me the fare to return south, which took a week. I flew to Churchill via Baker Lake. On the strip at Baker there was a gathering of about 100 seeing off an elderly kabloona, Canon William James, their pastor for the previous 30 years. On boarding the aircraft he came to sit beside me, and we became acquainted; he the faithful shepherd and I the run away. At Churchill there was a similar gathering, and we immediately went into a hanger where he greeted them in the name of the Lord and celebrated The Lord's Supper. There was nothing 'churchy' about this.

In Churchill there was a letter awaiting me from the bishop. It was the most blistering letter that I had ever received, expressing considerable anger at my leaving Coral Harbour without his permission. On the train from Churchill to The Pas I showed it to Canon James, when we were alone in the Parlor Car, and we prayed together before going to our bunks, and the next day also, I remember, walking along the side of the train at one of its frequent stops. For three days we visited Inuit patients at the TB hospital at The Pas, and then we continued to Winnipeg, where we parted, he to Toronto, and I stayed there a week.

On my return east I stayed in Toronto only long enough to see Bishop Marsh. He explained that he would never ordain me, because, as he put it, I had no gospel to preach. Before leaving him, however, he came to my side of his desk and we knelt down together to pray for one another. That was real Christianity.

Not knowing exactly what to do next I continued my studies at King's, and achieved a Licentiate

in Theology, but not with the intent to be ordained. Having read some anatomy and physiology in Resolute, I knew that medicine was an option. In one week in June 1964 I made two decisions that forever changed the course of my life; the first to apply to Dalhousie Medical School, and the second to give my life totally to Jesus Christ at a Leighton Ford Crusade that week in Halifax. It was through the latter that I met Tony Tyndale with Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship. He invited me to a study of Romans 5 which he led every night for the first week after the Crusade. Tony mentored me for several years, as I grew in the New Testament faith.

Afterwards I discovered that I no longer needed to achieve to be accepted by others, as I had already been accepted by God, wars and all. I had become a nobody, and even though I later graduated in medicine, I preferred the company of nobodies to those, who like me before my finding Christ, thought we were somebodies. I think I had lost my Phariseism. In God's eyes only I am a somebody. Problems arise, however, between Him and me, and between me and my fellow nobodies, when I see myself in my own eyes as a somebody. It was in this newly found New Testament fellowship that I met my wife, Ellen, who was from Egypt.

Over the years since I have thought that if the church really be a collection of nobodies we have nothing to boast about to non-Christians, for whom Christ also died. We are like the street sweepers in Cairo, cleaning up the mess which the world discards. I feel a special kinship with Muslims. I'm also much influenced by the Anabaptists. Since I share a common humanity with all peoples, war is an anathema. So this is where I now stand—from Catholic, to Evangelical, to Anabaptist, or whatever—still very Anglican, as Anglicanism runs through my veins. I have received the torch from my parents and forebears, and now pass it on; different, perhaps, in its outward form from that which I received it, but still the same Gospel once delivered to the saints.

# To whom do I belong?

continued from page 16

that I was a male child; I had only recently learned the difference, not having any sisters. Was I mad? Did I belong in the Bethlehem Hospital's (now, and rather fittingly, the Imperial War Museum) lunatic asylum? I belonged to parents who had high hopes for me. Could I let them down? It must have been during my introspection that I began to appreciate that I belonged to something bigger than myself; bigger than my family; bigger than the world in which I lived. There's a divinity that shapes our ends, rough-hew them how we will. I belong to God.

It has taken me a lifetime to comprehend how completely I do belong to God. This is not egoism. This is my Father's world. I am here for a purpose, the purpose belongs to me; the purpose belongs to God for it is His purpose for me, and I belong to Him. In spite of its entire vicissitudes, the life I have lived has been loaned to me by God. I pray that I may have lived according to His will.

Where has all this led me? I have lived for fifty-six years as a man. I have belonged to the male sex; I have fathered two daughters. I belonged in my secondary school as house captain, prefect, and chosen to represent my school on the W. H. Rhodes Educational Trust Tour to Canada in 1939 when we docked in Liverpool on the homeward journey four hours before war was declared. I belonged to the British Armed Forces for six years during World War II, serving as a staff captain.

Throughout all this I had belonged to the Church of England, but when I arrived in Canada in 1947 I was to learn that I belonged to a greater communion, the Anglican Communion. I also belonged to a wife to whom I had been married for two years and through whom I was to belong to my daughters. During the ensuing years I belonged to the Hamilton Board of Education, serving in both elementary and secondary schools. I belonged to the Diocese of Niagara, serving in numerous roles in the diocese as well as in two parishes.

Where did all this belonging get me? I must claim that it got me nearer to the God whom I strive to serve, but it did not get me closer to my true self, the inner being to whom I really belong. I retired from teaching in 1977 and ceased to belong anywhere, except to God, in whom I placed my complete trust. I left Hamilton and moved to Rexdale.

I lost so much of the support group to which I had belonged, but I maintained my faith in the God to whom I belong. I remembered (and experienced) the words of the Psalmist, "though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me." I learned the meaning of being despised and rejected, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. It was a very painful experience, but I knew that I had to face it.

But God was there all the time. I found new shelters. I belonged in a new identity, the deanery, the ecumenical community, the social planning council, and a new congregation at St. Andrew's, Thistle-town. I was accepted in spite of the knowledge of the great change that was taking place in my being; I was changing sex; I was becoming my true self.

How strong is the sense of belonging? I was rejected by my life partner and by a daughter, but they still "belonged" to me. I had left Hamilton, which had been my hometown for thirty years, but I still felt that I belonged there. In a sense Hamilton belonged to me. I had to put things right.

Belonging and acceptance are not the same thing. When I returned to Hamilton in 1982 the first church I attended did not accept me. I was greeted by the rector with "Why did you have to come here?" and I was rejected by friends in whose home I had previously enjoyed a family Christmas. Some will consider me an obstinate cuss, but I decided to ride out the storm. Over twenty years later I can say that I belong in my parish, in the diocese and in the community. I feel at home, I belong, but it is all thanks to the God in whom I trust and in His Son whom I try to emulate.

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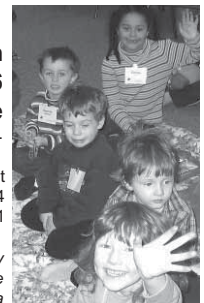
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# Summer Clinical Pastoral Education journal



Chaplain Doug Jones (far left) and the summer chaplain interns at St. Catharines General Hospital's Chapel.

**BILL MOUS**  
DIVINITY STUDENT

What does morning worship, sitting in on clinical rounds, attending therapeutic group sessions, being with as many as fifteen patients, liaising with staff, rushing off to attend a crisis and having a group debriefing session all have in common? Well it's what a typical day as a Chaplain Intern looks like!

In my last column I mentioned that among my adventures this summer would be the completion of a unit of Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE). It is an intense experiential learning program based in a health care setting which brings together the ministry of pastoral care with supervision and daily group reflection. CPE aims to assist clergy, theological students or lay pastoral assistants in achieving their full potential for ministry by, among other objectives, becoming aware of one's personhood and how one's ministry affects others.

Each unit of CPE consists of 400 hours. These hours are split evenly between clinical and supervisory activities such as critical incident debriefings, supervisory meetings and the infamous IPR or Interpersonal Relationships Group which meets daily to discuss the inner world of each student so as to better understand the attitudes, values and assumptions that shape our ministry. Each program and supervisor is accredited by the Canadian Association for Pastoral Practice and Education (CAPPE). Most dioceses (including our own) and some theological colleges (such as Trinity College) require a unit of supervised pastoral education to complete ordination or degree requirements.

I completed my unit at the St. Catharines General and Niagara-on-the-Lake sites of the Niagara Health System under the supervision of the Reverend Doug Jones.

Doug, a United Church Minister and Co-ordinator of Pastoral Care at the St. Catharines General site, likens his supervisory method to that of a river bed: guiding the flow of water through its course and in the process also being changed by its flow. Joining me in the program were five other students: two Anglicans from our diocese, two from the United Church and one from the Evangelical Missionary Church. Each person brought a welcomed and different perspective, making our discussions and our overall experience quite rich and rewarding.

## Mental and physical illness

During the course of my CPE unit I was blessed to interact with two paradigms of unhealth: mental and physical illness. My primary assignments were the inpatient mental health unit at St. Catharines General and the Niagara-on-the-Lake chronic and acute care unit, in addition to a week of on-call coverage during the evening and weekends.

As a chaplain intern and member of the multi-disciplinary health care team, I felt like a team member during my time with the Niagara Health System; I was received well and utilized, supported and encouraged. It was an environment where I could ask questions of staff but also where I provided some education to staff too, where I received and provided referrals. It was quite evident that the role of pastoral care within the Niagara Health System has been well defined and that the multi-disciplinary approach to health care is not only supported but encouraged.

Some of the key issues which I came across in my ministry with the patients of the mental health unit, patients often my own age, were grief, physical and sexual abuse, substance abuse and iso-

lation. So many patients lacked community support and were often afraid to reach out because of a fear of being stigmatized by their family, their community or their faith communities. I wonder what the role of the Church is in identifying or ministering to people afflicted by issues such as these in a parish setting.

## Challenged in ways I never knew were possible

Throughout the course of the summer I was challenged in ways that I wouldn't have even thought were possible. Among the many challenges and insights were my understanding of mental health and its origins, my theology around demonic possession and healing, what health versus unhealth looks like, and how I respond in crisis situations. As one of my learning goals, I also intentionally strived to augment my sensitivity to patients of faith backgrounds which differ from my own. Increasing my basic knowledge about the major faith groups particularly as it relates to a health-care setting has correspondingly increased my sensitivity to the ecumenical and multi-faith issues which arise with patients and staff. Visits with Jehovah's Witness, Hindu, and Buddhist patients have given me confidence in ministering to those of different faith traditions.

Another one of the significant learnings from this unit came from a patient who observed that one could always tell the healthy from the unhealthy by the way people dressed. From that comment, I realized that a tie and dress clothes might present a barrier to care for some on the mental health unit which led to the decision, with the encouragement of my supervisor, to dress casually in that context. This was an amiable decision as comments about my approachability were echoed from staff and

patients and no one voiced, nor did I experience any negative reaction to my change in dress. It speaks to the importance of adapting ministry to the context of a situation and asks the question: how do we as Christians minister in our communities in a way that honours the context of the situation? What 'ties' are we wearing that separate us from society and put up barriers to ministry?

## Challenged in my understanding of aging

Once a week I would drive down scenic Highway 55 to Niagara-on-the-Lake hospital to spend the day with patients and staff. Patients here were relatively active and engaged, with most in the final stages of their recovery from illness and awaiting transfer to a seniors care centre.

Dementia is common as are issues around grief, fear of death and the unknown, as well as feelings of being isolated and misunderstood. I've been challenged significantly in my understanding of the aging process and in the concerns of this older generation. One of my assumptions going into this area was that old was 'old'. But I quickly realized that there are different stages of life with older persons. Just as it would be preposterous to lump all young people under 25 into the same category as 'youth' and say they have the same needs and are facing the same life issues, so too is it ridiculous to lump all people over the age of sixty-five into the same category.

Unlike the mental health floor, my role as chaplain was much clearer for the dozen or so people who attended the weekly services at Niagara-on-the-Lake hospital which I facilitated along with a wonderful group of volunteers. My homilies often centered around issues which I had experienced while on the floors: suffering, healing, isolation, hope, patience. It was really quite amazing to see the seeds of those words bloom and grow in my subsequent visits with patients.

My trip to this hospital was the highlight of my week. In a very real sense, the people here fill me with so much joy and happiness (even in their tribulations).

## Understanding pastoral visits

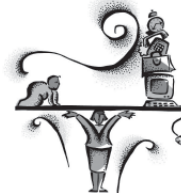
My understanding of a pastoral visit with someone who cannot or has great difficulty speaking was transformed as well. One specific example of this was the patient who was unable to express her words and formulate thoughts because of a stroke, yet when we prayed together and invited her to join me in the Lord's Prayer the words came out of her as though she was fully communicative.

Looking at pastoral care as a whole, I would say that it is about going where patients, family and staff would take me on their journey at the hospital, clarifying, facilitating and listening along the way. It is very much the act of being present for a person. It is listening, and chatting, struggling with a person and challenging that person; it is not a superior/inferior relationship, but rather like companions who undertake a journey for a period of time together, open to wherever that journey may lead them. The relationships I developed were, like the image of the riverbed, two-way especially when I became intentional about integrating the lived experiences of one 'human document' into my own.

## An incredible experience

I often tell my friends and family that I have learned more about life in the past three months than I have in the past 24 years. It has been an incredible and intense experience that has given me so many insights about life, about myself, about my pastoral identity and presence and about God! The theological reflections and integration that have resulted from my experiences have been a real blessing. I'm so glad it was a requirement! I believe it is an essential part of any person's ministry formation and I look forward to taking another unit of CPE in the future.

## Soul Food for Mothers and Grandmothers Retreat Day



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# Bishop of Niagara lily dedication service and reception



continued from page 1

ferred, and a spectacular reception at St. John's Cayuga, put on by both parishes, was enjoyed by many. The tea was truly elegant and refreshing, with silver tea serving sets and lilies cascading over the refreshment table of sweet delicacies, sandwiches and vegetables. The flowers in the hall were donated and arranged by Heather and Paul Gross. Yvonne Skrepnechuk, the in-house reception coordinator of the congregation's Anglican Church Women, coordinated and guided her hosting team with true grace. The whole hosting team of women and several men were bubbling with excitement and heartfelt love. Many were in their floral coloured sundresses and bright summer shirts. Yvonne told me that when Bishop Ralph came in to thank the ladies, she told him that they were honoured to serve the people of God, including "our Chief Shepherd."

I had some rather in-depth

conversations with several Anglicans from around the diocese and truly enjoyed myself. Thank you to Carol Summers, warden of St. John's York, who did a lot of behind the scenes planning and contacting. The whole idea was the brainchild of Chris Grabiec, our Niagara Anglican Editor, who unfortunately was away on holidays. This was just another example of one sowing and others reaping the benefits. The lilies and the hospitality were truly a unique way for our diocesan faith community to celebrate the summer.

It takes about seven years to hybridize a new daylily and deep red is a difficult colour to work with but after all that work Jack Kent from the Potting Shed in Cayuga presented the Diocese of Niagara with its own daylily. The Potting Shed will be moving to Dunnville and opening there in May. In the meantime, they have a great variety of beautiful daylilies and hostas on display in Cayuga.

## Niagara Anglican

A section of the Anglican Journal  
Publications Mail Agreement No. 40069670

The official, independently edited publication of the Anglican Diocese of Niagara. Published 10 times a year (no issue in July or August) by The Dunham Group in Hamilton, Ontario. Printed by Signal Star Publishing, Goderich, a division of Bowes Publishers Limited.

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Proofreading: Bryan Stopps

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

Circulation: 16,175

Subscriptions: \$15 per year

### Deadlines for Submissions

November 2006: Oct 2  
December 2006: Nov 1  
January 2007: Dec 1

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### Let Your Voice be Heard

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

## People in the News

### ALLISON D'ATTRI BISHOP'S SECRETARY

■ The Reverend Ann Macdonald has accepted the position of Chaplain for Regency Care at the Willow Grove, Queen's Garden and Regina Gardens Long Term Care communities in Hamilton, as of August 7.

■ The Reverend Timothy Morgan has accepted the appointment to be Priest Associate at St. Columba's, under the direction of Archdeacon Bruce McPetrie beginning August 1.

■ The Reverend David Anderson submitted his resignation from Ridgeway and Ridgemount, and accepted the position of Rector of St. John the Evangelist, Hamilton, effective September 1.

■ The Reverend Michael Calderwood has accepted the position of rector of St. Paul's, Brighton, in the Diocese of Toronto, effective September 1.

■ The Reverend Canon Robert McCord submitted his resignation from Church of the Epiphany, Oakville, and will retire from full time ministry October 31.

■ The Reverend Laura Marie Piotrowicz has been appointed Priest Associate, half time,

at Church of the Ascension, Hamilton, commencing September 1.

■ Canon Terry DeForest has been appointed interim pastor at St. Paul's Church, Fort Erie, effective August 1.

■ Canon James Powell has been appointed interim pastor at St. Thomas, St. Catharines, effective August 1.

■ Archdeacon Ken Cardwell has been appointed interim pastor at All Saints, Ridgeway and St. John's, Ridgemount, effective September 1.

■ Congratulations to the Reverend Paul Tinker and his wife, Kelly, on the birth of their fourth child, Matthew Scott Edmund, who arrived on July 22.

■ Our deepest sympathy to Canon Margaret and Greg Murray along with their family on the death of Greg's father, Michael George, on July 27.

■ The Reverend Ted Crabtree and Marian Crabtree, celebrated their 50th Wedding Anniversary on August 4, 2006.

■ Canon Steve Witcher and Carol Witcher celebrate their 40th Wedding Anniversary on September 24.

■ From St. Cuthbert's, Oakville, Richard and Jean Beaumont celebrated their 50th Wedding Anniversary on May 28.

■ From St. Stephen on the Mount, Hamilton, John and Amy Turnbull celebrated their 60th Wedding Anniversary on May 24. Betty and Cliff Jenkins celebrated their 50th Wedding Anniversary on June 30. Sandy and Brenda Triggerson celebrate their 50th Wedding Anniversary on September 1, and Bert and Phyllis Brown celebrate their 60th Wedding Anniversary on September 14.

■ Glen and Jody Cawker, from St. Paul's, Caledonia, celebrated their 58th Wedding Anniversary on August 14.

■ From St. Luke's, Burlington, Glen and Marilyn Hastings celebrate their 50th Wedding Anniversary on September 15.

■ Tom and Sheila Turner, from Epiphany, Oakville, celebrated their 50th Wedding Anniversary on June 9.

■ From St. Jude's, Oakville, Herb and Lois Clitheroe celebrated their 60th Wedding Anniversary on June 15, and John and Vi Simkins celebrated their 60th Wedding Anniversary on July 27.

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Fax: 905-685-5122  
Email: brandihil@on.aibn.com

**St. Michael's Anglican Church**  
(Fennell Avenue East and High Street, Hamilton)

**1956 50th Anniversary Service 2006**  
Sunday September, 24 2006 8:00 a.m. and 10 a. m.

All former parishioners are invited to join Bishop Ralph and the people of St. Michael's in our celebration.  
Lunch served following the 10 a.m. service.

Please R.S.V.P. 905-385-0722

### Help Wanted

**ADMIN ASSISTANT** Christ Church Flamborough 2 mornings/week. Please email resume to christchurchfla@bellnet.ca by Sept. 26, 2006.

### Bishop's Diploma Course

This program provides an opportunity for lay people to grow in their commitment to Christ and Christ's Church through a deepening of faith. This fall will feature an eight-week course on World Religions. To register, contact the centre nearest you. Registration fee: \$35 (includes sessions plus text)

Area	Parish Centre	Start Date
Dunnville	St. Paul's	TBA
Grimsby	St. Andrew's	September 18, 7:00 pm
Hamilton	St. Peter's	September 18, 7:30 pm
Milton	Grace Church	October 10, 7:30pm
St. Catharines	St. Columba	September 20, 7:00 pm

For further information contact Jane Wyse at 905-527-1316 (ext. 420) or jane.wyse@niagara.anglican.ca