



Niagara Anglican

A section of the Anglican Journal

NEWS • PERSPECTIVE • REFLECTION • FOR A GROWING CHURCH • DECEMBER 2007



An Advent letter from Bishop Michael Bird

Dear Friends,

There is a stretch of highway on the way up to the Algonquin Park area, our summer northern retreat, which is particularly difficult to drive at night. First of all, by the time you have reached this area you have been in the car almost four hours; it has already been a long period of waiting to reach the destination and patience has never been one of my strong suits.

Secondly, this part of Ontario is deer and moose country so it is not uncommon for one or more of the beasts to wander up onto the road and so you have to be very careful as you motor along. To make things even more difficult, when darkness falls in this particular region it is completely black. For long stretches of the highway, the driver cannot see anything beyond the reach of the headlights. You strain to be vigilant and watchful, as the lights of the car push aside the darkness ahead; you work at being ready and you wait

for a sign that something important lies ahead.

As we, in the Diocese of Niagara, move into this season of Advent, it feels very much like we are on a very similar journey. Sometimes, the road ahead of us seems uncertain and difficult to navigate. The common Advent themes of waiting and anticipating a new beginning and a new vision for the future are very familiar ones for our diocesan family.

The midst of our waiting, this holy season is also a time for vigilance, a time for watching and being open to signs of God's presence and love all around us. In the coming of Jesus Christ, the reality of humanity's hope and peace found its full expression and for those who are watchful and ready to receive these blessings, the coming of Christ's peace and love continue to be made real in our midst over and over again.

In last month's Niagara Anglican those signs of peace and hope were

present on every page:

- Two inspiring services of ordination.
- A coffee house for university students and community members.
- A challenge and encouragement to embrace the sacred messiness of life.
- Niagara Synod and regional churches taking up the urgings of our diocesan youth to focus on the environment.
- Constructive and concrete ideas for making social justice and poverty reduction a reality in our midst.
- A plea for a new understanding of what it means to be the church, to continue in dialogue with one another and in doing so becoming a parable of the Kingdom.
- A new radio and newspaper campaign that will once again invite people to our churches over the Advent and Christmas seasons.

» CONTINUED ON PAGE 13

Out of the Cold

Churches open their doors to bring Hamiltonians "Out of the Cold" this winter

Jesus said... But when you give a banquet invite the poor, the cripple, the lame, and the blind. And you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you, for you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.

From Christian tradition, Luke 14:12-14

JUDITH PURDELL-LEWIS
ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST

The Hamilton Out of the Cold Program strives to respond, in a meaningful way, to the needs of the most abandoned of our city's poor and homeless people—basic physical

needs of shelter food and warm clothing, deeply human needs of compassion, dignity and feelings of self worth.

Anglican, United, Presbyterian and Baptist churches in downtown Hamilton open their doors and above all their kitchens to serve meals, and some to provide beds, to many of Hamilton's poor and homeless every winter. Every evening except Sunday, soup is stirred, food is cooked, juice is made up, tables are set, meals are served and cleared, pots, pans and plates are washed, and cleaning up is done by around twenty five to fifty volunteers in one or more of these churches.

» CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

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PARISH NEWS

Outreach to the youth in our community

Friday night dances at St. Michael's in Hamilton are a huge hit

SUE CRAWFORD
ST. MICHAEL'S, HAMILTON

Our recent Hallowe'en dance was a great success. Many youth in ghoulish and unusual costumes came through the door. The young dancers were certainly not shy about dressing up.

We started with 25 at our first dance just over a year ago and we have now grown to as many as 150 attendees at our Youth Dances for the 9-13 year olds. What better way to show the community that we care and are a vibrant parish than to invite children to a fun evening. Where else can they find a safe environment, well chaperoned and an inexpensive evening for their kids? For just \$5.00 the children are entertained for two hours once a month with D.J. Alex (who has some occasions given freely of his services). Each child receives 5 tickets to "spend" in the snack shop. Pop, chips, and pizza are available for one ticket each. Candy goes for three items for a ticket. There are spot dances and some great prizes were given out at the Hallowe'en Dance. One of our parish youth,

Matthew McDonald has on several occasions entertained us with his live band. And are they good!

Without the support of the "older" parish folk, Janine and her Parish Kidz outreach has once again proven successful. 75% of the attendees are families from the community. Janine never has to worry that there will be enough adults to chaperone. We have become so successful that we now have to limit the number of tickets sold and the number of children who come to the "Fireside Room" for their snacks. The snack room is a magnet for the groups to socialize. I personally prefer the "quiet" of the snack bar than the Parish Hall with the music. It is the fastest two hours of the week for me. The other regular snack bar ladies, Mary Farrell, Audrey Beatty and Pat Melmer all enjoy being there to help out. Mary's husband and sometimes Pat's husband Gord keep the pizzas coming from the kitchen and provide a well deserved cup of tea for us!

Other regular adult helpers are warden, Anne Young who "guards"



the washroom area, Joyce Russell, Carolyn and Mike Thornton monitor the numbers in the snack room while Lori Wilcox, Jennifer Fedus, Kathy Stott, Joanne Chrapko and Terry Charters help with the tickets and keep an eye on the hall (and the kids!). Jennifer's son Eric was so excited that he was finally old enough to attend the dances that he wouldn't let his grandpa pick him



up for their annual fishing weekend until AFTER the dance.

I was a little reticent to write this article as I know Janine is concerned about more children learning about our dances, but I am sure if other churches tried this venture they would find it extremely worthwhile. We didn't start out with the idea to make money, but the dances have proved so successful that we

are able to use the excess to buy more prizes, snack food and put money back into our Parish Kidz programs. I know Janine is very grateful to ALL the parishioners who help and if I have left anyone's name out it who is a regular I apologize! All of us who help out know that we are contributing to a worthwhile cause—providing a very valuable community service.

Beautifying St. James, Fergus



MIKE MCDEVITT
PEOPLES WARDEN - ST. JAMES, FERGUS

Our parish has been very busy in the past months. This activity coupled to the action over our last couple of years reads like a construction job site plan. We have had a major expansion and renovation over the last three years and took on a loan to cover our extension. Well the plan was to repay the loan over a five year period and to the credit of all involved this project was paid off in three years. What an accomplishment for all those hard working individuals. Hoorah!

Well now we are again in the throes of some renovations and sprucing up, our beautification project is well under way and we have many people hard at work. Plans are afoot

to do painting, landscaping, paving, and fencing—I told you things were moving and shaking. You should drop by to see the all that is afoot.

The church has been painted and the other projects are well underway and coordinated by the various committees.

Please keep your eyes posted to the Anglican or the St. James website (www.stjamesanglicanfergus.com) for updates.

I just want to extend an invitation to all to come and see us—check out all the changes and acquaint yourselves with our parish—in the near north.

Thanks again to all who have helped our parish to grow and fulfill the hopes and aspirations of the congregation. Moving with the spirit.

Chi Rho fellowship celebrates 60th anniversary



The Chi Rho Fellowship of Christ Church, Niagara Falls, celebrated their 60th anniversary on Friday, September 14, 2007 at their regular monthly meeting. Father Kevin Block joined original members Jean Giddens and Jack Stevenson for a picture with the 60th Anniversary cake. They were then joined

by the rest of the members who were present on that day.

Jean Giddens presented a short history of our Chi Rho Fellowship from the founding meeting in September of 1947 to the present. Jack Stevenson has served as president of the group since 1963.

Chi Rho continues to fulfil its aim

to be a fellowship, to serve and promote spiritual, intellectual and social programmes and always welcomes new members. Our Chi Rho currently meets on the second Friday of every month from September through May for a Pot Luck Supper. During the summer months, one or more members hosts a picnic at their home.

Proud of my green church

DEAN SUTTON-GREENHALGH
ALL SAINTS, HAMILTON

I, for one, am proud of my church of All Saints, Hamilton. I'm proud of the people, the clergy, the community and, of course, our way of helping the environment. At All Saints, we have made a commitment to being on top of things when it comes to the environment. We always try to do whatever we can to help out in taking care of the Earth from using energy-efficient light bulbs to our way of watering the grass.

We do many things as good stewards of the environment such as using compact fluorescent bulbs as opposed to the incandescent ones that we used before. All year round we recycle everything that can be recycled. During the summer the grass wasn't watered and it looked just fine. There were also no pesticides used on the

weeds around the church; they were just dug out. During the winter we use a removable sealer on some of the window and door cracks to cut down on the cold air that gets into the church, and this ultimately cuts down the heating cost and use. The thermostats are also on timers thus preventing the use of the furnaces (wasted energy usage) when no one is in the buildings. Monthly Rummage Sales not only allow us to connect to our community but also help the environment by recycling clothing and other household items preventing them from ending up in landfill. The yearly yard sale helps accomplish this as well. When we have our monthly pot luck lunches after the Sunday service, we ask people to bring their own plates, cups and cutlery so we don't have to use paper plates and cutlery thus cutting down on

waste and saving trees. At our weekly after service coffee hours, we use china cups and glasses for coffee and juice again so we are not using paper cups. At our Parish Council meetings, members receive minutes via email which saves us from printing a hard copy for everyone—again saving trees and creating less waste.

As I said before, I am very proud of my church for the way we care for the environment. I hope that other churches will start or continue in the long fight to prevent global warming and take care of the earth that we have. For more information about what your church can do, check out:

- <http://www.niagara.anglican.ca/green/>
- <http://www.greeningspirit.ca/>
- <http://www.elcic.ca/Stewardship/Stewardship-of-Creation/Other-Resources.cfm>

On earth and in heaven

"Heaven is another world, but it's in this one."

"Heaven is pure music."

ELEANOR JOHNSTON
ST. THOMAS, ST. CATHARINES

Alan Jones, Dean of Grace Cathedral in San Francisco, engaged his audience at St. Mark's in Niagara-on-the-Lake by reminding us, from his perspective as a progressive traditionalist, of the value and joy of worship.

Jones focused on his understanding of heaven, God, the Bible and the church.

Heaven, according to him, is our being fully alive: courteous, joyful, peaceful and creative. It is our sense of the Presence of God and our falling in love with all creation. It is a longing for both harmony and adventure. It is the mystical glory of seeing the world shine and the giving of ourselves in service to God and others. It is the feast. Jones referred to numerous authors, including C. S. Lewis who described being "surprised by joy" as he learned to believe that one cannot possess anything truly wonderful, such as autumn; one can only enjoy it. Hell, in contrast, is turning away, in fear, from God.

To be human is to long for God who, in turn, longs for the human response of choosing total love. God's bounty calls us to rejoice in every act of appreciation, creativity and generosity. Jones referred frequently to his rebuttal of Christopher Higgins' bestseller, *God Is Not Great: How Religion Poisons Everything*, as "clever but empty." Jones's greatest fear is "the horribly destructive undertow of nihilism" that, manipulated by leaders such as Stalin, Mao and Pol Pot, has been "responsible for many more murders in the 20th century" than those committed in the name of religion. We need to interpret God for our time and our culture while

respecting the God of other people: "How myopic to think one tradition has a monopoly on the definition of God!"

The Bible is transcendent to our human experience but must be interpreted by each generation. Disagreements handled as "holy arguments" can encourage growth. We should be able to "object without being objectionable." Jones's positive model is the Jewish tradition of midrash (the ancient method of scriptural exegesis). He mused that scientific understanding has evolved over the past two thousand years and, while everyone accepts current rather than first-century science, we still cling to ancient theological understandings which are at times superstitious and limited in their world view. That said, the Bible, read with humility, is never exhausted in what it can teach us about God.

Finally, the Anglican Church and, by extension, all open-hearted and open-minded churches, is where people catch glimpses of God. Our primary response to the sacred is awe and gratitude and the church is doing its job when it points us to such mystery and fails when it makes things small. Churches are needed in the big moments of life and death and should value these opportunities to serve people's needs, not disparage those who only appear at church for special occasions. People do need institutions; he dismisses as parasites those who say that they are "spiritual but not religious." The church is, ideally, a place of conversation and openness to God in others. And it should always be countercultural. He is concerned that so many clergy are depressed, barely hanging on, acting out of

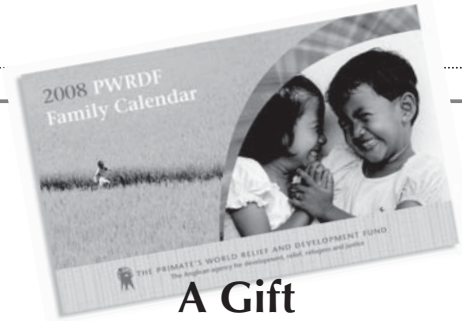
the impulse of "safety first" instead of being able to rejoice in service. And he regrets that those being called to ordination seem to have so little discipline for spiritual exercises and so little respect for church traditions.

Jones provided a provocative title for his two lectures: "Down with Religion and Up with God." The religion he wants to pull down is what he calls "the curse of literalism" of both "fanatical Muslims and brain-dead Christians" that is poisoning contemporary life. He dealt with this theme primarily in the first lecture, while assuring us that the current "sad but small" turmoil in Anglicanism is no more momentous than the restructurings it's undergone throughout its history.

I found the following "up with God" lecture more valuable. It seems to me that we spend far too much time criticizing and mocking our fellow Christians and not enough energy worshipping God by loving and encouraging each other. Advent is a good time to set aside our power struggles and theological differences (often one and the same) and reflect on the ways in which Heaven is available to us here and now, as Christ is born anew in us.

Although Jones made so many joking put-downs of conservative Anglicans that he at times undercut his own point about finding Christ in those who are different, he succeeded in challenging and encouraging his listeners to overcome "small" divisions and share in the mystery of divine love and creation.

Many thanks to Father Bob Wright for bringing yet another excellent speaker to the people of the Diocese of Niagara!



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Sincerely,



Cheryl Curtis, PWRDF Executive Director

To order a copy or copies of the calendar, please send an email to: Debra.Pickfield@pwrdf.org or tel: 416.924.9199 ext 205



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Huron University College Alumni Awards of Distinction



The Huron University College Alumni Association is pleased to announce that **The Rev'd Canon William Cliff, The Rev'd Canon David Pickett, Mr. Angus Sinclair and The Very Rev'd Peter Wall** are recipients of the 2007 Huron Alumni Award of Distinction for outstanding community volunteer service.

Through their time and dedication, The Three Cantors have raised close to \$1 million which has been directed principally towards the Huron Hunger Fund and the Primate's World Relief and Development Fund. They have inspired their audiences musically and spiritually in close to 150 concerts.

The Huron University College community congratulates Canon Cliff, Canon Pickett, Mr. Sinclair and Dean Wall and thanks them for everything they do for Huron and the communities in which they serve.



HURON
UNIVERSITY COLLEGE at WESTERN

Healing and reconciliation brings hope



BILL MOUS
DIVINITY STUDENT, DIOCESE OF NIAGARA

On a warm autumn afternoon a group of parishioners from St. James Dundas gathered together for our monthly Prayers for Justice and Peace service. Our worship on this particular month took the form of an evensong service for Aboriginal Justice; adapting resources provided by the General Synod for the National



We must shed our racist and colonial attitudes and transform them into ones where we acknowledged that we are all God's children.

Aboriginal Day of Prayer. It was an opportunity for us to reconnect with an issue that I suspect has fallen to the back of most of our minds these days: our church's history with Residential Schools. Given that most of our parishes have paid their share of the Residential Schools settlement, it is only too easy to pretend that this chapter in our life as a church has been dealt with and that we can move on to the next issue.

Nevertheless I think we are called

to take another path; a path that is not content with simply paying off our liabilities and thereby forgetting our wrongs. As Christians, we are called to the ministries of healing and reconciliation—ministries which take months, years, and perhaps even generations; ministries that are not simply the completion of our share of a legal agreement. The conclusion of our Residential schools agreement is just one more step on this journey that began when we withdrew from the Residential schools system and that continued with the work of people like our former Primate Michael Peers who offered an apology to those affected by the school system on behalf of our church.

This work of healing and reconciliation with our Aboriginal brothers and sisters must continue today. The good news is it is going on in many places throughout the Canadian church. Our speaker at our evensong service, Dr. Ellie Johnson, the Director of Partnerships for the Anglican Church of Canada and a member of our diocese, shared with us many stories of the ministry of the Healing and Reconciliation Fund in its mission "to assist the Anglican Church of Canada in continuing to respond to the healing needs of communities and dioceses with regards to the residential school abuse and other ongoing abuse arising out of assimilation policies, to the end that Christ's healing and reconciliation will be realized."

The Healing and Reconciliation Fund supports ministries like the "Better Day Coming" Project in Brantford, Ontario that hopes to ad-

dress the core causes of homelessness and domestic violence and begin the healing process for the participants. The project's goal is to engage Aboriginal men and women in a culture-based group healing process in order to "recognize, address and begin to resolve the healing issues" as a consequence of abuse they might have experienced at residential schools.

It is through projects like this in which we live out part of our call to be reconcilers. It is a call to which many have dedicated their lives. Our former Primate, Andrew Hutchison, is one such person who spoke often about the importance of the ministry of reconciliation as one of the central themes in his ministry. We also—as a corporate body—participate in this ministry in several ways. We see this participation through corporate action such as the apology offered by our former Primate on our behalf or by our commitment to provide anti-racism training to our national committees and boards or by the establishment of a National Indigenous Bishop to continue our commitment to Aboriginal peoples to self-determination.

We also participated in this ministry of reconciliation through our donations to the Residential Schools Settlement Fund. As a result of some amendments to our agreement with the federal government, these donations which formed our compensation payments to settle the abuse claims brought by former students are now going to be refunded to us by the federal government. The refunded money

will be placed in a trust fund that is dedicated to the work of the healing and reconciliation fund. This will permit us to double the amount of healing and reconciliation work in which we as a church can support.

One of the issues before our Diocesan Synod is what to do with the money our parishes contributed to the Residential Settlement Fund that exceeds our commitments to the amended agreement with the government. It seems to me that transferring these funds to the Healing and Reconciliation Fund makes sense not only because they were designated for this work, but because it would be a way in which our diocese might fully live out its corporate call to engage in the ministry of healing and reconciliation.

Within the next month or so, as part of the Residential Schools Settlement agreement, a Truth and Reconciliation Commission will be formally established by the Government of Canada. All Canadians will be called to participate in this work—for it will be an important part of our own reconciliation. At the end of this process the Prime Minister will offer a formal apology on behalf of the government to those affected by the residential schools systems.

This corporate action is yet another important step towards healing and reconciliation, but I think that for healing and reconciliation to be fully lived out, we must also participate in this ministry individually. True, all of you reading this paper today have contributed to the work of the Healing Fund because part of

the contributions to your parish is forwarded on to the General Synod, which oversees this ministry.

Yet our work for healing and reconciliation is not done with financial support alone. We—each and every one of us—need to open ourselves to God in order that we might begin to heal. Many of us have begun this journey as a result of the attention brought about by the Residential Schools Settlement Agreement. Yet it seems to me that healing and reconciliation also requires a change of attitudes as reconciliation cannot happen in earnest through financial transfers, but only if it such actions are coupled with a transformation one's self. To do this, we must shed our racist and colonial attitudes and transform them into ones where we acknowledged that we are all God's children.

The work of healing and reconciliation brings hope to communities and individuals that have been oppressed because of injustice. This work, however, is not solely confined to our relationships with our Aboriginal brothers and sisters. For each one of us has areas in our lives which are in need of healing and reconciliation whether through our being or our doing. In Advent—a season of hope—there is perhaps no more fitting a time to consider how you might participate in this ministry to which we are all called; to more fully live out Jesus' call for us to be reconcilers, to transform the attitudes and values in our lives which bind ourselves and others, and to take a step towards more fully living out God's kingdom on earth.

Healthier church, safer church



MARNI NANCEKIVELL
DIRECTOR OF INTERIM MINISTRY

This past week, I sat in the presence of the Very Reverend Alan Jones, Dean of Grace Cathedral in San Francisco. He provided his listeners with what I found to be an intriguing test of "orthodoxy". In this current moment of the history of the church, his "test" struck a chord deep within me. The simple question was this: "If you were in charge, would I be safe?"

I am the chair of the Bishop's Committee for a Safe Church. In the time that I have been involved in "safe church" issues, I have met many who do not find the church to be a "safe place" for them. Originally, this church task force grew out of concerns around the protection of children, and then developed to embrace issues of misconduct. We have found that our mandate has grown. Now our attention also embraces those who are vulnerable through age, ability, or some other issue that marginalizes them. As a Diocesan Committee, there are

times when people come to us to discuss circumstances pertaining to their employment. At other times, lay people come to discuss a climate that has developed within their congregation.

Difficult behaviour in the church is not new

Never has the Christian church been a problem free environment. In fact in the epistles, we find letters from the early church, which outline many varieties of "problem behaviour". Difficult behaviour within the human community and indeed difficult behaviour in the Christian community is not new.

Every lay person and every cleric can recount stories of things that shouldn't have happened in the community of God's people. Let me tell you one particular story. The details have been changed, but the core of the story is true.

In my favourite fictitious parish of Saint Swithin's in the Swamp, there was a particular lay leader, "Mr. B." who was the head of the Men's Club. Now this club had been very active over the years. They devoted energy to fundraising and activity both inside and outside of the church community. The leader of this group had been found by a succession of clergy to be a difficult type. One clergy leader found

him to be rather manipulative. Yet another cleric, a woman, found that he would sometimes try to get his way by exhibiting his considerable flirtatious charm with her. Over time, both male and female clergy found him to be a force to be reckoned with. There was no doubt in anyone's mind that his intentions were good. However, the way that he went about trying to achieve his goals frequently caused problems.

Hostility grew

At Saint Swithin's, there was a new Incumbent in town. Canon Leslie had come from another Diocese, and was still trying to discover the cultural norms of this part of the country. Things were done differently in this part of Canada than from the area from which Canon Leslie had come. So you can imagine her surprise when one day, the good Canon walked into the church one day to find that the nave was in the process of being repainted—and redecorated. There was stenciling and Celtic ornamentation where, only the week before, there had been plain paint. And, you would be correct if you guessed that "Mr. B." was behind the "surprise".

Now, he hadn't consulted the Rector, or the Wardens in this venture. It hadn't been discussed by the parish council. It was "Mr. B's" idea alone.

Well, Canon Leslie was not at all amused. She asked that the work be stopped immediately so she could consult with the Wardens and the Parish Council. Mr. B. was outraged at how ungrateful Canon Leslie was for all of his generosity and initiative. That moment was the beginning of a complex, antagonistic relationship between Mr. B. and Canon Leslie.

From that time forward, hostility grew between them. Canon Leslie wasn't sure how things went in this part of the country, but she wanted things to be done "by the book", and every time Mr. B. stepped out of line, Canon Leslie made sure he got back in line—preferably at the back of the line. And each time he felt that he had been treated badly, Mr. B. mounted yet another campaign to oust Canon B. from the parish. He initiated everything from whispering campaigns to a barrage of letters to the Bishop. After one particularly difficult Parish Council meeting, he hired a local "n'er do well" to slash Canon Leslie's tires. It was an ugly and unhealthy situation.

Healthier ways

How might this situation been dealt with in a healthier way?

Clearly this situation quickly became adversarial. There was little evidence of mutual respect between Mr. B. and Canon Leslie. Tensions

escalated quickly between the two of them, anxiety was high, and overreaction, on both of their parts was the order of the day. Quickly, Canon Leslie and Mr. B. adapted "fight or flight" behavior. Neither one of them demonstrated regard, respect or empathy for the other. I suspect that simply sitting down at the kitchen table over a cup of coffee to talk things through would have been a good way to talk about why Mr. B. reacted the way he did and why Canon Leslie responded in the way she did.

Now the Diocese of Niagara's Safe Church Committee's mandate isn't that of settling concerns about church décor. But we are concerned to ensure that the church is a safe place, where all people can engage in Christian community without harassment, fear or persecution. A healthy church is a place where differences can be addressed openly and freely, in a spirit of mutual respect and integrity, with people working collectively towards the resolution of differences.

If you want to read more about healthy responses to conflict within the church and beyond the church, I recommend *Never Call Them Jerks: Healthy Responses to Difficult Behavior* by Arthur Paul Boers. It is an Alban Institute Publication, copyright 1999.

Getting to know you

The Reverend Michael Pryse - Bishop of the Eastern Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church of Canada



FRAN DARLINGTON
HONORARY - ST. JAMES, GUELPH

Wise, soft spoken, and with a gentle humour, Michael Pryse offers leadership, care and compassion to many people as Bishop of the Eastern Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Canada. In Anglican tradition, bishops acquire particular titles according to their position in Church hierarchy; not so in Lutheran tradition: "We have no 'Rights' or 'Verys'," chuckles Bishop Michael. "Whenever I write to you guys I always check who is a 'Right' or a 'Most!'"

Bishop Michael pastors the clergy and people of two hundred Lutheran congregations, about eighty thousand people, from Sault Ste. Marie in northwestern Ontario to the Atlantic coast, an enormous area compared to Diocese of Niagara, the smallest in area of the Anglican Church of Canada, but the most densely populated per square kilometer.

"I travel a lot; I'm afraid to count the days. There's no other way to do the job," Bishop Michael explains. "As Bishop, part of my self-image is as a visible link between the local Churches' expression and the universal expression of the Church, so

I become in part the face of the universal expression to local Churches, and the opposite is also true. They are both very important expressions of what the Church is. In order to do that I've got to visit; the most important part of what I do is visiting with clergy and leaders.

"If I identify a locus for my work, it's the table; the reading desk and the Eucharistic table, presiding and convening gatherings at the table, to bring people together to talk, to vision, to solve problems—I spend a lot of time at tables."

Bishop Michael comments: "Paul planted, Apollos watered (1 Corinthians 3:6), but somebody's got to pull the weeds. That's part of a Bishop's job. It's like (Jesus' parable of) the wheat and the tares (Matthew 13); they're not always easy to distinguish, so you want to be careful that you're not ripping the good out with the bad.

Our mission with and for God

"I see myself trying to call people to a broader vision of mission. I believe that God has a mission in and for the world, and God will accomplish God's mission whether with us or in spite of us. I would like it to be with us... The Church is not the only tool in God's toolbox, and we're deluding ourselves if we think we are. God is not limited!"

Considering the unfolding human partnership with God, Bishop Michael says, "God is alive and

well and doing wonderful things on Planet Earth, some... being done through the life of the Church, but also through many other means. One of the things Christians ought to be doing is identifying signs of God's breaking into the world, pointing to them, celebrating and giving thanks." Bishop Michael names the environmental and peace movements, the fight against HIV/AIDS: "God's Spirit is alive and well and infusing those movements."

Neighbours, friends, leaders in ecumenism

Anglicans in the Diocese of Niagara are aware of the friendship between Bishop Michael and the Right Reverend Ralph Spence, Diocesan Bishop. In 1988, after four years in his first parish at Mildmay and Neustadt in Ontario's Grey-Bruce county, Michael became Pastor at Burlington's Holy Cross Church. The Rector of neighbouring St. Luke's Anglican Church was the then Reverend Canon Ralph Spence: "We've had many adventures together," laughs Bishop Michael.

Holy Cross Church was one of the first Lutheran parishes across Canada to be linked to an Anglican parish to explore possible cooperation and acceptance. "We held joint services, study groups and social events—one was a tobogganing party which Ralph advertised as 'Push-a-Lutheran-Down-the-Hill Day!' When Holy Cross began a building expansion,



the capital fund-raising dinner was at St. Luke's, and the first cheque was from Ralph Spence."

In the stairwell of the office of the Eastern Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Canada is a colourful banner, one of four created to cover the clock at Kitchener Hockey Arena when the Lutheran National Convention and the Anglican General Synod were held jointly there in 2001. That

gathering accepted the Waterloo Document, which sets out the mutual understanding and acceptance between the two denominations of each other's doctrine, theology and practices. The Anglican Church of Canada and the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Canada are in "Full Communion," welcoming members of both traditions to each

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Lessons from Hurricane Katrina on how to prepare for a pandemic

DAVID LONG
DIOCESAN RESOURCE CENTRE

Speaking at The Faith Community Summit on Pandemic Preparedness this past June, Larry Bredensen, noted "the people who suffered most during Hurricane Katrina didn't have connections... it's not just that they didn't have a car [to escape New Or-



Faith groups, like other sectors of society, have a duty to act—morally, ethically and legally... the pandemic clock is ticking.

leans), they didn't have connections to someone who had a car." He went on to say, "The most important relationships occur in daily settings, like in a faith community.

Faith groups can play an important role by making sure people are connected to sources of assistance during an emergency". During a pandemic, "we will all have a role to play, to help each other," he concluded. The challenge to our diocese is to find ways to help our parishioners and our commun-

ities prepare for emergencies and a Pandemic.

Larry Bredensen is the Regional Coordinator for Emergency Preparedness and Response for the Public Health Agency of Canada. "We absolutely do know there will be another pandemic," he stated. "We just don't know when, where or what the virus will be." Bredensen added that "we cannot count on vaccines to protect us," noting "it takes between four to six months to bring the appropriate vaccine on line once the virus is identified."

He went on to say, "there have been three pandemics since the turn of the 20th century: The Spanish Flu in 1918-20, which killed between 20 and 40 million people; the Asian Flu in 1957, which killed one to two million; and the Hong Kong Flu in 1968, which killed about 700,000 to one million. So far, 12 countries have had human cases of the most recent avian flu, and 191 people have died". "What makes flu pandemic so virulent" he noted, "is victims tend not to be bed-ridden once they become ill, but will continue to move around, go on vacation, go to work and go to church, even though they are sick. Adding to the problem is that people travel

so much, and the world is very urbanized. You can get anywhere in the world in 24 hours."

"Together with our higher density living, viruses can be spread very quickly. In addition to the health effects of pandemic flu, society would be greatly disrupted by the illness" he said, noting "stores today depend on "just in time" delivery of everything from groceries to medicine. If truckers get sick in large numbers, or there are increased border delays, consumers might not be able to get food and drugs.

Faith groups, like other sectors of society, "have a duty to act—morally, ethically and legally," he said, adding that "we can delay it [the pandemic], by doing things such as hand washing or staying home from work, church and social events when sick. But we cannot stop it... the pandemic clock is ticking."

What can we do in The Diocese of Niagara? Sometimes it appears that we are trying to put our finger into the dike to stop an impending flood. First of all, we need to put those numbers into perspective. Yes, millions of people may die in the world around us but 95-99% of us will survive depending on the se-

verity of the virus. How can we get ready for a Pandemic?

Every year, on average, 4,000 Canadians will die from the results of seasonal flu; many of them are the most vulnerable people in our church and community. By doing all we can to prevent seasonal flu we will do two things. First, we will make our churches healthier places and secondly we will be ready to help reduce the effects of a Pandemic Flu.

- Go to your neighbourhood clinic and get a flu shot each year.
- Ensure that all Communion assistants wash their hands before administering Holy Communion.
- Make antibacterial hand cleanser available to all parishioners.
- Be informed about why The Diocese of Niagara does not practice intinction (dipping the wafer into the wine).
- Stay away from work and church when you are ill.
- Wash your hands frequently and thoroughly.
- Don't cough into your hands, learn to cough into your sleeve.

Both scientific studies and observations have concluded that a significant number of people who practice intinction dip their fingers

into the wine. Our hands carry germs. On a good day the germs may be relatively benign. But only on a good day. In order to protect the health of all the people of our diocese, the Bishop—in consultation with Public Health people—has asked everybody to refrain from this practice in order to reduce potential health risks. For some of us, this has been a painful transition. We thank you for complying with this directive.

"The people who suffered most during Hurricane Katrina didn't have connections". It is fair to assume that there will be a similar situation in the event of a Pandemic flu. Our churches have an incredibly important mission in this situation—to make connections. Sick people living alone will need food and medications delivered to their homes. Parish halls may be needed for isolation centres or for inoculation clinics. The list is endless. Has your parish begun to prepare? It's in your hands.

A number of resources can be found on our web site. On the left side of the home page look under Resources and follow the link to Emergency Preparedness. Don't hesitate to contact the Rev. David Long at the DRC.

Inter-faith dialogue is an Anglican necessity



ALAN L. HAYES
THE ITINERANT CHURCHGOER

Every term I give a short course in the adult education program at my parish church, St. Simon's. Usually it's a bible study or a topic in church history, and it draws a dozen stalwarts.

Last spring I gave a course on Islam and Christianity. Over forty folks packed our room every week.

What drew them? Part of it was just that many of our layfolk (not our clergy) work and study alongside people of other faiths. They just want to understand them better.

For another thing, lots of people are realizing that a good future for the world depends on interreligious understanding. If we leave global leadership to people who don't have a clue as to why everyone else doesn't think exactly the same way they do—and you can find such folks in quantity in Washington, in Riyadh, in Copenhagen and Amsterdam, and, yea, even in Niagara—well, we have a lot of mayhem ahead of us.

Anglican leaders

Besides St. Simon's, several other Anglican groups around the diocese of Niagara have been seeking a greater understanding of other faiths. Church of the Trans-

figuration, St. Catharines, has had multi-faith Sunday morning workshops. The diocesan youth ministry website lists a book of interfaith resources. St. Peter's, Hamilton, sponsored an address on Christianity and Islam by Archbishop Josiah Idowu-Fearon, who holds a doctorate in Islamic studies and has many unhappy stories to tell from Nigeria about what happens when Christians and Muslims *don't* acknowledge each other.

It's a big world, and Anglicans spend way too much time talking to Anglicans about Anglican problems. And the Church has a big mission, and whatever our priorities—evangelism, peace and justice, knowledge of God, spirituality—interreligious understanding is part of our task.

Of all the world's religions, the other two great monotheistic traditions, Judaism and Islam, are the ones that it's most vital for Christians to meet. Not only do we share a faith in one God, but we all recognize Abraham as a patriarch and model of faith.

Lambeth bishops

The world's Anglican bishops, meeting at the Lambeth Conference of 1988, encouraged "the Churches of the Anglican Communion to engage in dialogue with Jews and Muslims," and in 1965 the Second Vatican Council of the Roman Catholic Church, in its breakthrough *Nostra aetate*, had already exhorted dialogue and collaboration with members of other religions. It identified Jews and

Muslims in particular.

The fact is, we can't really understand our own Christian faith without understanding Judaism. There probably isn't a passage in the whole New Testament that will fully open itself to us if we don't appreciate its Jewish context.

Islam, too, has influenced Christianity in lots of ways. Our second most influential western theologian, Thomas Aquinas, got most of his philosophical texts, some of his method, and several of his topics from Muslim commentators and philosophers. The western university, including its faculties of theology, is historically, in large part, an adaptation of a Muslim creation.

Inter-faith understanding isn't helped by some of the practices I meet in my itinerant churchgoing. Preachers who use older commentaries have an unfortunate tendency to make negative and ill-informed comments about first-century Judaism. For instance, I sometimes hear that first-century Jews were very anti-feminist, and Jesus showed them wrong, or that first-century Jews were very legalistic, whereas Jesus preached love.

Skin crawls

A new unauthorized liturgical practice that makes my skin crawl is hearing a reading from, say, Genesis or Jeremiah followed by, "Hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches." Say what? Don't Jews have some kind of interest in Genesis and Jeremiah?

As a theological educator, I have to confess that a big problem for the

Church in Canada is that we haven't been educating our clergy in other religions (unless the clergy were trained at McGill). Before I retire from the Toronto School of Theology, that's going to change.

The University of Toronto has taken impressive leadership in promoting a peaceful future for Canada by encouraging people of different faiths to talk to each other in a safe environment that respects diversity. This year it opened a stunning Multi-faith Centre which operates under a Vice-President for Student Life and has a co-curricular program.

It's thought to be the most ambitious such undertaking of any publicly funded university in North America.

I meet there once a month with a group of Christian, Jewish, and Muslim professors, doctoral students, and chaplains, and together we read and discuss the Tanakh, the New Testament, and the Qur'an.

Scriptural reasoning

This is part of the new movement called Scriptural Reasoning. You can find out more about that at <http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/journals/jsrforum/gateways.html>.

In October the Furlong Symposium at St. Michael's College in Toronto was dedicated to this movement. It's possible that by the time you read this the texts of the talks will be posted at www.utoronto.ca/stmik.

This monthly Abrahamic dialogue is changing my life. My understanding of the New Testament Church has been trans-

formed by the experience of reading II Corinthians 3 and Exodus 32-34 together with Jewish rabbis and students. My understanding of Muhammad has changed after reading sura 96 of the Qur'an in the light of the story of the Annunciation to Mary. The parallels between Mary and Muhammad never before occurred to me. Both received the angel Gabriel, who brought to them the word of God and commissioned them to a holy duty to which they humbly submitted themselves.

It would be great to see this movement take root at the congregational level.

Interfaith councils

Regional interfaith councils are another great idea. The Interfaith Council of Halton, which I know best, was founded in the months after September 11, 2001, and is led by an executive comprising a Christian minister (who happens to be married to me), a Muslim imam, and a Jewish rabbi. It's supported by the mayor's office and the police department. Once or twice a year it organizes a faith fair for schools in Halton. Just meeting together and talking about common issues has built bridges among these religious leaders and their communities.

If Anglicans can stop arguing about Anglican identity and Anglican instruments of unity for a little while, they could take a lead in something that would actually make the world a better place for our children. Thanks be to God for those who have already done so; I pray that many more will be so inspired.

Party Eggnog

WARNING: This is definitely one for the grown-ups, treat with respect. It also uses raw eggs. I have never had any difficulty with it (the alcohol probably kills off any bacteria!) If you have any concerns about the eggs this is not the recipe for you.

Serves 10 to 12 adults.

Submitted By Carol Summers



Ingredients

6 Eggs	1 pt milk
1 pt. whipping cream	Grated nutmeg
6 Tablespoons sugar	½ bottle whiskey
3 Tablespoons peach brandy	½ pt dark rum

1. Separate eggs. Beat yolks until smooth. Add sugar and ½ pt of milk. Mix to dissolve sugar.
2. Pour into punch bowl. Add whiskey, mix well. Add rum. Set this aside.
3. Whip egg whites until they are stiff.
4. Add cream, brandy, nutmeg and egg whites to punch bowl. Stir to mix.
5. I put the punch bowl in a very generous bed of ice to keep it cool.

ADVENT

by Paul Rowley

Oh Advent! Oh Advent! Emanuel comes,
To palace and village, to ghetto and slums.
From the rich warm darkness of a mother's womb,
To the cold dank blackness of a hillside tomb.

The angels and shepherds have gathered around.
Hosanna! Hosanna! The echoes resound.
The mother and father who know... yet not all,
Are huddled in awe by the bleak cattle stall.

The prophets foretold it, 'twas Bethlehem's fate,
This savior for whom all in Israel did wait.
Oh Advent! Oh Advent! The roundelay rings,
By angels to shepherds and far away kings.

"All glory to God," are the words from on high.
Hosanna Hosanna! It peals 'cross the sky.
Now come let us go see this thing that has passed,
To Bethlehem city, as had been forecast.

O glorious day that the prophets foretold,
When Israel would finally be consoled.
God's plan for his children at last is revealed,
Our fate and salvation is finally sealed.

Oh Advent! Oh Advent! Emanuel comes,
To palace and village, to ghetto and slums.

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The Passing Principle I'm not Racist, but...

Lessons about life from behind the wheel



MARTHA TATARNIC
ASSISTANT CURATE ON MATERNITY LEAVE - ST. JUDE'S

My husband Dan and I love to get in our car and drive places. Especially when we can escape the traffic of the GTA, we look forward to cruising along, watching the scenery, taking catnaps in the passenger seat (an indulgence of mine rather than Dan's), playing music and singing along, talking

The Passing Principle is just one small, mundane example of how small and afraid most of us feel, even if those feelings usually remain buried.

out problems or imagining our futures, laughing at the antics of our baby Cecilia, and sometimes just sitting quietly and spending time together in silence.

We also love to rail against the driving habits of everybody else on the road, and as you may imagine, or know from your own experience, there is never a lack of annoying behaviours being exhibited. I could list them, Dan and I have noted them all, but there is one behaviour that has ascended above all the rest as being the most annoying and the most common. It is "the Passing Principle", a term coined by Dan. The Passing Principle occurs when Car A is driving behind Car B and Car A wants to go faster. In an 80 Zone, A would like to go a comfortable and consistent 90. B is having trouble even maintaining a speed of 80, sometimes slowing down to as little as 70 and then speeding up again to max out at 82. A has an opportunity to pass B and seizes the moment. This is when an odd thing happens. Suddenly, B starts driving faster. Faster. And faster. And faster. A has to drive at 110 or even 120 in order to pass the previously puttering B.

The Passing Principle

Now, I would like to imagine that The Passing Principle is a behaviour in which I myself never engage. You, the reader of this paper, are likely telling yourself that this is something that you, thankfully, never do. However, after a great deal of observation and thought, it seems to me that The Passing Principle occurs far too frequently to conclude anything other than the fact that *we all do it*. Sure, we can use cruise control. And we can make the supreme effort of keeping our eyes glued on the speedometer, consciously not allowing the needle to rise upwards while

watching another car pull into that passing lane. But if we are not paying attention, if our mind is somewhere else, if cruise control is not in the picture, or if we just give in to instinct, it is inevitable that The Passing Principle comes into effect for all of us.

Why? Because we don't like to be passed. And we especially don't like to be passed in our cars.

The car culture has become so much a part of the fabric of our existence that we hop into these steel and glass contraptions, we careen around at speeds that are not by any stretch of the imagination safe, engaging in all kinds of distracting behaviour. While doing so, we honk our horns and get angry at the practices of our companions on the road; we invest a great deal of money in our cars and sometimes even believe that what we drive has the capacity of saying something about who we are. We drive around as if we have all the confidence in the world, as if we are made of steel ourselves, as if we cannot be touched.

It is a façade that matters a great deal to the average person; it is a façade that is very easily shattered. If you have ever been in a minor fender bender, let alone a serious accident, you know how quickly that illusion of invulnerability disappears, how much raw emotion and panic gets tied up in the scratches and bumps that happen to our cars.

And when I am on the road, cruising along in my car, minding my own business, driving at a speed, and in a manner, which I believe to be adequate, and suddenly I am being passed, all subconscious alarm bells begin ringing: *I am not fast enough. I am not good enough. I am not enough. I am being left behind.*

Whether any of these thoughts ever come anywhere close to being articulated in my conscious mind, the damage is done, my foot gets heavy, and my speed in on the incline. I am trying to, needing to, keep up.

The Passing Principle. Inevitable.

Jesus didn't have a lot to say about cars and highways and roadway etiquette, but Jesus did have something to say about vulnerability. He did have something to say that is or is not inevitable.

Jesus stands before Pilate, accused of blasphemy and rabble rousing, his enemies closing in on him, demanding his death. Pilate says to him, "What is wrong with you? Why don't you speak to me? Don't you know that I have the power to save your life or the power to kill you?" Pilate is saying to Jesus the same thing that those with power have been saying to Jesus throughout his ministry: don't you know that you can't do that? Don't you know that you'll get in trouble for talking to people who don't count? For healing wounds that are unmentionable? For speaking of a

God who is as close as breath? For eating with outcasts? Touching lepers? Disregarding the boundaries that divide us from one another? That make life sensible? Predictable? Safe?

It was inevitable that Jesus would be brought down. That he would realize that what he was doing wasn't safe, that he would get scared off, pipe down, back off, disappear. And if he didn't, he would be silenced. He would be used as an example to scare off anybody else who didn't want to toe the line. "Don't you know I hold your life in my hands?" Pilate asks. Don't we all know the truth of Pilate's question—that we're not made of steel? Those soft spots in our lives are used over and over again to build up fences between us, to keep the given power structures in place, to make sure that our lives with one another are managed, controlled.

The Passing Principle is just one small, mundane example of how small and afraid most of us feel, even if those feelings usually remain buried. It is one example of how that smallness and that fear make us suspicious of one another, antagonistic toward one another, one example of how easy it is to slip into the stance of 'me against the world.' It is one example of the inevitable: we are vulnerable and we need to surround ourselves with a lot of steel and speed to make ourselves feel okay.

Except that this is not the inevitable. Jesus stands before Pilate, with no steel and no speed. Open, empty, entirely vulnerable. Every possible threat is leveled against his body, his mind, his soul, every threat to play on any secret anxiety of his heart that will make him fall into line. He faces the inevitable—that his vulnerability will destroy him. And the strength and the life to which he bears witness in the midst of that vulnerability destruction, open up choice and possibility where none existed before.

Maybe it is the case that most of us will still unwittingly behave according to The Passing Principle. Maybe it is the case that our anxieties will continue to be hooked, sometimes without our even realizing it. But if we take Jesus' Gospel seriously then those anxieties don't get to define us. The fear of inadequacy, the fear of being left behind, the fear of having that soft spot exposed, this is not what gets to define us. Instead, we are defined by those moments when we see beyond, and move outside, our structures of steel, when we dare to encounter one another in the manner modelled for us in Jesus—Jesus who gave his whole life and being to the project of making known the God who creates us with those soft spots so that we may learn the art of loving, the God in whose image and likeness we are once more fashioned as we find the capacity for mutual tenderness in the face of one another's vulnerability.

JOSHUA MORRISON
CHURCH OF THE ASCENSION, HAMILTON

"I'm not racist, but we all know the Indians in Caledonia only want money from the government to build a casino."

"I'm not sexist, but women don't get promoted in the workforce because they're just going to go have babies and leave the workplace anyways."

"I'm not a homophobe, but bisexuals are just gays who are too in denial to be totally out of the closet yet."

"I'm not ageist, but people need to retire by 65 so they don't steal jobs from young people. Their pension will take care of them anyways."

"I'm not anti-disabled, but come on, we don't need wheel-chair accessible alters."

"I'm not anti-Islam, but all those terrorists are Muslim."

"I'm not heterosexist, but it's okay to let gay people just have civil unions, we don't need to use the word marriage; it's all the same rights."


These are all statements that I myself have heard in person, in the media, or had recounted to me by friends. I've heard them at school, in church, at home, with my friends, out in public and on TV. They've been spoken by students, priests, the young, the old, teachers, politicians and the everyday "normal Joe". And it disturbs me.

We Canadians are good people right? This is the perception we have of ourselves. Canadians: peacemakers, peacekeepers, defenders of multiculturalism, liberal individualists, fair, good people. We Christians are also good people, yes? We are the fol-

lowers of Christ, the people who took up the cross to follow Jesus in the fight against injustice and to promote equal love and treatment for all.

But if you really listen, how often do you hear statements like this? Sometimes the "I'm not" statement is implied or more subtly added into the conversation, but it's there. Every time someone says, "I'm not racist but..." they are about to make a racist statement, and some part of their mind knows that it's racist. The same goes for all of the other, "I'm not" statements above, and any that weren't mentioned. Our Canadian culture, and often our Anglican-Christian culture lets us so easily feel like we're good people, and with that preface say things that go against the teachings we believe in with impunity.

As Christians, it is our commitment when we are baptized and later confirmed that we follow the teachings of Christ, in which racism, sexism, ageism, heterosexism, and homophobia, anti-religious, and anti-disabled sentiments and other prejudices are not welcome. It's such a simple thing to think about what we're saying, and stop ourselves if we hear one of the "I'm not" statements coming out of our mouth. What's harder is stepping up to the plate to call other people on making the same statements. I myself have made the mistake of staying silent when I hear one, which is really just implicitly agreeing with it. Standing up for what you believe in and for justice is never easy, but maybe this is one way to make a small change in our normal lives to follow the path.



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Grace and St. Paul's present cantata

SOLANGE DE SANTIS
MILTON, ONTARIO

The adult choirs of Grace Anglican and St. Paul's United churches, both in Milton, will perform together for the first time on Sunday, December 9 when they present the cantata *The Winter Rose* by American composer Joseph M. Martin, with narration written by Pamela Martin.

"It is our sincerest prayer that as Christ, the Rose of Sharon, opens before you this Christmas, your spirit will be encouraged by the beauty of God's greatest gift. Let the words and music of this cantata remind you that even in the deepest winter, we are people of joy and life, children of the garden," the creators

wrote in a foreword to the published sheet music.

"It is beautiful and there's lots of variety to the music. It uses some traditional melodies, such as the French folk song *Bring a Torch, Jeannette Isabella*, which becomes an Advent song, *When Will He Come?*" said Sue Anderson, choral director at Grace Church, in an interview.

"I like the themes—the whole idea of the rose unfolding," said Judy Hunter, music director at St. Paul's United. Her 45-voice choir will blend with Grace's 25 voices, accompanied by a 14-piece orchestra and piano. Ms. Anderson and Ms. Hunter will each conduct six of

the twelve songs in *The Winter Rose*, which lasts about one hour.

A cantata is a story told through music, usually with choruses, solos and sometimes narration. The rose is often used to symbolize Christ. The rose of Sharon is a hibiscus shrub that usually blooms in September, when other flowers are gone, however a winter rose refers to a miraculous blossom.

Isaiah 35:1 uses floral imagery to tell of the effect of the Lord's coming to his people: "The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose." Coincidentally, the passage is also the motto of St. Paul's church, where the

sanctuary features a huge stained-glass rose window.

The two choirs got together last spring when they both happened to be involved in a choir festival in Mississauga, said Ms. Anderson. "We were trying to learn some difficult music and I got an e-mail from Judy suggesting we work on it together," she said.

The joint concert resonates further through its dedication to Ms. Hunter's mother, Alma Wicks, who died in February 2007. "Mom had grown up as an Anglican. When she married my father, she went with his family (to the United church)," explained Ms. Hunter. The family asked that the funeral be held at

Grace. "They couldn't have been more hospitable, so I made a donation to the music program," said Ms. Hunter. Ms. Anderson used the donation to buy *The Winter Rose* and suggested the dedication. Ms. Hunter said "the idea of the beauty of the flower and the gentleness of it reminded me of her."

The Winter Rose, presented by St. Paul's United and Grace Anglican churches at St. Paul's United Church, 123 Main Street East, Milton, Ont., Sunday, Dec. 9, 2007 at 7:00 p.m. Free-will offering. Refreshments following the performance. For further information contact Grace Church at 905-878-2411 or St. Paul's at 905-878-8895.

Christmas, a time to laugh

JERRY SALLOUM
ST. ALBAN THE MARTYR, GLEN WILLIAMS

I was sitting in my office flipping the pages of a magazine when I uncovered a cartoon. It showed a lion speaking to Noah who is about to launch the ark. The caption reads, "You'd better get two more gazelles!"

Funny? I managed a slight grin, nothing more. At the time, I tried to recall the last time I had a really good laugh. By this, I am not referring to those small chuckles that we frequently force ourselves to make in order to be polite. Rather, I am referring to those side-splitting, often embarrassing muscle-tiring explosions which, once triggered, are virtually impossible to control. Short-lived manageable chuckles are common. Regrettably, howling sustained laughter is not.

The best laughs are not only sustained; they are spontaneous. Like breathing and digestion, they are involuntary. We don't choose to initiate our best laughs. And few of us have the power to end them. Frequently, they are triggered when laughing is anything but appropriate behaviour. I recall such an episode of laughter at the funeral of one of my relatives. At some crucial point in the service, something struck me as humorous, and though I tried hard to impose control on what is normally uncontrollable, I lost it. The more I tried to put a lid on my laughter, the more I laughed.

But why do we laugh? Many things make us laugh. Words make

us laugh. Situations make us laugh. The howling laughter of others makes us laugh. However, one of the most common triggers for laughter is surprise. Something sudden interrupts the expected progression of events and thought processes in our lives. The insertion of the incongruous, that thing that does not belong in our lives at that moment, is a laughter-generating tool common to many funny situations. Some might recall that outrageous Monty Python scene when a group of British soldiers in the heat of battle are told that it is the birthday of one of their platoon members. Suddenly, all interest in the battle ceases when, through the smoke and dirt, a grimy soldier appears with a cake complete with candles. Totally oblivious to the roar of bullets whizzing overhead, and blind to the dangers that surround them, members of the platoon congratulate the birthday boy, deliver some outrageous speeches, then watch him blow out his candles.

In one of those memorable Pink Panther movies, the bungling idiot Police Inspector Clouseau comes upon a barking dog and a man who appears to be the dog's owner. Fearing the dog, and with this thick French accent, Clouseau asks the man, "Does your dog bite?" The man replies, "No, my dog does not bite". Confidently, Clouseau proceeds to walk past him. Suddenly, the little mutt lunges and locks onto Clouseau's pant leg. Managing to shake off the dog, he turns to the man and says,

"I thought you said your dog does not bite". The man replies, "That is NOT my dog". Who would have expected such a misunderstanding of Clouseau's question? And who would have expected that within a heated gun battle, there would emerge a farcical birthday celebration? Insertion into any situation of the unexpected and incongruous is a powerful trigger for laughter.

The Bible tells us that Jesus cried. But it never mentions him laughing. We wonder if the Godhead has a sense of humor. If the litmus test is evidence of Him inserting the unexpected into life's situations, then God is the quintessential Funny Guy. Look, for example, what he did with Abraham and Sarah. He informs Abraham that his wife would bear a son. Abraham immediately falls face down laughing. Later, when Sarah hears the same news, she also laughs. I doubt that theirs was a mocking laughter. I am certain it was not a subdued forced chuckle. Rather, I suspect it was that hilarious laughter of delight that comes to each of us when we are surprised by the incongruous. We imagine Sarah saying to God, "You've got to be kidding!" But a few months later, there was Isaac, whose name means "He laughs". Laughter was their natural response to a situation that appeared downright crazy! God had done something in the lives of a wrinkly old couple that was utterly unexpected and completely unnatural. At the time, Abraham was 100 and Sarah was 90. Not exactly

prime time parenthood!

Looking further into the stories of the Bible, we find further evidence of a divine sense of humor. How incongruous it was that an elderly woman named Sarah would conceive. How equally incongruous it was many years later that a virgin named Mary would conceive. Were there hints of laughter in the words she uttered in the Magnificat. Later, was there joyous laughter in the Lazarus household when Martha and Mary confronted the incongruity of life coming to a decaying body? There was certainly laughter among the Israelites when they confronted the incongruity of freedom coming to a people who, for generations, had known only captivity. The Psalmist cried out, "Our mouths were filled with laughter, our tongues with songs of joy".

Somewhere out there in our giant cosmos, I imagine a Face that bears a smile. It is the face of a God with a wonderful sense of humor. At the centre of human history and in the fullness of time, with His eyes fixed firmly on all humanity, God inserted the mother of all incongruities into our world. While we were a people walking in darkness and in the shadow of death, a shaft of Light shone forth to extinguish darkness. Conception came to a virgin. God appeared at eye level and pitched His tent among us. And in that little town of Bethlehem, God unwrapped and inserted into our world the ultimate surprise of all: the surprise called GRACE!

Why should GRACE be a surprise? I believe the reason is obvious. Our world writes on our minds the indelible message that apart from lotteries and sheer luck, our only hope of moving out of the category of loser into the category of winner can only come when fingers are worked to the bone and when noses are kept to the grindstone. What counts in this world is human effort! We are taught that nothing is free! Even love is conditional!


But GRACE smashes this rule. According to the One who writes all the really important rules, eternal life does not depend upon human effort or human merit. The Pearl of immeasurable price IS free. Grace means that nothing we can ever do can make God love us more, and nothing we can ever do can make God love us less? Given our conditioning in this world, such a message is almost impossible to accept.


Was your mouth filled with laughter and your tongue with songs of joy the day you discovered that you are saved, not because you are good, but because God is good? This central message of the Gospel is so foreign to our thinking and so unexpected as to be preposterous. Who would have ever thought that at Christmas we "repeat the sounding Joy" because we are celebrating a God who, beholding our broken world, acts outrageously, converts the mother of all tragedies into the mother of all Comedies and enters our world in diapers! What a God!

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Ignorance may indeed be bliss



NISSA BASBAUM
RECTOR - TRANSFIGURATION, ST. CATHARINES

A few simple vignettes

I converted to Christianity from Judaism in 1978. I thought I knew what I was doing when I chose to become an Anglican. Yet, it was only *after* I was baptized that I realized women had barely been ordained in the Anglican Church of Canada, and they were nowhere near being ordained in the Church of England. I was a product of the late 60's, early 70's feminist movement, concerned as were others with issues of equality and opportunity. Before taking the plunge, so to speak, I wonder how I missed this?

I was ordained as a deacon in the Diocese of Niagara in 1984. Perhaps I was a bit less naïve than when I was baptized six years before but even at that point, I found myself in for a shock when I realized how vast the chasm was between the seminary and the parish and, considerably more troubling, between Jesus and the church.

When our first child was born, I thought we had accomplished something amazing with our timing. Due on December 16, Ben was born on December 21. I began my maternity leave somewhere

around December 10th. In those days, maternity leave (and it was *only* maternal at that time), lasted four months. The amazing thing which we had accomplished was that my leave enabled me to pass most of Advent, and all of Christmas, Lent and Easter into Robin's capable hands. Not bad planning, really...until the next year when we two clergy parents were trying frantically to balance home life with church life; desperately endeavouring to figure out which held the higher priority, the birth of Jesus or the birth of Ben. To this day, we have not sorted this out!

These are merely three instances in my life when, if I had known better, I might have thought twice about doing what I did. Yet, they have taught me a valuable lesson about an essential ingredient in the life of faith: that is, the capacity to live with a degree of innocence or naïveté that borders at times on ignorance or just plain stupidity!

Praying for innocent faith

Years ago, an extremely learned member of Transfiguration who taught medieval history at Brock University told me he could sum up his Christian faith in one line: "Jesus wants me for a sunbeam," he said. I remember being appalled by this and, what's more, not believing him. It took me many years before I figured out that, not only was it true for Alan, it was also true for me. Unfortunately, the difference

between he and I, is that Alan really lives his life out of this seemingly innocent faith, whereas I continue to fight it. He is now a retired and charming senior citizen. Perhaps, as I continue to age I, too, may one day reach such an esteemed state of "Zen" being. All I can do is pray for this to happen.

What does it look like to choose a life in the midst of naïveté or apparent ignorance which is faith-based? I would hazard a guess that most, though not all of us have done so at some point in our lives. If this were not the case then few of us would be married nor would many of us have children. Indeed, if we waited for certain knowledge or clarity on either of these two things, I daresay we all might be single and childless. There simply is no amount of preparation that could come close to defining what it will be like to share the rest of one's life with another person, and no amount of planning to describe the impact that the advent of children has on single or married adults. In fact, if we were able to discover this beforehand, it's highly likely that many of us would say "thanks but no thanks," and move on to something much less invasive and, quite frankly, less stressful.

Many of the major decisions we make in our life are made in relative ignorance because, without this ignorance we probably would be paralysed by all our fears and our "what ifs?" When it comes to stepping out in faith—which is what each of us does when we

choose to connect with or reach out to other people—knowledge, rather than opening us up to the unknown, has a way of closing us off from this. Innocence or naïveté, on the other hand, seems to instil a greater sense of trust, encouraging us *towards* the unknown rather than *away* from it.

Saying "yes"

Should it come as any surprise that a goodly number of the people healed by Jesus were deaf, dumb and blind? Surely, their physical ailments are a metaphor for a lack of knowledge or a lack of information that enabled them to reach out to him, to move towards a relationship with him. Given that the more whole and the more wise among those who followed Jesus—including his chosen disciples—often were not the ones who "got" him, it would seem that a certain naïveté or ignorance is a helpful resource in a life of faith.

The advent of Advent has caused me to ponder all of these things, much the same way as we are told that, upon receiving the visit of the angel Gabriel, Mary "pondered in her heart" all the things that had been revealed to her by him.

Mary often is regarded as a rather submissive female. Personally, I never have thought of her as such. Instead, she strikes me as stronger than most of us, for it must take enormous strength to ponder the surprising, the unknown and the utterly unimaginable, and

to choose to say Yes to all these things. Without doubt, if those of us who are now followers of Jesus exhibited her kind of strength, the church would look quite different than it does.

Pretty much deaf, dumb and blind to the consequences of Gabriel's message, innocent of all that was to lie ahead, Mary still chose to say Yes to the Spirit's action in her life. It is something that those of us who often see ourselves as wise, knowledgeable and responsible in the life of the church consistently find ourselves unable to do. Perhaps we, too, need a good dose of deaf, dumb and blind in order to respond to the Spirit.

The warmth of a sunbeam

Exactly what does it mean to say that my Christianity can be summed up in something as simple as, "Jesus wants me for a sunbeam?" Well, a sunbeam provides warmth for those on whom it shines. As Mary chose to say Yes and, by this Yes, to provide warmth and comfort to the unknown mystery she carried in her womb, I pray that more than anything, I am able to provide this same kind of warmth and comfort to the unknown God that visits me in all whom I meet—and I hope I can do this without question and without judgement.

It won't be knowledge or right belief which I need in order for this to happen. Instead, it will require an innocence and a naïveté—a form of ignorance perhaps—that is probably a lifetime in the making.

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ALL ARE WELCOME TO ATTEND

Chocolate Roulade

When I was a child my mother would always make a Yule Log. It was covered in butter cream and decorated to look just like a wooden log dusted with snow. It wore a sprig of holly and we even had a little robin perched on the top! She stopped making that very sweet one quite a few years ago in favour of this version which is much lighter. *Submitted By Carol Summers*



Ingredients

Roulade
6 oz dark (bittersweet) chocolate
5 eggs
8 oz sugar
3-4 Tablespoons of water

Filling

½ pint whipping cream, lightly whipped,
flavoured with brandy or rum or vanilla
essence.
Tin of chestnut puree (optional)

1. Heat oven to 350 degrees.
2. Line 12 x 8 jelly roll pan with parchment paper, spray or oil paper with melted shortening.
3. Melt the chocolate gently in a bowl over a saucepan of hot water (not boiling). The chocolate should be the consistency of thick cream. Take off the heat.
4. Separate eggs.
5. Put sugar in bowl, gradually add egg yolks and whip until the mixture is lemon coloured. Add the cooled, but still melted chocolate and mix thoroughly.
6. Whip egg whites to soft peaks.
7. Gently fold whites into yolk mixture.
8. Pour mixture into prepared tin.
9. Bake 10-15 minutes until firm to touch.
10. Remove pan from oven. Leaving the cake in the pan, cover with a damp towel and let cool overnight in fridge.
11. Dust a piece of parchment paper with icing sugar.
12. Turn pan over onto paper. The cake should drop out. Carefully remove the lining from cake.
13. If using the chestnut puree, spread that over the cake.
14. Spread whipped cream and then gently roll the cake up to make a log (don't expect it to look like the commercial jelly rolls, it's not meant to). Don't worry about it splitting a little. Dust with icing sugar.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1 » Out of the Cold



How did all this start?

It started in Toronto in 1986. The death of George, a homeless man, brought together the students and teachers of St. Michael's High School. They arranged a location, food and volunteers and opened a small storefront on St. Claire Avenue. From this humble beginning in January 15, 1987, the Out of the Cold program has spread throughout Toronto, Ontario and across Canada. In the Niagara Diocese

church, but by last winter, between November and March, fifteen thousand guests were fed in five church locations, six evenings a week. Three of the churches were also able to provide overnight accommodation and did so last winter for almost two thousand guests.

The spirit of Hamilton Out of the Cold

Hamilton Out of the Cold, started by a Catholic nun, is now held in

es, synagogues and mosques. These include Anglicans from many parishes. One parish, St. John the Evangelist, has chosen HOOTC as one of three local mission projects to support. There are twenty-one church members who volunteer at three different locations. One of these is also a board member and Coordinator at James Street Baptist Church and another is also the Volunteer Coordinator at the Church of the Ascension. In response to a specific need, this year church members will be filling a basket of new men's and women's underwear for the Hamilton Out of the Cold Program.

What can you do? Pray.

Volunteer: As there was such a good response to this year's request for volunteers no more will be needed until next September when it is hoped to start a new program at a different location

Donate: As food is purchased in bulk quantities, cheques (payable to Hamilton Out of the Cold), will help keep the program afloat.

If you can help, contact Sister Carole Anne at (905) 308-8447 or caguy@care2.com.

Start a program in your area

If you are interested view, read and/or download the Revised Manual on the HOOTC website <http://www.hamiltonoutofthecold.free-servers.com>.

.....
Judith Purdell-Lewis, who is new to HOOTC, enjoys washing up at Central Presbyterian Church, and thanks all those who supplied the information to write this article.

The pious are the socially conscious who recognize in their wealth, a right for the indigent and the deprived whom they help for the sake of God alone, without any desire for recompense or thankfulness from those whom they help.

From the Muslim tradition, "Ethic of Compassion and Sharing"

there are programs in St. Catharine's, Fort Erie and Niagara Falls as well as in Hamilton.

The Hamilton Out of the Cold Program started in the hearts of Sister Carole Anne Guay, a Sister of St. Joseph, and her friend Ms. Gloria Colizza, retired teachers from Hamilton. They saw the need, started to pray about what God wanted them to do about the need, and visited the Out of the Cold Program in Toronto. Having invited others to share their vision and dream of feeding the poor and giving them a place to lay their heads, they started the program December 1, 1997, at James St. Baptist Church.

The program has steadily grown. Back in 1997, meals were served to nearly fifteen hundred guests in one

Baptist, United, Presbyterian and Anglican churches. Last year the Church of the Ascension, on the corner of Charlton and John Streets served almost three and a half thousand guests on Mondays and Saturdays.

An Anglican coordinator of volunteers, reflecting on the ecumenical spirit of the program, said that it is a joy to have Muslims say their prayers in the parlour of a Baptist Church while volunteering in a program organized by a Roman Catholic nun.

How are Anglicans involved?

The nearly 400 volunteers come from the community: adults, university and high school students, husband and wife teams, parents and children, mainly from church-

Giving birth to faith



MICHAEL PATTERSON
EVANGELISM DIRECTOR

In my work and ministry of evangelism, I am occasionally asked "Can you prove that God exists?" The questions always irks me because it often feels as though someone is throwing down the gauntlet challenging me to a 'dual' of sorts. The question is almost always asked by someone who has already made up their mind that God, in fact, does not exist and therefore by they ask it in the hope that they will see me squirm. They know that by even asking the question, "Can you prove that God exists?" I am at a distinct disadvantage.

So is it possible? No, at least not in a way that would compel anyone to make an act of faith on the basis of a mathematical or scientific argument. The existence of God can't be empirically proven because God doesn't work that way. God doesn't appear in the world as the conclusion to a mathematical equation. God, as we know through the way Christ was born, comes into our lives at the end of a gestation process on which we reflect through this season of Advent.

That also describes how faith is born in our lives. God never dynamites his way into to our lives with a force so powerful that we can't resist. God doesn't slap us up-side the head to get our attention. No, God always enters the world in the same way that Jesus did on the first Christmas. God is gestated in a womb and appears as a helpless infant that has to be picked up, nurtured, and coaxed into adulthood. The presence of God in our world, at least within the dynamics of the Incarnation, depends upon a certain human consent and cooperation; we're partners in this process.

For God to take on real flesh and power in the world we must first do something. What? The answer to that lies in the way Jesus was born. Mary, Jesus' mother, shows us a certain blueprint, a pattern for how God is born into our world and how faith is born in our lives. What's the pattern?

Mary, we are told, became pregnant by the Holy Spirit. What an extraordinary notion! This doesn't

just mean that Jesus didn't have a human father, but that Mary so let the seed of God's spirit (charity, joy, peace, patience, goodness, and compassion) take root in her that it began to grow into actual flesh.

As we know, conception is not followed immediately by childbirth. A long, slow process first occurs—gestation. In the silent recesses of her heart and body (and surely not without the normal morning-sickness that accompanies pregnancy) an umbilical cord began to grow between Mary and that new life. Her flesh began to give physical sustenance to the life of God and this steadily grew into a child which, at a point, as in all pregnancies, demanded to be born into the world.

Then was the agony of giving birth. Only with much groaning and struggle can a child emerge into this world. It is always excruciatingly painful to birth something to the outside world, to take what's precious inside and give it birth outside. Mary, despite all romantic notions that would make Jesus' birth something unnatural, experienced the normal birth-pains common to all mothers. Nothing gestated is born into the world without pain, Jesus included.

An infant is then nurtured into adulthood. Henri Nouwen once suggested that we always find God in our lives as Jesus was found in Bethlehem on Christmas, a helpless infant in the straw who must be picked up and nurtured into adulthood. Mary gave birth to the baby, Jesus, but what she ultimately gave the world was the adult, Christ. Like all mothers she had to spend years nursing, cajoling, teaching, and nurturing an infant into adulthood.

In the Incarnation, and in looking at how Mary gave birth to Christ, we are given a blueprint that invites imitation not admiration. Mary is the model of faith. What she did, each of us too is called upon to do, namely, give birth to God in our lives. Christ-mas is for marveling at what once took place, but it's also for imitation, for continuing to give God flesh in the world.

How do you prove to anyone, yourself included, that God exists? You don't. The object of our faith and worship doesn't appear as a compelling proof at the end of a rational experiment. God has to be gestated into the world in the same way as Mary did all those years ago at the first Christmas.

Insurance and risk management sub-committee

The Financial Advisory Committee of the Diocese is looking for people who are interested in serving on the Insurance and Risk Management Sub-Committee. They preferably, but necessarily, should have some insurance knowledge and be interested in serving on a volunteer committee that meets twice a year. If you are interested please contact Bob McKinnell, Diocesan Treasurer at 905-527-1316 ext. 520 or robert.mckinnell@niagara.anglican.ca

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Leave your worries on the doorstep



GRAHAME STAP
RECTOR - ST. ALBAN THE MARTYR, GLEN WILLIAMS

During the last part of October my wife and I had a holiday in northern Ontario near to the town of Temagami. Much to my disappointment, on the Sunday we went to the local Anglican Church we found that it was Morning Prayer. Not only was it Morning Prayer but it was led by two lay readers.

Imagine my surprise when I found it to be one of the most moving services I had ever been to. It was from the heart. The scriptures were interpreted without any thought other than to impart the word of God in an honest and meaningful way. There were only eight of us in the church but the number did not matter to the two lay readers who were there to worship the God they loved.

At that time and place it did not matter that the church was being pulled in many different directions by the ongoing struggle of whether or not to marry same sex couples. It did not matter if the Bishop of Ottawa would give his agreement or not. It was not that they were not concerned about these problems of the church it was that they were not concerned at the time of worship. They came to the church they loved to worship God and that was all that mattered.

I realized I had learned a lesson on that Sunday morning; a lesson I hope will stay with me for the rest of my life. The church is political and there is nothing we can do to change this. It has been political since James and John asked if they could sit at the left and right hand of

God. While this is true it is not why we go to church; we go to church to worship the God we love.

Perhaps it is time for all of us to put aside the pain we feel as the problems of the church intensify and the political nature of the church seems to engulf us from every side. On Sunday morning, just go to church to worship the God that created us all.

This does not mean we should not have an opinion nor does it mean we should change our opinion. Perhaps it just means we should start to separate the political from our worship and know that at the time of worship God loves all things God created; each of us have a personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ our saviour and redeemer.

There is a word in ancient Greek it is 'Anamnesis.' We have translated this to mean 'Do this in remembrance of me' which is a very poor translation of what it actually means. In the Greek tradition it means Jesus was with us in the past, is with us now and will be with us in the future.

I believe we need to hang on to this and know Jesus will help us weather this storm just as Jesus has helped us weather all the storms the church has encountered since Jesus walked on this earth. When we go to the church, we love to worship the God we love. Leave the problems of the church on the doorstep. Accepting the scriptures we hear as being interpreted without any thought other than to impart the word of God in an honest and meaningful way.

I know I will try from now on to be more like the two lay readers we listened to on that Sunday morning. I will try very hard to worship the God I love in the most meaningful way I can, leaving my worries on the door step.



From left: Ilana Landsberg Lewis, The Reverend Jeff Ward, Peter Knox, Irene Richards, Mary Anna Beer, and Peter Jensen.

Oakville reaches out to help the Stephen Lewis foundation

IRENE RICHARDS
STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBER

In December 2004 tsunami struck Southeast Asia wiping out villages and killing 140,000 people. Concurrently, an even larger catastrophe was underway in Africa, where, without significant intervention from the world's developed nations, the HIV/AIDS pandemic was killing just as many people EVERY MONTH.

Incredibly, more than 20 million people have died from this disease to date and 13 million children have been orphaned, yet there has been no real political or financial response to help the people of Africa.

The Stephen Lewis Foundation estimates that without adequate financial aid, the infected population of dead and dying could reach 100 million before the pandemic's end. We must not allow this to happen!

An idea was planted several months ago and has quickly germinated to the point where a community-wide initiative is rapidly gaining support. A core group of Oakville residents came together to build awareness of and support for children and families suffering with HIV/AIDS, with the goal to raise a "Million or More \$"

After meeting with the Stephen Lewis Foundation the committee

decided that the Stephen Lewis Foundation was a progressive and practical means of getting resources to those who are in greatest need. The Foundation is a grassroots operation with all donations reviewed and approved by associates representing the Foundation in Africa and most often Stephen Lewis himself. For each dollar donated, 90 cents reaches people of concern, including food, school uniforms and even coffins.

If you would like to know more about our community initiative, email us at millionormoreSLF@sympatico.ca or check out our web site at www.millionormoreSLF.com.

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LITURGY IN THE ANGLICAN CHURCH

Liturgy... and stuff



PETER WALL
RECTOR - CHRIST'S CHURCH CATHEDRAL

Several years ago, Bishop Spence named me the Diocesan Liturgical Officer—an interesting, relatively stress-free, low-key kind of 'job' which involves answering questions about matters liturgical, advising the Bishop on such things, and generally keeping one's antennae both open to what one hears from around the Diocese and also tuned to what is happening in the broader Church elsewhere.

In last month's column I tried to speak about liturgical planning—its importance and its gifts. We live in a church imbued with a dynamic and profound sense of 'movement' in weekly liturgy and readings. What we speak and read during this Advent leads us to the mystery of the Incarnation and the joy brought to the world by the Nativity of Jesus. The sweep of the Christmas narrative carries us through Epiphany and into Candlemas, and so it goes.

We are people both of The Book and of several books—we hold The Word, both the Incarnate Word and The Word of scripture in the highest regard—we immerse ourselves in scripture and follow a pattern of lections through the year. We aim, as Anglicans, to celebrate our 'common prayer' which links us, through

both lectionary and liturgical texts, to fellow Christians across the world.

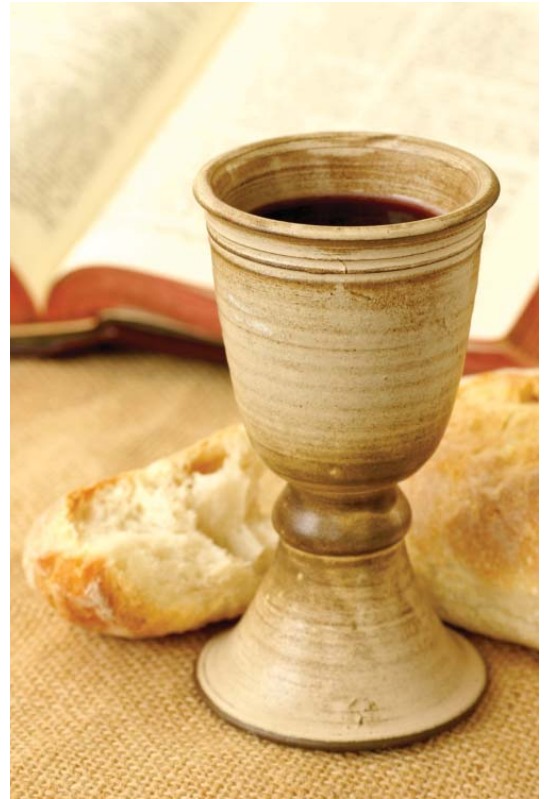
In a 2005 statement from the *International Anglican Liturgical Consultation*, meeting in Prague, the following sentence is found: *'We believe that our worship conveys and carries the historic faith of the Church, and recognize that we be are blessed with reason, memory and skill we are called to use our gifts in crafting liturgy that honours our received and living faith in this time and context.'* That, I hope, strengthens our commitment to lively planning of exuberant and meaningful liturgies! We are the inheritors of a rich liturgical tradition—it becomes our gift to develop, expand, and pass on to those who follow.

I am asked questions from time to time about guidelines, about authorization of liturgical texts, about new texts, and other general enquiries. While there are authorized texts, there is also a hope from us all that local patterns of worship, local preferences, and local creativity will also be a hallmark of parishes throughout the diocese.

A letter in the November *Niagara Anglican* addresses the matter of intinction. While this is not a new issue, there continues to be degree of misunderstanding and disagreement about this practice. On the soundest of medical and theological advice, Bishop Spence has directed that intinction not be practiced in parishes at Sunday services. The epidemiological evidence is quite sound: there is far more risk of spreading germs from

intinction than there is from receiving from the common cup. Still, many are uncomfortable with the expectation that all should receive wine from the chalice. Thus, receiving in one kind is suggested—always an acceptable *Anglican* practice, and one which gives the communicant *full* communion—it is not, in any way, 'half' of the sacrament, as the writer of the November letter suggests! Indeed, in the community which I serve, there are several who receive in one kind—including some who *only* receive wine, because of gluten or wheat allergies. Similarly, there are some who receive only the bread, for reasons which have nothing to do either with intinction or the common cup. These people all know that they are partaking *fully* of communion. The restriction about intinction has, in my view, taught us much and given us other gifts which have included people in the sacrament!

This issue, not unlike others about which we have some discomfort, underscores what it is to be part of a *catholic*, Episcopal Church. There are common understandings and, if you will, *rules* which are not meant to deny individual or community freedom, but rather to keep us as one in the catholicity of the Church, in communion with each other, and with the universal Church. The principal of the local Bishop, functioning as *Ordinary* (the use of that word relating to 'Order' not to plainness!) with authority to guide and direct worship in his or her Diocese, and the *commonality* of understanding of liturgical action, is an import-



ant cornerstone of Anglicanism. Equally important is the idea that we *understand* things in a commonly accepted way, without having to *agree* on every understanding or interpretation. There are, for example, as many understandings of what we actually 'do' at the Eucharist as there are people experiencing it. That does not mean that we do not agree on Eucharistic elements, form, and practice,

including, in this Diocese, the use of intinction.

As we approach the annual remembrance and celebration of the great and world altering Incarnation of God in our midst, may our celebrations reflect the wonderful diversity of Anglicanism, carefully planned within local communities, linking us to each other and the world as we keep Christmas. Every blessing to us all.

Liturgy of the mind, of the heart and of the body

DAVID HOWELLS
RECTOR, ST. DAVID AND ST PATRICK, GUELPH

In October a group of folks from our diocese met to talk about what is happening in the development of liturgy in our churches. The BAS, now in its third decade, was a brave first step out of the rigid liturgy of the BCP. The change between the two books is not actually just about ancient or modern English, but about rekindling Cranmer's vision that the liturgy should suit the people it is being used by. Cranmer rejected the idea that Rome's liturgy fitted the English people. The BAS rejects the idea that England's liturgy of centuries past fits the Canadian people. This is a very Anglican decision. When the BAS was written it wasn't just a re-doing of the BCP, like a translation, but it recognised that liturgy needs to be flexible and adaptable to fit all sorts of moods and contexts. So we have several eucharistic liturgies, lots of resource material for the offices of prayer and so forth.

Over 20 years later a lot has changed in Canada. The resources

the BAS offers frequently are found to be inadequate to meet new situations, new expressions of the ancient faith we share, and new longings for God. Up and down our diocese there are churches where people are striving to use different images, language, feel and idiom to communicate our relationship with God.

Remembering lost images

In my church, St. David & St. Patrick in Guelph, the main service has been using "beyond the BAS" liturgies for 8 years, and is a growing church not least because of that.

Often the reasons for change begin with a sense that we are losing half of God. Men and women make up the church, but our language is often masculine when it comes to God. Orthodoxy teaches that God is neither male nor female, yet tradition says "He's a he", actually".

So new liturgies often begin by remembering lost images. The Holy Spirit for example. In Latin he is masculine, a translation from Greek where it is neuter, a translation from Hebrew where she is fem-

inine. Jesus called her "she". That's just a single example. Next people arrive at the idea that early Christianity was a shockingly egalitarian organisation. Rank, status and race were wiped away in the table fellowship where nothing counted any more except being in Christ. The mediaeval Church which had been woven into the state, had armies and immense power. It had become anything but egalitarian.

New liturgies attempt to share the worship among the people. Dropping domination language about God, like power and might, king of kings, sovereign lord, almighty and so forth, struggle to restore the Abba, Daddy intimacy which was in the teaching of Jesus.

It matters immensely that we change the words. But words are not enough. When you have a church set up like a lecture hall it segregates worshippers into passive receivers without voice and active players who hand out teachings and sacraments, often from behind a boundary step, rail or other demarcation. The furniture speaks. It says

there are two classes of Christians, those in robes and those who aren't. Does that sound like Jesus? When the choir and clergy process in or out, what does it say? Does it not imply that God is arriving in some special way? Do we think that? Do we want to say that?

And when the sacrament is celebrated in the most distant part of the building from the people, up steps, away beyond the choir, in a fenced-off sanctuary, where only people wearing robes may step, does it tell the story of the God who comes among us as a helpless infant in a stable? Did Jesus keep himself at a distance, in the holy of holies? Does Jesus not enter the hearts of the most unholy people today to heal and transform lives in the most un-sanctuary-like of places?

Liturgical reform has a long way to go beyond merely working with words.

However there is more still to liturgy Liturgy is also, and very importantly, the work of the people. It belongs to the people, the particular

people of a particular place. It is an expression of a community in worship. Often, in our Anglican tradition, which is, in the nicest of all possible ways, a bit clergy-dominant, it is the priest in charge who charges ahead on liturgical reform. It should really be the people who bring liturgy to life.

Here the tone of argument changes. In the first section it is about thinking things through. But community is not thought through. Community is an odd thing that must be absorbed, learned by feel and gradually entered. Rather like interior home decoration you may recall dark wall colours and heavy furniture may have been a home-fashion once, but it only really worked with a few families. Was it right? Was it wrong? Better to ask, Did it fit? It is the same with liturgies, they have to fit the people of God in that place.

Once, working in a francophone community in Northern Ontario, where the anglophones had lost

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On the way to Bethlehem

SOLANGE DE SANTIS
MILTON, ONTARIO

Several Decembers ago, early in the Christmas season, I was bemused to find myself clad in biblical robes, trudging up a path at Country Heritage Park holding the Baby Jesus' bottle. I had been asked to go warm it up in a microwave, a journey that involved a quarter-mile hike from his Bethlehem manger scene to the park's administration building.

Grumpy with cold as wind-blown snowflakes stung my face (unusual weather for the Middle East, I thought), I irreverently muttered, "He's the Son of God. Can't he work a miracle and heat up his own bottle?"

The answer was no, of course. In this case, Jesus was not only a girl but a nativity pageant stand-in for the real thing.

This year, I and my daughter Florence, who is now 10, will participate for the sixth year in one of the largest nativity pageants anywhere—both in terms of cast members and acreage. Its correct title is *On the Way to Bethlehem*, but most of the 100+ people in the cast call it "the Walk to Bethlehem," as in, "Are you doing the Walk to Bethlehem again this year?" It takes place Nov. 30 to Dec. 3 at Country Heritage Park in Milton (www.onthewaytobethlehem.ca).

Once again, we will struggle to get our costumes over parkas, waddle to our stations and drink Tim Hortons coffee and hot chocolate during breaks—a very Canadian version of the timeless story.

Once again, I will probably whine about the cold and how tired I am from standing on my feet for four hours—but we are back every year, as are many of the cast members.

Some 25,000 visitors have traveled *On the Way to Bethlehem*—busloads of seniors, families pushing strollers, dads carrying little kids on their shoulders, couples, youth groups. Cast members come from a number of local churches working under the umbrella group Milton Area Christian Churches Working Together.

Although many hands make the pageant work, it is a testament to the strength of one person's idea. Andrea Rowbottom, of Grace Anglican Church, looked at the 19th century buildings that had been moved to the park—barns, cabins, schoolhouses, shops—and saw a nativity pageant where the audience would stop at stations containing scenes from the biblical drama.

The first year and for several after that, Florence was one of the little angels serenading the baby Jesus in the climactic scene in a large barn in the middle of the property. My title was Manger Mom—not the Virgin Mary, I hastened to assure friends, just there to take turns opening the barn door, assist visitors and shuttle angels to washrooms. Florence and her five- and six-year-old comrades were real troupers, sitting on hay bales around the Holy Family, singing *Jesus, Gentle Jesus* and even signing the lyrics for the deaf.

Last year, Florence moved up to another angel chorus and I was

a tour guide, shepherding groups to Mary's house for the annunciation, through Herod's court where the terrible-tempered king bellowed his jealousy at the idea of a rival king, past three magi with gifts who asked directions and a Roman soldier who demanded to see passports.

The charms of the pageant are many, for both actors and visitors. There are real animals—donkeys, camels, goats, sheep. The costumes and decorated pavilions look great. It is interactive; my tour group is my "family" on the way to Bethlehem to pay our taxes and they often chat with me or the actors. The script structure creates little dramas at each station. You knock on the door of a real inn and an innkeeper comes out and tells you there's no room.

All those things, however, serve the power of the story and the eternal wonder at the possibility that there was a night in human history here on earth when God became man. You can walk the paths and enjoy the spectacle and see the fellow who usually sits in the pew behind you, tonight dressed as a centurion. Then you see a barn up ahead and you look up into the black sky dotted with stars and you dream a little. The distant whoosh of cars on Highway 401 drops away; you ignore the un-Holy Land cold and think, "Maybe, just maybe, this is how it was..."

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Solange De Santis is a writer for the *Anglican Journal* and a member of Grace Anglican Church in Milton.

Electing for a new Outreach

A new way for the church to politic



JOSHUA MORRISON
CHURCH OF THE ASCENSION, HAMILTON

After having witnessed several synods and the election of Michael Bird, I have had to face the reality that our church, our diocese and our communion is full of politics that just can't be avoided. Humans are political beings, and since matters of faith are so close to our hearts, we can't get away from involving them in our politics and vice versa. It's also shown me though that there is a real heart behind politics; we politic because we care.

Having come to this realization, I was very shocked to see the very low voter turnout numbers in the recent Ontario general election. Does Ontario just not care? I can't answer that question, but I'd like to believe that isn't the case. So what's the problem in this picture?

This election provided a new insight to me that was brought about by the Mixed-Member Proportional Government Referendum. It was overwhelmingly voted down, but most of the media coverage after the election spoke about how the general public was confused about what they were being asked and what MMP really was. It would seem to me there are two causes for this general ignorance on the issue. First, it would seem that the major political parties and elections Ontario didn't advertise the referendum very well. The other though is that the general public did not take it upon themselves to research the issues at hand.

We are responsible to promote awareness

So, could this be a chance for the parishes in our diocese to take on a new kind of outreach? In the church we all have a great passion for politics. We also have a duty to go out into our community to help others and spread our Christian values like equality and fairness for all. Many of the values democracy promotes are the same that our church does, so why not combine our passion for politics and our passion for helping others through political outreach?

During an election season, the church shouldn't take direct sides in the debates; we are a large group of people who have differing views and we could never hope to find a political party that supports everyone's ideals. Besides, Canada as a whole made the historical decision to separate church and state a long time ago. But that doesn't mean we can't go out and promote awareness of issues like referendums or the main issues in an election in an impartial way.

Every parish in our diocese is a large organization with a large pool of volunteers who want to make a difference for their community. Awareness comes in many different forms. Churches can make displays to educate parishioners about the parties involved in an election. Parishioners can make pastoral visits to people who can't get out of the house and old age homes and talk about an election with people outside the church. We could have volunteers take people who want their opinion to remain anonymous to vote on the big day so they don't have to be driven there by someone affiliated with a political party.

A helping hand with no strings attached

This is but one way that we can go out into the community and make a difference without being "overly religious" or "scary", which are common criticisms about church outreach, both from parishioners and the general public. It's a way to spread good will, promote the values of the church, and get our parishes known in their communities as a force for good even more than they already are.

This is the kind of thing we can be doing to turn our outreach programs around. To go out into the world we don't always have to talk about religious issues and describe faith; people need a helping hand in many ways, and we should be the people to offer that hand with no strings attached, no expectations and no preaching. If we can make a positive difference in peoples' lives in mundane ways, they'll remember the kindness of the church, and maybe they'll want to explore that kindness further. But if not, it's ok, because we've still made a difference and done God's work for another human being. And isn't that the point of outreach anyways?

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1 » To the clergy and people of the Diocese of Niagara

■ The expression of how, in the cry of a new born baby, we can find a metaphor for our hunger for God's table and our relationship with God.

The scripture readings that we hear in Advent, challenge us to journey out beyond the reach of our own comfort zones. They remind us that

in Christ our blindness of intolerance and prejudice will be healed, that we are encouraged to push back the shadows of a violent and unjust world and to break down the barriers that hinder the gifts of community, fellowship and communion with one another.

As your Coadjutor Bishop, I

am filled with a renewed sense of hope and peace as I acknowledge the signs of Christ's "coming" that I see in every corner of our Diocese. These are exciting and awe-inspiring days to be engaged in ministry, even if the road ahead is challenging and uncertain.

In this season of Advent, we discover that the difficult work of watching and waiting helps us to prepare ourselves for the great celebration of the coming of Christ; His coming to Bethlehem long ago, and His coming into our lives here and now. May this joyous gift of Christ

coming, be a light that shines upon the road on which we walk together and may it lead us all to the glory of the kingdom of God.

Wishing you that wonderful gift in this Holy season,
Bishop Michael

GODLY PLAY

The desert is a dangerous place

New encounters with sacred stories through Godly Play



JUDY STEERS
YOUTH MINISTRY - ANGLICAN CHURCH OF CANADA

"The desert is a dangerous place... People don't go there unless they have to. During the day, the sun is hot and can burn you. At night, it is very cold. When the wind blows, the sand stings your skin and hurts your eyes. People wear lots of clothing to protect themselves from the sun, the cold and the stinging sand. There is little water and no food in the desert and you can die without water to



Children are not empty vessels who need to be filled up with the 'right knowledge', rather, they already have an experience and awareness of God...

drink. The sand is always shifting, so it is easy to lose your way. The desert is a dangerous place. People don't go there unless they have to..."

So begins many of the lessons in the 'desert box' (we never say 'sandbox') in the Godly Play classroom. As the stories say, 'so many important things happened to the people of God in the desert that we have to have a little piece of it here in our space'. Using finely crafted wooden figures, the desert box, fabric, painted cards and other beautiful props, the story teller engages the learners in Sacred Stories, Parables of Jesus, and lessons about Liturgy.

I first encountered 'Godly Play' a year ago at a workshop given by a trainer from the United Church. Listening to the story and watching it unfold before me with three-dimensional materials, I felt as though I was being wrapped in the story. At the end, the whole group of adult learners was invited to wonder together. To wonder aloud about the significance of the story, the important moments, and to find the deeper meaning for each of us. At the risk of using a loaded word, the experience was mystical and, dare I say, magical. I knew I wanted to find out more about this incredibly engaging method of Scripture story-telling and meaning-making. I borrowed books from our Diocesan Resource Centre, shared a story or two with a seminary class and in early September, found myself in Belmont, Massachusetts for a three day accreditation course as a Godly Play Teacher.

I moved to Guelph with my family in June this year. In a moment of what can only be described as 'God-incidence' I received an email out of the blue from David Howells, the rector of St David and St Patrick while I was away at that course in the US. He described how the parish had a wonderful space, a group of eager volunteers seeking 'something different' for the children's education program and lacked only direction and a plan. He wondered if I might be able to come to share some ideas or offer direction. At the very same time that he sent that email, I was sitting in a Godly Play classroom wondering if there was a parish who would be interested to take a leap of faith to try something new and engaging. And, since our move, my spouse and I were looking for a new parish home. Sometimes, circumstances come together in extraordinary ways and a plan, people, a place and a vision coincide. Though it is early days, the results have so far been very exciting.

We have a very small Sunday Morning children's program. Each week, five to eight children gather in our children's worship space to hear and see a story unfold. Certainly, the stories in the Desert Box (Abraham and Sarah, Exodus, the "Ten Best Ways to Live" (ten commandments) and the Exile) have emerged as favourites. Stories focus also on the stories of Jesus or on liturgical lessons such as Baptism, Advent, "The Circle" (seasons) of the church year, Eucharist and Lent.

What amazes me the most is how 'sticky' the stories are. It was quite something to hear 7 year old Jordan patiently explaining to adult volunteer Brent Klassen how the previous week she had learned how Abraham and Sarah listened to God, traveled far from their home, how they learned that "all of God was in every place" how Abraham and Sarah came to have descendants 'more than the stars of the sky and the grains of sand in the desert' and how we are all part of that great family of God's people. At coffee hour, 5 year old Rebecca shared with her mother Chris that when God's people left Egypt they had no time to let their bread rise, so the bread they ate was flat. The matzoh, she explained "...tastes like the story—when you eat it, you remember what it was like in the desert".

Creative reflections in clay, paint, plasticine, wood, paper cutting, collage, Fimo and more help children to make the story their own. Rather than a pre-determined 'craft' project, learners respond to the story in a way that is meaningful and chosen by themselves. Sometimes, that means just sitting with the story materials and

re-telling it on one's own.

What inspires me the most about this approach to children's religious education is the underlying theology and principles; the centrality of the narrative itself, and that children are not empty vessels who need to be filled up with the 'right knowledge', rather, they already have an experience and awareness of God, and only lack the language to articulate that experience and consciousness. Godly Play engages children with the stories, the liturgy, the rituals of our faith, to give children a language to express their emerging relationship with God and to see their connectedness to the wider story of the People of God. The invitation "I wonder..." invites learners to question, to seek, to explore the deeper meaning for themselves rather than having that meaning handed to them pre-packaged.

Is it just for children? No! We are already planning an evening Lenten Learning program for adults which will be a weekly Godly Play lesson. As Val, one of our parishioners commented "I want the chance to reconnect with the stories I was told as a child, but now as an adult, and to engage with their deeper meaning and significance without layers and layers of interpretation overlaid on them. To let the stories speak for themselves and to make meaning from them for my life."

We have only just begun to explore the fullness of Godly Play in our parish, but if you'd like to experience what Godly Play is all about one Sunday, please call the church office at St. David and St Patrick to let us know you'd like to come. We'd welcome you into our circle. Watch for news of an upcoming training event in the new year.



Trainer Linda Clapp shares the lesson on The Eucharist at the Godly Play Teacher Accreditation Training at All Saints' Episcopal Church in Belmont, Massachusetts.



Adult volunteer Brent and Jordan work on their own creative reflection of the Creation story.



At St. David and St. Patrick, Kieran, Scott and Rebecca watch and listen to the Exodus story unfold. Teacher/Story-teller Judy Steers helps children to connect with Sacred Stories using the Godly Play method.

Children experiencing the spirit



CHRISTYN PERKONS
DIOCESAN RESOURCE CENTRE

Last month, I talked about how a Sunday morning might look without separate children's programming. For some, it's appealing to worship and learn side by side with the children of the parish. For others, there's a sense that children have different learning and worshipping needs so here are a couple of models that are quite different from the typical curriculum-based Sunday School.

The Catechesis (means oral teaching) of the Good Shepherd, developed by Sophia Cavaletti, a Hebrew professor and Gina Gobbi, an educator who worked with Maria Montessori, focuses on enabling children to respond to their innate longing to know God utilizing Montessori techniques. The setting is the *atrium*, a room transformed by simple but beautiful child-sized tables and chairs, a prayer table, a model of an altar and a wooden sheep pen with figures of the Good Shepherd and the sheep.

The teacher's role is to introduce the children to this sacred space where the quiet sharing of King-

dom parables allows children to make their own responses. The goal is to *experience* the liturgical life as opposed to being taught about Jesus and the church. This method highlights the centrality of the Eucharist and the God/Jesus experience rather than the historical Jesus. The Good Shepherd Catechesis is quite common in Roman Catholic parishes in Europe and North America and can be found close to home in Anglican parishes in both the Toronto and Ottawa dioceses.

More information can be found at <http://ottawa.anglican.ca/shepherd.shtml>. As well, you can find information about training and certification at www.utoronto.ca/stmikes/comt_ed/certificate/good_shepherd.html. You can explore this approach further by reading Cavalletti's preeminent work, *The Religious Potential of the Child*, published by Catechesis of the Good Shepherd Publications.

Expressing encounters with God
Godly Play is an imaginative method for engaging children with scripture stories developed by Jerome Berryman, an Episcopal priest trained by both Sophia Cavaletti and Maria Montessori. Berryman developed Godly Play (an expansion of the Montessori approach to religious education) through his work with children in churches, schools and hospitals as well as through the work of the Center for

the Theology of Childhood.

While Godly Play uses similar presentations and materials to the Good Shepherd Catechesis, the focus on sacred stories, parables, liturgy and silence reflects a somewhat more ecumenical approach as well as using a broader spectrum of materials. The goal of Godly Play is to familiarize children with the art of using the vocabulary of our worship tradition to express their encounters with God and to find a God-centered direction for their lives.

The flow of Godly Play follows the basic structure of worship; to enter, to get ready to listen to God's Word, respond, prepare for the feast, share the feast, receive a blessing and go out into the world. The experience is not intended however to duplicate the liturgy but to prepare children to participate more fully in the Eucharist experience.

Spirit-knowing

The process begins as children enter the space when they are ready to engage with the presentation; to sit in a circle with a storyteller who tells a parable or sacred story moving wooden figures, sand, or other sensorial materials in a manner that evokes an experiential dimension for both the children and the storyteller. Following the telling of the story, the storyteller invites the children to wonder with him/her. Wondering is not about regurgitat-

ing the story but rather is an exploration with the children about where God is present in their experience. Questions the storyteller might ask are; "I wonder what this could really be?", "I wonder what part of the story you like best?" or "I wonder who you are in the story?"

Once they have explored this through language, the children are invited to respond using a variety of media; tempera paint, watercolours, pencils, markers, clay, small bits of wood, cloth, stones, different kinds and sizes of paper. This "work" (the creation of meaning) is followed by the feast; a simple drink and snack shared in community that echoes the joyful celebration and thanksgiving of the Eucharist. The feast is not about what is served or how much can be consumed but is about how you feel when you share what you have.

The process finishes with a closing ritual that allows children to integrate their time of being and their time of doing and enter back into the everyday world. The storyteller acknowledges that they have been on holy ground; encountering the Divine in a way that will have relevance to their daily lives. Each session ends with the facilitators staying after the children leave to reflect on the God moments for each child; to assess how effectively the story and work engaged each child in developing their own Spirit-knowing.

Godly Play encourages, creates a safe space for children to explore the elusive presence of God—where and how they encounter the Divine. As Berryman writes in *Godly Play: An Imaginative Approach to Religious Education*, "Godly play is the playing of a game that can awaken us to new ways of seeing ourselves as human beings. It is the way to discover our deep identity as Godly creatures, created in the image of God."

If this approach resonates with you, more information can be found at <http://www.godlyplay.org> and in the writings of Jerome Berryman, many of which can be borrowed from the Children's and Family Ministry Resource Library at the Diocesan Resource Centre. There are both theory and "how to" books available for lending. Also available through the Resource Library is a five session unit written by a British Anglican priest called *Living in a Fragile World: A Spiritual Exploration of Conservation and Citizenship Using the Methods of Godly Play* which is appropriate for both adults and children over the age of seven.

You might also be interested in a training weekend for creating the Godly Play experience that's currently in the planning stages for late March/early April. Call Christyn Perkons at 905-527-1316 (ext. 460) to get your name on the list for continuing updates.

Looking for a special way to share your Christmas with someone less fortunate?

St. Matthew's House

invites you, your family, group or parish to help make Christmas more joyful for a family by participating in our Christmas Adopt-a-family Program.

For over 44 years, St. Matthew's House has given Christmas new meaning for thousands of families. Last year, St. Matthew's House helped 4,584 family members and individuals at Christmas time. This year, as many or more families will be affected by poverty, unemployment and economic hardship.



Three ways you can sponsor a family:

- Provide the food or grocery store vouchers for Christmas Dinner for the family.
- Provide new, unwrapped toys for children or gifts for teenagers. (These should be taken to the registry no later than **December 12**).
- Complete Sponsorship - Sponsor a small or large family by supplying the Christmas Dinner, as well as one to two gifts for each child. St. Matthew's House gives sponsors first names of family members, plus ages and sizes of children. We suggest gift certificates from major grocery stores to cover the cost of meat for the size of family chosen. You can also supply the potatoes, vegetables and dessert. As a guideline, you should be able to sponsor a family of four for \$150 - \$175. Sponsors are asked to bring their donations to the Wentworth Campus, Mohawk College, 196 Wentworth Street North, (main floor, south-east door), on December 10, 11 or 12 for distribution to families.

Or, you can sponsor a family by giving a donation to St. Matthew's House Christmas Program. Income tax receipts will be provided.* Families registered at St. Matthew's House are eligible for assistance from only one agency, thereby avoiding duplication.

For more information about how you can help, please call Debra House at (905) 522-4584.

*If you require an income tax receipt for in-kind contributions, please take all gift receipts to St. Matthew's House, 414 Barton Street East prior to delivering parcels to Christmas Program site. Families registered at St. Matthew's House are eligible for assistance from only one agency, thereby avoiding duplication.



St. Matthew's House
Helping People Most in Need Across Hamilton

New Beginnings



SUSAN C. HUXFORD-WESTALL
ALL SAINTS, HAMILTON

A baby is born: new beginnings. A Bible begins: new beginnings. A Bible ends: *Behold, I make everything new*: new beginnings. A church is de-consecrated: new beginnings. A parish vestry agrees to pull down the old buildings: new beginnings.

Advent heralds the birth of a baby: new beginnings. That birth

realising that we must make new beginnings.

Living in a self-centred way

I believe that God is on the move. If God is indeed the God in whom we live and move and have our being, then we must accept that he is calling us to join with His Holy Spirit in making all things new.

Two millennia of Christendom have passed, but the world has not chosen to follow the will of God. Jesus taught us to pray *Thy will be done*, and the world has lain back and left it all to God. It's up to us to make sure that God's will is done; God has given us more than enough pointers, but we bungle along in our own sweet(?) way, just as the An-

that they have felt driven towards procreation. Security, because parents have had to depend upon their children, especially male children, for their livelihood in the declining years. Society has yet to learn how to overcome these problems.

What has caused our excess? Surely it is because of our own self-interest. Society has taught us always to want more. We have had to "keep up with the Joneses"; we have always wanted to outdo our neighbour. How do we show how powerful we are? We must have more of this world's goods, whether it is the Masai who counts his worth in cattle, the Bedouin in camels, or the Canadian in loonies—now worth more than the ubiquitous American greenback.

Are we living in a dictatorship?

Ever since the days of ancient Athens the western nations have touted so-called *Democracy*, which it claims, as did the ancient Greeks, is *Government of the people, for the people, by the people*. It is a deceptive doctrine. We have only to look at the recent provincial election to recognize that half the people who were entitled to vote considered the election to be a waste of their time. Under such circumstances democracy becomes government of the people by half the people who vote for other people whom they believe will serve their own self-interests. The people who are successful in the election are also, by and large, interested in their own self-interests, having chosen politics as a career. The present government in Ottawa is a good example; the party caucus obeys the dictates of the P.M.O. and a very few have obeyed their own conscience and defied the Prime Minister's dictates. Are we, in fact, living in a dictatorship?

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Belonging



COLLEEN SYM
SOCIAL JUSTICE COORDINATOR

"Belonging. Such an achingly simple word. It conjures up some of our deepest yearnings, and for some of us, perhaps our most painful memories. Equality claims begin and end with a desire for belonging, for community. Ideas of equality lie at the heart of the Canadian promise of community. Yet we know that communities are built in two ways: by welcoming in, and by keeping out." (Frazee, 2000)

Poverty keeps people out. Living in poverty means feelings of exclusion and isolation and a loss of personal dignity. For me, pizza day at school is a welcome break for a working mom from having to prepare school lunches. The dollar a slice in my mind is cheap versus the cost of my time and the emotional energy of thinking up and preparing a lunch that my kids will actually eat. One of my clients on social assistance described for me what a horrible stress hot dog day caused for her. Her children wanted to feel part of the group; she wanted them to feel that way. To get the money to pay for the hot dogs involved calling her worker and asking if there was any way she could get assistance to cover the cost. The worker then had to verify with the school principal that the request was legitimate. Another client of mine just found it easier to keep her child at home on those days and hope he didn't find out what he was missing.

From the perspective of the children the impact of exclusion brought on by poverty is obvious. In an article "Social inclusion advances children's well-being" Christa Freiler, of the Laidlaw Foundation documented that when asked what poverty meant to them, students in a North Bay, Ontario elementary school focused on the ways in which their families' inadequate incomes prevented them from participating in their schools and communities like other children. To those children poverty means:

- Not getting to go to birthday parties because we can't afford to buy a present.
- Not being able to go on school trips.
- Not buying books at the school fair.
- Not being able to go camping.
- Hiding your feet so the teacher won't get mad that you have no boots.
- Feeling ashamed that my dad can't get a job.
- Being afraid to tell your mom that you need gym shoes.

The vast majority of people living in our Diocese have likely never seen a welfare cheque and would have no idea how the amount of financial assistance is calculated. There is a portion allocated for "shelter costs" and a "basic allowance". The basic allowance is to be used to meet your basic needs. Basic means basic. No frills, no hot dog days, no sports, no dancing lessons, no swimming lessons, no hockey, figure skating, karate etc. None of the opportunities

for activities that build confidence, friendships and feelings of belonging that we want for our children.

Inclusive Community

In 2005 the City of Burlington through Community Development Halton participated in a national project on how to build inclusive communities. Inclusive Cities Canada: A Cross-Canada Civic Initiative was a collaborative venture of five social planning organizations across Canada and the social infrastructure sub-committee of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM). The aim of *Inclusive Cities Canada* was to strengthen the capacity of cities to create and sustain inclusive communities for the mutual benefit of all people. One citizen surveyed in Burlington defined an 'inclusive community' as:

"A place where everyone can enjoy all the amenities. Where poor children can participate in sports and arts and crafts alongside rich children. A place where people have lived all their lives and don't have to leave because taxes are high, because rich people live here in greater numbers and raise house prices."

Elsewhere in the report it was noted that there was a belief that the overall affluence of the community exacerbates the difficulties faced by poor families, by increasing expectations in schools and community groups that parents can pay more for activities. Further, it was observed that the under funding of education has been the source, not only of user fees, but also of increased fundraising by schools, placing additional pressures on low-income families.

Church community

As Church we have an obligation to build inclusive communities that provide opportunities for the optimal well-being and healthy development of all children. We can do this by being open and welcoming and creative. In my home parish of St. George's, Georgetown the hiring of a church school coordinator and the Messy Church are great initiatives. But overall dwindling church attendance tells us that children in our cities and towns do not have exposure to the church community—as the churches have nothing to offer their parents—and in fact to those living in poverty churches may seem like places for the rich. How do you make a weekly offering, contribute to the capital fund and donate a tray of fancy cookies or baking for the baked goods table when you visit the food bank once a month?

A friend of mine on the board at the Royal Hamilton Yacht Club is trying to convince "them" that they have to concern themselves with children and poverty in the North end of Hamilton. He wants them to start offering sailing lessons, water safety lessons etc. to some kids who would never dream of having that opportunity. He truly believes that if they get them involved in some of these activities that are "normal" in the experience of our more affluent kids, they will have a fighting chance at succeeding in life and perhaps even at succeeding as leaders who live with values—and maybe even within a "new" church structure.



Turn back, O Man, forswear thy foolish ways.
Old now is Earth and none may count her days,
Yet thou, her child, whose head is crowned with flame,
Still wilt not hear thine inner God proclaim—
"Turn back, O Man, forswear thy foolish ways."

Clifford Bax, 1919.

gives rise to celebration: Christmas. Do we regard that birth as heralding a new beginning, or do we lapse into sloppy sentimentality and use it as an excuse to over-indulge? Pass out the cigars and have a drink!

Our forebears placed Christmas close to the winter solstice: new beginnings. The days begin to get longer and a new year was heralded in the Roman world: new beginnings. That sense of new beginnings has continued in the Christian calendar, which has only very recently been accepted as the measure of a Common Era: new beginnings. 2007 draws to an end; six years of the new millennium have already slipped by; we must not let another slip by without

cent Hebrews ignored their prophets. God sent Jesus to straighten us out, but we've continued to live in our own self-centred ways.

Look at the result! We are worried about global warming. How has this arisen? It is by our own greed and misuse of God's gifts. When the world's population was very much less than it now is, the thoughtless use of wood and coal (or peat) was not a threat to the environment, but we have been so concerned about our own pleasure, reputation and security that we are now over-populating this globe. Pleasure, because sex is a God-given gift that we have exploited and abused. Reputation, because people have been so concerned about their virility

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Agree to Disagree

The Anglican Church was founded on a schism of Roman Catholicism and Protestantism. Both sides equally passionate and both sides thinking the others were heretics. Gradually with the use of the Book of Common Prayer, each side began to respect the other. Sometimes the policy of 'Agree to Disagree' was used but the church grew to be known as a church that was inclusive and respectful, and open to other points of view. Now we have another schism over the blessing of same sex unions that is tearing us apart. Unlike our forebears, some leaders, who in my opinion, are acting like children who say, "If you don't play the game my way, I'll take my toys and go home." or "You can't play with us because you're different" Personally, I am in favour of blessing same sex unions, however, I'm not about to breakup lifelong friendships with those who disagree with me. From what I've

read, neither side wishes to leave the communion. Both sides have issues with each other. What happened to 'Agree to Disagree'? To the leaders I say "Grow up and be the leaders God called you to be!"

CATHARINE BENNETT
St. John's, Ancaster

The closing of St. Philip the apostle

As former parishioners of St. Philip's church, we would like to express our sincere and heartfelt thanks to the Rev. Susan Wells for her articles in the *Niagara Anglican Journal*. She truly portrayed St. Philip's story.

Some of us have accepted, what appeared to be the inevitable fate of our beloved church. Some are still angry; but all of us grieve the loss of our caring and nurturing community.

As Susan wrote, St. Philip's was

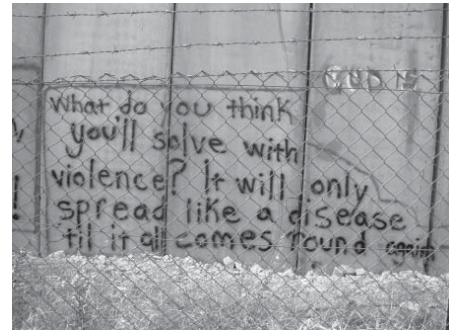
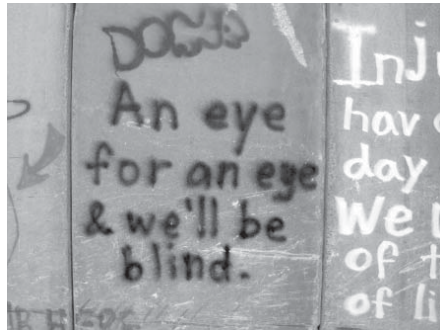
"a place where people gathered to hear the word of God" and a "conduit that led many people to our wonderful friend Jesus". As a result many ministries were formed to meet the needs of others.

St. Philip's may not have been unique; but many of us, who had come from other churches, experienced more caring and greater involvement in living faith-filled lives than we had in previous churches.

This has been a highly emotional time for all of us; but we do wish to express our gratitude to the Rev. Susan Wells for her pastoral care through this time of trial; and for telling St. Philip's story.

We would like to thank the *Niagara Anglican* for publishing these articles.

Sincerely Margaret Brisley, Linda Frappe, Ida Glancie, Frances Gransauil, June and Gary Hillier, Marilyn Husted, Margaret Pitcher, Lynette Royeppen, Jan Savory, Shirley Stagg, Marilyn Summerhayes, Sharon Thompson.



Bethlehem revisited



GORDON KINKLEY
RECTOR - ST. JOHN'S, ST. CATHARINES

This Christmas in Shepherd's Field, Bethlehem, do not expect to hear the sounds of angels singing choruses of "Peace to Earth". In fact it hasn't been a very catchy tune in this part of the world for a long time. Over the years I have come to know some of this

“
From the ashes of our hopelessness spring the flames of our hope.

Message from the wall

land reasonably well. I first studied here in 1972 under the tutelage of Monsieur Rene Leconte a Roman Catholic priest and translator of the New Jerusalem Bible who was part-time professor at Lille, France and part-time professor at the University of Ottawa where I was studying for my M.A. In all, I have been to this Holy Land ten times now but nothing could have prepared me for what I was to about to see.

In mid-October I returned to Israel to study once more at St. George's College in east Jerusalem. As an aside, I highly recommend

this experience to everyone. I had previously studied at the college in '96 and since I knew the lay of the land I decided to arrive six days before the course began. I wanted time to recover from jetlag, time to do some reading and time to do some exploring. Especially, I wanted time to see for myself the situation in David's city, Bethlehem. I had read much about "the fence" and as I said before nothing could have prepared me for what I was about to see.

Near to the Damascus Gate leading into the Old City of Jerusalem you can catch a local Arab bus for Bethlehem and the cost is 3.5 New Israeli Shekels (about 75 cents Cdn). Bethlehem is only 10 kilometers down the road but now for many Palestinians it's a world away. I was the only non-Arab on the bus that day and for that matter everyday I traveled on it; no one spoke English but there was no mistaking their Near Eastern hospitality. I had not been to Israel since the 2nd Intifada (Sept. 28, 2000), provoked you may recall, when then opposition leader Ariel Sharon heavily guarded by Israeli soldiers and policeman walked into the al-Aqsa mosque – the third holiest site in Islam. In my earlier visits to Bethlehem the local bus would bring me directly to Manger Square and very near to the Church of the Nativity; the oldest church in Christendom. This is the site where tradition says that Jesus was born and services have continued here uninterrupted from the six-century—from the time of the Emperor, Justinian. The

present structure rests on the site of an earlier church build by Constantine early in the fourth-century.

Since all Arab buses must stop at the "fence," we disembarked there. Some fence! It is eight meters high with sniper towers, video cameras and razor wire! Little wonder despair and unemployment are running high here. One Bethlehem merchant told me that for him the wall made him feel "like being in prison." What is that expression? "If it looks like a duck and quacks like a duck, it's a duck." Indeed, he is imprisoned. If he wants to go to Jerusalem for one day he needs a permit and that takes two weeks to obtain. Not surprisingly, unemployment in Bethlehem and throughout most of the West Bank is running at between 35 – 38%. In some cities like Hebron unemployment is much higher. It's 50%. At St. George's College, with the exception of the Dean and the Warden, all of the staff is Palestinian and the maintenance staff at both the college and the guest house are divided equally between Christians and Muslims. These workers require permits to travel to Jerusalem from their homes in Bethlehem and Bethany and must reapply for permits every three months. That is every three months they must make a new application; they must start over like they have never made an application before and the college must similarly provide supporting documentation as though it had never given this information before. It is all about control and harassment. The situation is desperate. I visited

two Palestinian refugee camps in Bethlehem (Aida & Dheisheh) and one in Hebron. Independent observers, to describe what life is like here, have used the terms apartheid and ghetto. And... standing in juxtaposition to this imposed squalor is a new Israeli settlement built three years ago in Bethlehem by ultra-conservatives in contravention of both the Oslo Accord and the Road Map to Peace. They see the Hebrew bible and Yahweh's promise in Genesis as their deed to the land. It is, I believe, the ultra-conservatives in Islam, Judaism and Christianity who pose the greatest obstacle to peaceful co-existence here.

Meanwhile in Jerusalem, Christian and Jewish ultra-conservatives dream of the day and plan for it when the third Temple will be built. Plans have already been drawn up and a huge golden menorah, crafted for the third temple's entrance, sits encased in glass in the Old City's Jewish Quarter waiting for that day. It's all very nice but to build the third Temple, Temple Mount must first be cleared of the third holiest site in Islam and that would probably mean WW3. For some that's OK for then the Messiah will come. Make no mistake thought the majority of Palestinians and Israelis are good and moderate people who want peace and are willing to make major concessions to achieve it. I believe this. Unfortunately it is an entrenched minority on both sides that is holding the process hostage.

Meanwhile back at the wall, after leaving the bus one must walk down a long concrete pathway past

a sniper tower and on to passport control before passing through to the other side. Returning is even more unnerving. Bags and belongings are electronically checked while soldiers walk back and forth on catwalks over head. I particularly noticed one Israeli soldier who carried an Uzzie as well as a holstered pistol and another pistol pushed into his belt at his back. One can never be too well armed or too intimidating! Being the only non-Arab on an Arab bus didn't bother me but I must confess that soldier did.

For any relationship, building walls is never a solution. In the letter to the Hebrews (Heb. 9.11) the Christ is described as pontifex (literally: the bridge builder). By nature of who the Christ is, and as his followers, we are to be inclusive not exclusive; a builder of bridges not a builder of walls.

It is often argued that language is more powerful than the sword. The lecterns in many of our churches provide us with a subtle reminder of this truth. The bible often rests upon an eagle and the eagle was a standard for the Roman Empire. In the primitive church the bible was placed on top of the eagle as a reminder that the word of God is above and more powerful than all the legions of Roman. History has proven that true.

Both Palestinians and visitors have written messages of hope on that Bethlehem wall. Maybe the angels are singing this Christmas after all—if we have ears to hear and eyes to see.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12 » Liturgy of the mind, of the heart and of the body

power and control, the Anglican church community needed stability, comfort and safety. They needed, in their church, to feel secure in their relationship with God from the threats and changes that were all around in the town. My ideas for liturgical development were theoretically well-founded, but the pain they caused was unacceptable. Cerebral theology was trumped by community theology. I learned about the liturgy of the people there. People may have difficulty articulating it, but it is real nonetheless.

Rooted in the reality of place and people

So what is the community of your church needing to express as it gathers for worship? What are the

tender spots on the body of Christ that need to be held, healed and gently tended? Is this a community (as many early BCP eucharists are) of quiet, introverted people who have a deep, instinctive love of God? Is it a church which welcomes people seeking intimate community and friendship? Is it a place where there is lots of energy looking for an outlet, or a refuge for those coping with busy work, busy families, sick parents and too many friends? There are any number of descriptors of a church which should predict the kind of liturgy which will give words and gestures to help people find the language of their hearts in offering worship to God.

Liturgy must be rooted in the actual reality of the place and people.

But even then there is more to include in our work.

We need to keep going

Lastly there is a liturgy of the body and of space. When I am teaching people about private prayer I ask them what they are doing with their body when praying. If you pray the Lord's Prayer in an armchair it feels different from praying in an upright chair. Try it on a prayer stool or flat in bed. Your body affects your prayer. In church what we do affects how the community experiences worship.

Altar rails are often the place where people take their stand against the liturgist. To kneel and, with head bowed, extend your hands to receive communion is an experience, and expression and a

part of the whole sensual physicality of the sacrament. To walk in a line towards a person who meets your eye, and places the bread or chalice in your hands as you stand, with others waiting behind you, is another experience and expression. They are very different.

What is the difference in bodily experience between receiving communion in a small circle of people around an altar on the one hand, and, on the other, walking up through a narrow chancel of singing choir members to kneel at a high altar rail and receive communion there? The liturgical ideas of the gathered community expressed by the former, and the journey of faith to God by the latter only begin to touch the somatic realities which are so much deep-

er, mythically powerful and transformative.

Canadian Anglicanism needs to keep going on liturgical reform. The BAS was never meant to replace the BCP, but to be a new beginning. In the two decades of trying new things we have learned that change is not just in the head. Liturgy is not composed only at a desk. Liturgy needs also to listen to the heart and the body, to the individual and the community.

This is not a counsel of conservatism, but of depth. There is a thirst for God and people come to our churches looking for living water. Deep liturgy, of word, of heart and of body can quench that thirst which is felt by the whole person. As the next phase of liturgical reform in our church unfolds we must remember this.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5 » Getting to know you

other's Communion, and enabling clergy of both to serve in either. Bishop Michael was co-chair of the Joint Anglican-Lutheran Commission with the now Right Reverend Fred Hiltz, Primate of the Anglican Church of Canada, but previously the Anglican Bishop of Nova Scotia, part of Bishop Michael's territory. "He's the real deal," says Bishop Michael. "Now it's Peter Wall and me!"

In June, 2007, the Report of the Joint Commission (representing both denominations) to the National Convention of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Canada and the General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada said "we need to be doing more collaborative work. The World Council of Churches articulated the Lund Principle: that we only do separately what we cannot do together."

Bishop Michael is proud of how the two denominations have come together: "It's terrific! We've made a lot of headway. A lot of relationships are being built between people, and we're coming to know each other as brothers and sisters in a whole new way." Now, "we have to start moving to a mindset where 'together' is the default position—that's a cultural shift."

Bishop Michael is "really excited about the ELCIC/ACIC (Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada/Anglican Church in Canada) present theme, 'The Church in Mission for Other.' (It is the only organisation I know of that exists for no other reason than to meet the needs of those who are currently not its members. I find that as individual Christians look beyond the Church to find that Mission Focus, they become enlivened in very exciting ways."

From Parish Pastor to Bishop
In 1990, Michael was called to be the Assistant to the Bishop of the

Eastern Synod. "In our world, we function with a Bishop and three Assistants, who are something like a cross between (Anglican) Suffragan Bishops and Executive Officers, but they aren't ordained to the position and can't ordain." Currently there are only two Bishop's Assistants, as a previous Assistant, the Reverend Canon Susan Johnson, was elected as National Bishop at June's Lutheran National Convention. (In 2004, Susan took sabbatical leave to work at Niagara's own Christ's Church Cathedral, and Bishop Ralph appointed her a Canon of the Cathedral.)

After eight years service as Assistant, Michael was elected Bishop of the Eastern Synod in June, 1998. "Next year will be my tenth anniversary," he smiles, "but I will have been seventeen years in this office, (first) in an office tower in downtown Kitchener. Then we bought this building, renovated and expanded it."

Daily worship is shared in the simple chapel. High on one wall is a stained glass window of Luther's seal, designed by Martin Luther, comprising a black cross, red heart, a white rose on a sky blue field, all surrounded by a golden ring, meaningful symbols for all Christians.

None of the three member-of-fice staff is Lutheran, but all spoke warmly of Bishop Michael: "When I started, I'd never heard of Michael Pryse, but I felt immediate respect for him" "He's doing what he's meant to be doing." "It's a feeling you get when he walks into the room." "He's perfected the balance, holds his authority."

Faith, family and fun—and faith again
Bishop Michael probably would not agree that he has "perfected the balance," but "I've got better at

balancing things as years go by. It's not easy for my family (his wife, Lois, and their four daughters aged between nineteen and twenty-five), but they're all incredibly supportive." He continues thoughtfully, "We clergy need to realise, as do the laity, that our first vocation is to our families. It's sometimes a hard lesson for us to learn."

Like most clergy, Bishop Michael is a "readaholic; I devour stuff! I like fiction, most contemporary Canadian literature. I'm a music nut, everything from soup to nuts, all genres. I like the outdoors, canoeing and fishing... I love to clean the house, the garage, the yard! I think it's because I can do things there, get everything in order, that I can't do in Church work!"

For Michael, the biblical theme of being adopted and claimed by God is "a very powerful image... I was adopted as a two-year-old, by a wonderful family who gave me much love. My parents are deceased, but I have an adopted sister in Windsor. My Grandfather in my adopted family was a Baptist minister who did almost all his ministry at Oshweken. He was given a Mohawk name that translated as 'Big Heart.' That's just the kind of guy he was. He was an inspiration to me."

Ten years ago I connected with my birth mother and three other siblings. Family roots on her side are Anglican in Nova Scotia! It has been a wonderful experience."

Bishop Michael has become a real presence among Anglicans in Niagara. His warmth, wisdom and spirituality are gifts to not only his good friend, Bishop Ralph, but to all of us who journey with him as fellow Christians, setting aside labels of Lutheran or Anglican, and fulfilling Jesus' prayer that we may all be one in his name and in his service.



FRANCEAN CAMPBELL-RICH
CHRIST'S CHURCH CATHEDRAL

Certainly not stewards of the earth. Too much time has passed. Too many voices have spoken. Too many scientists are agreed. Climate is changing—more quickly than we might ever have imagined.

In less than one lifetime we have seen the evidence: wildfire, hurricane, flood, drought, dwindling icecap, rising/receding shorelines, tsunamis, diminishing wildlife, pandemic disease—and we are reluctant to look at it.

To liars and deniers—we continue to listen to them.

To fundamentalists and literalists—we continue to tolerate them.

To Genesis creationists—we misread 'dominion'.

We have left undone what we

ought to have done; we all know what that is, and it's not just about styrofoam cups and blue boxes. Reduce, reuse, recycle—all good and well enough. European countries are way ahead of us on all these and more. China and India have hardly yet begun, and the USA lags behind. The human footprint is now the mark of condemnation. Life on earth is not endlessly resilient.

■ How many trees died today to provide the printed paper, mostly ads, that arrives on our doorsteps?
■ Observe the number of bags of garbage weekly on our streets headed for landfill.

■ How much of our donations to the church will go to solar panels? To rainwater collection? To heating controls?

■ How many of our churches provide or arrange shared transportation?

■ How much carbon dioxide did we add to the air this week?

Regard and repent. We must change our ways, and do better. God help us.

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I'm a graduate of Notre Dame

CHRISTOPHER GRABIEC
EDITOR

That's right; I am a graduate of Notre Dame University in South Bend Indiana. I did a Master's degree there and there is not much about that University that I have ever forgotten. I suppose most people who have heard of Notre Dame, think of football (and that is unforgettable) but there was far more to it than that.

I was a fairly young priest at the time and had decided that I would try to hide my identity and just be one of the crowd. That actually didn't work too well, and before I knew it they had me presiding at services in student residences around the campus. One of the ways that I had tried to hide my identity was by going to the mall and having my ear pierced. I remember being summoned into a professor's office who was a Jesuit priest. He wanted to discuss a few things that I had said in class. He then asked me what I did and I replied to him that I was a priest. I remember him cranking his head to the left so that he could get a better look at my ear. He responded, "Anglican?" I said "No, Roman." In a rather perplexed way he responded: "Hmm... I guess you learn something every day".

I'm telling this story for two reasons. One has to do with preconceptions and living out of what might be considered out-dated models. Don't get me wrong, he was a great professor, a forward thinker and a wonderful priest. However, a priest with an earring just didn't fit into his understanding. He didn't know me, but I believe he didn't want to know me any further because of the way I presented myself. In the end, I do not think that this professor was that much of an influence in my life. His vision of priesthood, at the time did not include a young man sitting in his office with an earring. To his credit though, he obviously thought that the Anglican Church would have been more open to acceptance of me than the Roman church would.

Juxtaposed, against that story, is the overall story of Notre Dame. The very first day I walked onto that campus, I took a deep breath and realized that I was inhaling an air of potential—it seemed like everything was possible in this world. It seemed to me that great people—presidents of corporations, successful lawyers and judges, famous politicians and

more had walked on these grounds. I really believed while I was there—that there was hope in my life and hope for the world. And what really amazes me, is that I have never forgotten that feeling.

The university has never let me forget them. It doesn't matter where I live; they seem to track me down. They send me alumni literature and notices of all sorts. They continue to make me feel like a member of the family. Believe it or not, they never directly ask me for money either. Campaigns are mentioned—but it appears that it is up to the individual to find out more and get involved.

The other day I looked at a two hour DVD that came rather inconspicuously in the mail. It was well done. In the beginning it drew me in as a member of the Notre Dame family. It also reminded me of their commitment to the poor and to assisting young people who could not afford the very steep tuitions. The numbers were actually astounding. They announced that they were starting up a new fund raising campaign and the target was 1.5 billion dollars. Not sure if you actually stopped to read what I just wrote—but it is 1.5 billion! Notre Dame will undoubtedly achieve their goal.

So, why all the talk about Notre Dame? There is a reason. Perhaps the church has something to learn from this great institution.

First of all, they never forget their members. They follow you everywhere and make certain that you always feel like you are a significant part of the history of this institution. How many of our former church members do we follow around? How many Anglicans who have left the fold still feel the pride that I feel as a member of the Notre Dame community? We must ask ourselves how we help those who have left the Anglican Church to feel like they are still a very important part.

Secondly, there will always be different attitudes within any community. Many of us have our symbolic "earrings". The question each of us has to ask ourselves is "Do we treat others who do not view life as we do, as odd or outsiders?" Each of us, and all of us together, might think that we have life all figured out, and we may even think that we have a lock on the "true and authentic" understanding of God's living Word. How long will it

take us to understand that Jesus was far bigger than that? His love embraced all kinds of folks with various earnings in their lives. His word is fluid and dynamic. All of our different understandings of that word contribute to a vision of who we are called to be in this day and age.

Thirdly, do we really believe that we are truly a 'big' Church? Big has nothing to do with size. It has to do with magnanimity. It has to do with acceptance. It has to do with hope and a perception of our movement into the future. Do we really believe that God's Spirit is alive—and, yes, alive among us?

Are we willing to set huge goals for ourselves and to believe that because of who we are (and because of who God is) that these goals will be achieved?

Are we able to stand up to everyone around us and remind them that as a church we are committed to helping the poor and the under-privileged? Are we really able to stand up and say that we do not want to live out of our preconceived notions and our prejudices, but rather we want to be open to the true human and spiritual expression that everyone among us brings with them?

Ultimately, it is about our vision for the church in the 21st and 22nd centuries and beyond. It is about clearly articulating that vision which must truly bring the church into modernity. It is about buying into that vision ourselves and believing that we can change the world around us. It is about putting that vision out there so that everyone can clearly see who we are and what we are about.

If most of the above is true for us, then we really should be able to run the biggest campaign that we could ever imagine. Advent is a really good time to think about whether or not we really value being Anglican. Are we proud of it or not? Do we have reason to be proud? Each of us, as well as each parish needs to examine our "raison d'être" and decide what it is that is important to us. I would think that if we can conclude that it's not about buildings—it's about people and not about a particular 'brand' of people, but just people. Then maybe we'll see years of return and growth among us. And by the way, the bricks and mortar buildings will most certainly follow! Oh, and I am a graduate of Notre Dame.

No room at the inn

VAL KERR
ASSISTANT PRIEST - ST. GEORGE'S, ST. CATHARINES

"And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn." (Luke 2:7)

Was this a symptom of the society in which the Holy Family found themselves when they had to make their trek back to the city where



The word Bethlehem is Hebrew, meaning "House of Bread" and Bethlehem Place provides nourishment to its residents on their journey to independence.

Joseph's family originated from? How must they have felt when traveling all that way, Mary heavy with child, Joseph tired, and I'm sure worried about his wife, being told there was no room at the inn? Do you suppose if they had have had more money they might have been able to procure suitable housing for themselves and their soon to be born child?

How many in our society today have trouble finding affordable housing or other desperately needed supports?

Let me give you some statistics gathered here in the Niagara Region.

According to Niagara Regional Housing over 4000 households are waiting for affordable housing in Niagara (approximately 1500 households in Niagara Falls alone), 46 percent of Niagara households pay over 30 percent of their gross income for housing. Many are paying 50 to 75 percent of their income on housing.

Now you might ask what are we here in St. Catharines doing about these statistics?

The History of Bethlehem Projects Niagara

In December 1985 individuals met at St. Paul Street United Church to explore ways of meeting the needs of homeless persons in their community. About 40 people attended the Housing Conference, organized by Outreach Niagara. Representatives from all the downtown churches as well as Outreach Niagara were present. The St. Catharines and Thorold Social Planning Council had, some time before, looked into the issue of affordable housing in the Niagara Region and produced a booklet called "The Hidden Problem". Using this material, the research arm of Outreach Niagara, a St. Catharines based Christian social action group, went a step further and developed the specific concept called second-stage housing. A Steering Committee came from that original gathering and six months later, July 1986, Bethlehem Project was incorporated with a 10-person Board of Directors. Their mandate was a challenging one, namely to locate and purchase a piece of land, centrally located, on which to erect the Bethlehem housing Project.

When a suitable piece of land was found both the Anglican and United Churches gave substantial monies in the early stages to allow the development to continue. In February 1988, the doors opened and the first residents moved into our earliest facility, Bethlehem Place. The word Bethlehem is Hebrew, meaning "House of Bread" and Bethlehem Place provides nourishment to its residents on their journey to independence.

Enabling people to help themselves... a hand up not a hand out. Bethlehem Projects Niagara helps people facing issues of poverty, abuse and family breakdown to rebuild their lives. It is the only organization in the Niagara Region that offers supportive and transitional housing for women, men and families. Through individual counseling, support groups and life skills seminars, people learn to become more self-sufficient.

Former residents or people living in the community who are homeless or at risk of homelessness find safe, affordable, supportive housing at Bethlehem Projects' two Community Support Homes. One home provides a family and single unit and Billies House provides four self-contained units for singles.

Our newest building opened in April of this year, Genesis Court (a new beginning), provides 40 affordable, supportive apartments on James Street in St. Catharines for people of low to moderate income, including those with specific needs such as people with disabilities, victims of violence and the homeless. The building design blends into the existing community and provides a safe, affordable and pleasant environment for tenants. Most importantly, a coordinated support service is available to tenants to assist with the transition to greater personal independence.

Together, we can make our community and world a better place to live

Our next goal is to build 40 affordable, supportive apartments in Niagara Falls for people of low to moderate income, including those with specific needs such as people with disabilities. We plan to create another attractive, accessible apartment building that will blend into the neighbourhood, providing a safe, affordable and pleasant environment. There will be one support worker on site and also a live-in superintendent. Approximately half of the units will be for families and half for single adults and 3 to 4 units will be completely accessible for those with disabilities. This is the first opportunity in the city of Niagara Falls for over a decade to create new, affordable housing. Affordable housing is key to reducing poverty and improving the quality of life in all our communities.

What does the Lord require of us but to do justice, and to love kindness and to walk humbly with our God...

For more information on Bethlehem Projects Niagara visit their website at www.bethlehemprojects.ca.

Embracing the Advent Curriculum



MICHAEL THOMPSON
RECTOR - ST. JUDES, OAKVILLE

As the gospel of Mark begins, the people are flocking from Judean countryside and from Jerusalem to John's wilderness ministry of bap-



Learning what to desire, to anticipate, to wait for, is a hard and lifelong curriculum.

tism. John tells them of one who is coming with power, more power even than John. Expectancy sharpens, and Jesus appears. He receives John's baptism, a voice identifies him as the beloved son, and the Spirit drives him into the wilderness for forty days. He emerges from the forty days and utters his first words: "The time is fulfilled and the Kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news."

Advent isn't just a season of waiting. It's a season of learning what to wait for. It's like the TV game show, "Jeopardy", whose contestants are provided an answer,

for which they compete to identify the right question.

We wait for many things over the course of our lives. For the first day of school, and the first day of holidays. For the first child, and then for the child's first words, first steps. For the list outside the gym that says who made the team. For the exam results—in school and in the doctor's office. We anticipate with longing and we anticipate with dread as well—for the other shoe to drop, for the enchantment to break, for the phone call we know is coming.

Many of the things we wait for bring satisfaction, sometimes over a lifetime. But some of our anticipation leaves us strangely empty when the moment arrives. Consumer goods and Christmas presents don't always measure up to our expectancy, even when the gift is exactly what we hoped for. For every bread maker in use, there are, I suspect, at least two in more or less permanent storage.

Desire and anticipation, then, do not always set an accurate direction in our pursuit of what is good. All the same, they are vital to us, because without them there is nothing to stir us into anything other than "going along to get along." Even our most dimly misdirected desire and anticipation is a sign of restlessness, and, though inadequate, a vestige of our sneaking

suspicion that the way things are is not the best way they could be.

Learning what to desire, to anticipate, to wait for, is a hard and lifelong curriculum. When I was a child, I wanted the apparent freedom and power of grown-ups. As a grown-up on a sunny November day, I want to go outside and play, and wait for that apparent freedom and power to manifest itself so that I can. Young people negotiate the rocky shoals of intimacy, learning about pleasure and responsibility as hearts and bodies meet. Parents take on the simple feeding and cleaning of a baby, witless as to what is coming, yet somehow—mostly—learning what their desire for a child leads to, and what it calls them to be and to do for the rest of a lifetime. Activist middle age is perhaps the hardest stretch of learning (or perhaps I write that because that's the one I'm navigating just now) about what is and isn't worth amassing—stuff, status, power, generosity, relationship, encouragement—and what those things really cost. And aging brings the curriculum of loss, of learning to want less, and to want it more passionately, until the world condenses out of a mist of everything into the singular quenching pleasure of one hand that holds one hand. None of these curricula is easy, and we are mostly awkward and sometimes dangerous as we sort ourselves out.

But there are moments along the learning way that seem set apart. In the middle of a horribly flawed performance as a parent, some grace says, "Stop!" "Breathe!" Let go of your desire to be right, and find your desire to be useful. "Repent and believe the good news. There is another way. The kingdom of God has come near to you." Step out of the puddle of hurt you're so busy enlarging, and into the orbit of healing that seeks to embrace you and invites you to share in its work.

In the midst of a horribly flawed performance as a friend, as a colleague, as a neighbour, as a spouse (though "husband" is the one I know best), some grace invites us to lay down the desire that will not bring life, and to take up the desire that will. These are not the easiest moments in our lives, but this season of Advent at least makes them both more clear and more bearable. More clear because in Advent, we practice desiring the Kingdom of God, practice believing that there is another way, that another Kingdom is nearby, and practice the turning from and turning to that make of our lives a dance of peace and wholeness instead of "all the boots of the tramping warriors" (Isaiah 9.5). More bearable because the season offers evidence that all of our ancestors in faith had to learn the same hard curriculum the same hard way. We are neither more

flawed nor less holy than they.

Aaron Copland's "Appalachian Spring" introduced me to a Shaker melody that forms the basis of Sydney Carter's "Lord of the Dance". But before it accompanied those words, it was called "Simple Gifts":

*'Tis the gift to be simple, 'tis the gift
to be free,
'tis the gift to come round where
we ought to be,
and when we are in the place just
right,
'twill be in the valley of love and
delight.
When true simplicity is gained,
to bow and to bend we will not be
ashamed;
to turn, to turn, 'twill be our
delight,
till by turning, turning we come
round right.*

It is a song to hold us in hope as we embrace the Advent curriculum. It is a song to sing as the kingdom comes near and invites us to turn and inhabit it. And it is a song that will bear our true weight, because it recognizes turning, not as something we might have to do once, but as a lifelong vocation for us in our humanity, and in our discipleship. And if we give ourselves to the song, it will remind us what is worth desiring, what dream is worthy of the dream God dreams when God dreams us into being.



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A seed of hope



LINDA MOORE
CENTRE FOR LEADERSHIP AND HUMAN VALUES

Recently I attended a wonderful creativity and writing workshop held by my friend Martyn Kendrick. In the workshop we were given one word and then asked to "free write" for twenty minutes without stopping and see where our writing took us. For months I have been paying attention to my ability and inability to be tolerant and compassionate. At times I feel I am succeeding and then I fall back into old beliefs and habits. One area that has been really tough for me is related to men who are abusive to women. As diligent as I have been, feeling tolerance and compassion for such men has been very challenging.

At the workshop I had a breakthrough. We were asked to write on the word "seed". What follows is the unedited story just as it came in one of my twenty minute free writings.

Seed, seed, the male, the one who plants his seed, the one who defiles, is defiled. The one who holds his hands open as midwife to the birth of a new calf... rough hands, calloused and thick from the hard physical demands of the small mixed farm in rural mid Ontario. His cow and her new calf are getting acquainted as she licks her babe clean of the blood and mucous of birth. He sits back on his haunches and breathes deeply. The twilight sky shows a soft ribbon of light; white, yellow and pink on the western horizon. Tomorrow will be a good day for haying.

His heart feels bruised and blessed at the same time. Birth-

ing a new life always makes him confused with both joy and pain. The straw in the stall smells stale, like iron, from the afterbirth and urine expelled during the birthing process. His mended plaid work shirt is damp and clammy up to his forearms from his part in the experience.

He thinks of his wife; so tired from her part in keeping their family together. Eight children, simply too many and yet he achingly loves each and every one of them. At night he only wants to drink in the smell of their freshly bathed heads and hold them tightly to him. He knows that another baby will kill her and yet Mary is his deepest love and their physical union is as close to breathing as his heart is to hers.

He knows his temper gets the best of him when he is worrying about their future and he has more than once lashed out with that red blaze of anger. Too often he has left her bruised and battered. He silently weeps as he strokes the side of the new born calf. Buffeted and baffled by his emotions, confused and raw with a heart so big and a life so sad and so rich he looks up and sobs to the evening sky, "What will I do? Where do I go from here? Lord, help me!"

As I re-read what I had written I knew I had been given a miracle. For the first time a part of my heart, that had been closed to the pain and suffering of abusive men, by my own intolerance and judgment, opened and softened. As I wrote I felt what he felt. I became that man, that human being. I felt a true and unconditional love for this individual in their deep pain and suffering.

This experience has planted in me a new and precious seed. If in a matter of moments I could know such deep compassion then so could we all. Indeed, a seed has been planted. It is the seed of profound hope.

Praise and prayer matters



ANNETTE HARRIS
ANGLICAN FELLOWSHIP OF PRAYER

The season of thanksgiving is only just behind us; the fall season reminds us annually of 'the outpouring of The Almighty God's lavish hand, to us and to all mankind; it is now we feel more than ever His faithfulness, His giving to us from His store houses, not with a measuring scale, but with overflowing abundance. The wonder of the glorious colour and beauty that surrounds us, urges us to see as little

else can of a magnificence beyond our comprehension.

Perhaps we respond to this visual sight yearly, perhaps we come step by step, year by year, nearer to praise and wonder to what the Almighty God has in store for all who trust and believe in Him? Blessing and gifts beyond measure. Could it be more by the Holy Spirit's gifts to us, by which we see better, see more clearly to what we are being called for? Praise and Thanksgiving to all that is Holy.

The lavish hand spreads the table for all in plain sight, for rich for poor, for all who believe or not. The promise 'fear not, I will be with you always, until the end of time', Jesus's own words to us. The baby who came at Christmas, the wonder of a gift from an Almighty God giv-

ing us a gift of His only Son, our Lord, to be a guide, brother, Saviour, and friend. To be our promise of salvation to all who believe in Him. That He was born, that He died—and was risen again. He, the Son of a Holy God, came with messages of redemption, and promises of 'Forever' with Him and the Father, and the Holy Spirit.

Year after year we are reminded of all this grace, let us be as constant and faithful, let our Thanks and Praise be heard and real, not only on our lips, but in our lives... So much was given, so much is given, day after day, year by year. Let us be aware from where all goodness and mercy daily attend us... in 'Thanksgiving', in 'Praise and Wonder' at such an Almighty love. Amen.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 16 » New beginnings

The anniversary of the birth of the Christ child must herald a new beginning. True democracy is *Government of the people, for the people, by the people, under God*. Jesus taught us to pray "Thy will be done on earth". With our usual devil-may-care attitude we have said to ourselves "That's got nothing to do with us; it's God's business". It is *not* God's business; it is *our* business.

What is to be our new beginning? We need to wake up and recognise that the Bible is full of allegories from which we should be learning important truths about life on earth, rather than life in heaven when we have escaped from all the hard work with which we think we are plagued on earth. The Bible begins with new beginnings: the stories of Creation. The second Creation story is that of Adam and Eve, the older of the two. What does it tell us in allegory?

Ruining the Garden of Eden

In the first place, it tells us that God provided everything that could make for an easy life for his new creation. Adam and Eve had only to go out and pick what they needed from God's bounty. The Garden of Eden was a Paradise. But God did not want his new creation to be merely puppets on His strings; He gave human beings *freewill* with, I am convinced, the intention that humans should learn to follow His plans by using their God-given intelligence. But man met woman, as intended by God for the continuation of humanity, and things went wrong. Instead of creating permanent and happy unions for the benefit of the children to be born, man became a hunter. Self-interest required something better than what was already good. The Bible seems to indicate that the first humans were vegetarians, but mankind wanted to follow the animals which hunt-

ed and killed their prey. Human appetite became insatiable and it spread from food to personal possessions. The woman left at home to look after the children also had to look after her own self-interests and, in order to feed herself and her family, became a gatherer. They were still living in the Garden of Eden, but didn't know it. They put so many obstacles in the way that they did not recognise that Eden was still all around them; they had put themselves out of the Garden!

Look at the result! Today we are ruining the Garden in which God has placed us. We have raped the earth of its riches, producing disastrous results. We have fought each other in our own self-interests giving rise to mutual distrust, and now we are slowly killing ourselves by having ignored our God-given purpose (according to the Bible) of caring for the Earth. It is time for a new beginning.

Father Earth

There's a two million year old man no one knows.
They cut into his rivers, peeled wide pieces of hide from his legs,
Left scorch marks on his buttocks.

He did not cry out.

No matter what they did, he held firm.
Now he raises his stabbed hands and whispers
That we can heal him yet.

We begin the bandages, the rolls of gauze,
The unguents, the gut, the needle, the grafts.

We slowly, carefully
Turn his body face up.

And under him
His lifelong lover, the old woman
Is perfect and unmarked.

He has lain upon his two million year old woman
All this time protecting her

With his old back, his old, scarred back,
And the soil beneath her
Is black with their tears.

Clarissa Pinkola Estes PhD

Time is running out

Time is running out to donate to the 2007 Anglican Journal Appeal. If you have already donated, the Journal and Niagara Anglican thank you. Your donation will be split evenly by the Journal and Niagara Anglican. You may send your contribution to the Anglican Journal Appeal, 80 Hayden St., Toronto ON, M4Y 3G2 or donate online by following the "Donate Now" link at www.anglicanjournal.com. You will be issued an income tax receipt immediately by email.

Since its inception in 1994, the Appeal has raised more than \$5 million for the ministry of the Anglican Journal and its publishing partners, the diocesan newspapers.



BOOK REVIEW » *The Spirituality of Narnia*

Bowen and Lewis help us find Jesus' other name

JAN MULLALLY
ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST, HAMILTON

John Bowen, Wycliffe professor and regular contributor to the Niagara Anglican, and C. S. Lewis, author of the Chronicles of Narnia, have more in common than the former would readily admit. You might even say they share a common story.

Both Oxford-educated professors, Bowen and Lewis were born and raised in the Anglican church, albeit almost 50 years apart in different countries. And yet, neither came to know Jesus until many years post-baptism: Bowen mentored by a high school teacher and Lewis by J. R. R. Tolkien.

Living in a world increasingly suspicious of all things religious, both men developed a remarkable passion (and talent) for evangelism. Of course, both understood that many evangelists come off as either pushy, obnoxious academics or as ranting self-absorbed lunatics. As such, they both feel, we often need to unlearn our religion in order to see Christ and His church in a new light.

One of Lewis' many solutions to this problem was to write *The Chronicles of Narnia*, a series of 7 children's books written between 1939 and 1956 that takes us to the magical world of Narnia, an "alternate dimension" if you will, populated by talking animals and ultimately ruled by (and saved by) its creator, Aslan the lion. In 2005, Disney produced *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, based on the first of these books, and it is set to release *Prince Caspian*, (written second by Lewis but chronologically fourth if you live in Narnia) in 2008.

According to Bowen, "Lewis' intention is... that our experience of Aslan in Narnia should give us a fresh understanding of who Jesus really was and is." In fact, Bowen guides us to this fresh understanding in his own new book, *The Spirituality of Narnia: The Deeper Magic of C. S. Lewis*. In it, he (rather successfully) attempts to "dissect" the Narnia stories—to show the Story that underlies the stories... with the hope of deepening [our] delight in them.

Bowen has spent the greater part of the last 40 years studying, teaching and even preaching Lewis' work. You might say he has a vacation home in Narnia. He even seems to have mastered its local dialect. Consider the following words:

Supposal (noun)—Bowen and Lewis insist adamantly that the world of Narnia is not an allegory of our world, but rather a supposal, in which we "suppose" our Creator created a parallel world to ours and we "suppose" that it too needs rescuing.

Undragoned (adj) - Bowen shows how Lewis' word describes the state of one who has been changed into a dragon but whose scales have been peeled away by the Creator to reveal one's underlying humanity.

Watchful Dragons (noun, pl.): Highly skilled evangelists like Lewis and Bowen evade the flaming breath of these "instincts that guard us

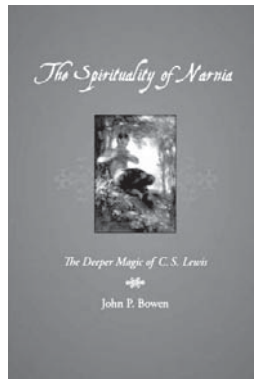
against anything that smacks of traditional religiosity" ...and that "wake at the sounds of anything 'churchy' and drive back any who dare to approach us with religious language or ideas."

In *Spirituality*, Bowen accomplishes three things. First, he introduces us to Big Stories, the stories that shape our beliefs about the world and our place in it. He claims that all such Big Stories propose answers to a certain five questions. Then, he shows how the residents of Narnia would answer those questions. Finally, he juxtaposes our world with Narnia in a way that causes us to sit up and take new notice of Aslan—er... Jesus—working in our own lives. The brilliance of Bowen's narrative, though, is that he accomplishes these three purposes simultaneously.

For example, one of these five questions that Bowen claims a Big Story or worldview must address is: what is wrong with the world? Of course, popular culture might phrase this differently. Why do bad things happen to good people? Why would a loving God create a world with such suffering in it? I imagine most Westerners would still know that Christians answer this question with a Story about a serpent, a woman and a fruit. I'm less sure they can recognize the serpents and fruits they come across every day. Bowen helps in this regard, by showing us some of the choices made in Narnia and their consequences. Edmund chooses to accept Turkish Delight from the White Witch. Uncle Andrew devotes his time to conducting a "great experiment." Each creates havoc in the lives of others, because, as Bowen shows, each "says 'No' to God" by taking "an attitude of independence from the Creator." Since, as you recall, we are "supposing" the same Creator made both our world, and Narnia, Bowen subtly challenges us to look for such choices in our own lives.

Since the narrative in *Spirituality* comes at us in three different directions, though, you only need to be familiar with one of the three to follow along. For example, I remember a student of mine, Adam, who loved Narnia from adolescence through to university, but being largely skeptical of churches—or having exceptionally gifted watchful dragons working for him—never knew Aslan's name in this world. For someone like Adam, Bowen's book might be the first step towards undragonizing.

However, *Spirituality* also has a lot to offer someone who knows quite a bit about the Christian Story but who doesn't know Jesus' name in Narnia. I myself fell into this category. After renting Disney's version on DVD, I borrowed all seven *Chronicles of Narnia* from my school's library. I started reading them in Narnia's own chronology, meaning I started with *The Magician's Nephew*, which I thoroughly



enjoyed, and quickly moved onto *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*. I simply didn't enjoy the second as much as the first, and stopped reading. Thanks to Bowen, I learned that the order in which Lewis published *The Chronicles* is not the order in which they occurred in Narnian time. In fact, *The Magician's Nephew* was the sixth to be published, and, as Bowen points out, "it is left to the later books to develop more spiritual subtlety and psychological insight." It's that very subtlety and insight that Bowen explores so thoroughly that has convinced me to read the remaining five *Chronicles*.

That being said, you'd better be the sort of person who finds the journey that much more enjoyable when the destination is clear, which is a fancy way of saying that Bowen does give away the endings of both *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* and *The Last Battle*, and, as such, the entire *Chronicles of Narnia* series. Of course, since you already know the series is an allegory—wait—supposal for the Christian worldview, then the ending should be fairly predictable anyway.

It is entirely possible that anyone other than John Bowen writing about a series of books by anyone other than C. S. Lewis might run the risk of producing, in effect, a one-hundred-and-forty-three page literary essay, an idea about as exciting as Bowen and Lewis found their boyhood churches. Bowen avoids this by maintaining a very conversational, almost "C. S. Lewis style" tone throughout. He writes entirely in first person, making the entire book feel like a guided tour of another country. And, like all good tour guides, John not only loves Narnia, but knows every inch of its geography, every resident in every locale and has even found a route to Aslan here in our world. And so, if you already love Narnia and would like to further explore its spirituality, or, conversely, if you already love Jesus but have never been to Narnia, let John Bowen take you there.

.....
The Spirituality of Narnia: The Deeper Magic of C. S. Lewis is available from amazon.ca.

Why do we still keep Christmas?

MICHAEL BURSLEM
ST. GEORGE'S, GUELPH

Those of us a certain age may recall the BBC radio program, ITMA—It's That Man Again—that man being Tommy Handley, ably assisted by his comic crew, Colonel Chinstrap—"When I was in Poona..."—"I don't mind if I do"—Mrs. Mop—"Can I dy' yer now, sir"—Miss. Monalot—"sob, sob) It's bein' so cheerful (sob, sob) that keep's me goin'" and others They kept us in stitches during the darkest days of the war. But now, listening to it by tape I can barely raise a smile. How could we possibly laugh at anything so inane and stupid?

In much the same way, when I heard the Christmas story as a boy in the church, or out singing carols in the village—living in the rectory as one of six boys we had certain responsibilities to take the message of Christmas to everyone by means of caroling, and I thoroughly enjoyed it—I was profoundly stirred in my heart by the wonder and awe of the Christmas story. But now, even when I hear carols about the babe in the manger, shepherds watching their flocks in the hills at night, of wise men coming from afar, it all sounds so ho-hum. I still love to celebrate Christmas, but more for its rich food and the warm, fuzzy feeling. I sometimes try to induce the awe by contemplating the creator of this vast universe pitching his tent in this insignificant planet, but that only stimulates my mind, not my heart.

We thought only Christians could be saved

What spoiled it, I think, was learning that the angels' message bringing joy to all people was hi-jacked by the faith squelching teaching of the church; that God was only a Christian. It substituted the good news about Jesus with bad news of religion. Since we lived in Iran before the war I've always suspected that God had something more for all people. Our teen-age house boy died suddenly of an insect or snake bite, and my mother assured us that we would see him again in heaven. But how could we, we learned later, if he wasn't a Christian?

That idea had been reinforced by every thing I've heard, or read; until this year, when I encountered Robert Farrar Capon. Capon dares to say that the good news of salvation is for everybody, not just for those who think they are saved. I recently reviewed his *Fingerprints of God*, and now I've read *Kingdom, Grace, Judgment*, a composite of three books, *Parables of the Kingdom*, *Parables of Grace*, and *Parables of Judgment*. It's a mammoth work, with the feel that they're transcripts of Capon's lectures on all Jesus' parables, spoken and acted out. He's outrageously funny, but dead serious. His central theme is that God's grace is catholic or universal; it's showered on everybody alike, orthodox and unorthodox, believers and unbelievers; all are invited to the party, the resurrected life, now. Now's

eternity, not some time in the future. That grace is procured by Christ's death and resurrection. But only those who are 'last, least, littlest, lost and dead' can really enjoy the party. The rest make excuses not to attend.

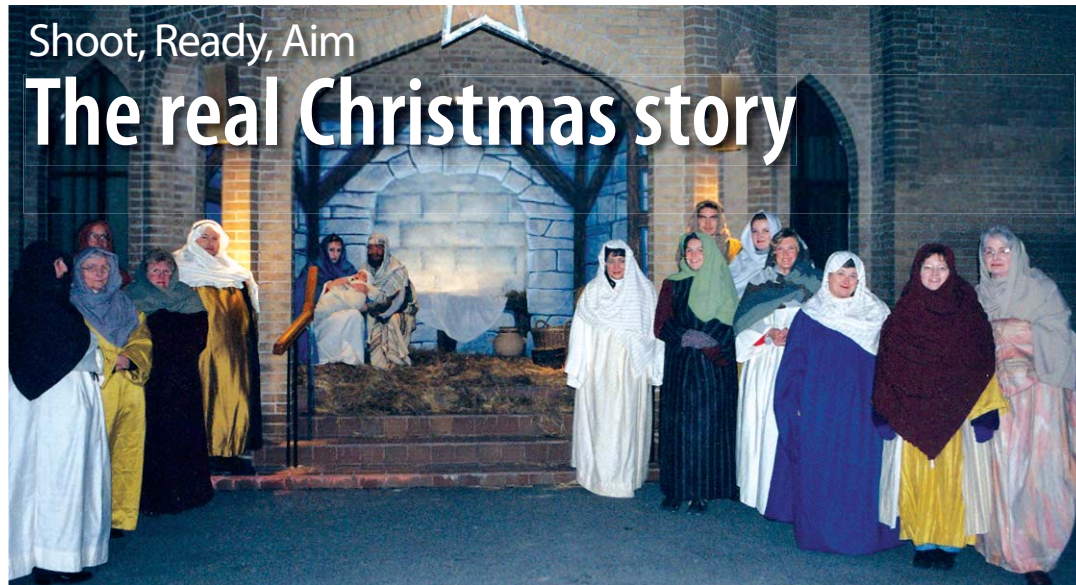
God is infinitely merciful

God can only raise those to resurrect life who are already dead. Actually we're all dead, but some of us don't know it yet, not until we're really dead. The saddest thing is that we all reject God's grace. Capon writes: "Free grace, dying love, and unqualified acceptance might as well be a fifteen-foot crocodile, the way we respond to it: all our protestations to the contrary, we will sooner accept a God we will be fed to than one we will be fed by." That's when we receive his judgment, and go to hell, not accepting his free gift of grace. But it's a judgment by mercy, not anger; he's not a vengeful God. He uses left-handed justice, of weakness, rather than the right-handed justice we prefer, of strength, reeking vengeance on all his, and our, enemies. This Capon proves in every one of the parables, even the parables of the wheat and tares and Dives and Lazarus.

God, you see, doesn't keep any score of our sin; he has even done away with all the score cards by Jesus' dying on the cross. We, however, love to keep scores on everyone who doesn't meet our standard of righteousness. Capon asks what if the publican, in the parable of the Pharisee and the Publican, doesn't clean up his act after being justified by God. We would expect him the following week on returning to the synagogue, to pray just as the Pharisee had done the previous week. But Capon insists that he would still be justified more than the Pharisee, even though he doesn't meet all our expectations. We might allow him to go to the synagogue three times; three strikes and you're out, we say, but God doesn't work that way. He's infinitely more merciful than we are.

Keeping his birthday every day!

This God fills me with goose bumps. I get excited about a God who was in Jesus Christ through whom he has reconciled now, not will reconcile, the whole world to himself; in which the losers of this world are the real winners. But not even they, the 'last, least, littlest, lost and dead' will see their resurrection, but only death. "Death, you see," Capon writes, "is absolutely all of the resurrection we can now know. The rest is faith." It's all about faith in that one man Jesus, not Tommy Handley, or anyone whom the world approves. What could be a greater sign of left-handed weakness than to be born in a crude stable and to die on a rough cross? This left-handedness of God replenishes me with the childlike wonder and awe I had lost. That's why from now on I'll strive to keep Christmas each day, not only on December 25, as Jesus invites everyone to enjoy his party.



HOLLIS HISCOCK
RETIRED PRIEST - BURLINGTON

SHOOT - The photograph

When I arrived at St. John's York Mills Parish, Toronto in 1990, I decided that the Church property was an excellent location for a dramatic presentation of the Christmas Story.

I also concluded that Christians in the multicultural milieu of Ontario needed a creative way to explain the real meaning and story of the Birth of Jesus Christ to their friends and neighbours from other religions and nations.

Seven years would elapse before our daughter Allison Lynn and I would finally pen the script to paper.

In December 1997 I walked through the Churchyard, stopping at each of the eight stages, where actors portrayed the historical events surrounding the coming of the Messiah, which culminated in a stable where two young parents celebrated the birth of their son. Tears of joy and thanksgiving, chilled by the early winter frigid temperature, flowed down my smiling face.

Since then, over 5,000 visitors have walked through the live performances of the Real Christmas story, and over 100,000 viewed the broadcast on Vision Television across Canada. We also distributed nearly 500 copies of the video. A long run for any theatrical show.

The photo was taken at the climax of the show where the choir, portraying citizens of Bethlehem,

witnessed the Birth of the Christ Child, and sang praises to our loving God.

READY - Words behind the photo

Let me be your tour guide as we walk through 'The Real Christmas Story' on a clear cold December Ontario evening.

Scene One: The narrator welcomes us to a journey unlike any other and reminds us that 'on the quietest of nights, in the most unlikely of places, a tiny baby is born.'

Scene Two: Isaiah, 800 years before the birth of Jesus, predicts a Child to be called Mighty God and Prince of Peace will be born to a young woman, who will name Him EMMANUEL or 'God with us' (Isaiah 9:2-7).

Scene Three: We travel 200 years through time and meet another Old Testament prophet Jeremiah, who was also getting ready for the coming of the Messiah or 'Lord of Righteousness' (Jeremiah 23:5-6).

Scene Four: After journeying another 600 years, we drop in on a rehearsal. Angels have been practicing for thousands of years to proclaim the Messiah's birth with the song, 'Glory to God in the highest, and peace and goodwill to all God's people' (Luke 2: 8-20).

Scene Five: The lowest of the least of society—the shepherds—are scared and excited because they were visited by angels, who told them that the Messiah (Jesus)

would be born in a small town nearby. They encourage us to go with them to see what had happened (Luke 2: 8-20).

Scene Six: We chance upon three strange astrologers who have followed a certain star for approximately two years, and now have 'lost it'. Fortunately, it reappeared. It led them to the Christ Child where they could deliver their presents... gold (a gift for a king), frankincense (a gift for a priest) and myrrh (a gift for one who is to die). They, too, invite us to follow them (Matthew 2: 1-12).

Scene Seven: We catch up with a young Mary and Joseph who have been travelling from Nazareth to Bethlehem to be registered in the census ordered by the government. They tell us how God's angels appeared to them and reassured them that Mary was carrying God's child and Joseph was chosen as His earthly father (Matthew 1: 18-25, Luke 1: 26-38 and Luke 2: 1-7).

Scene Eight: We arrive in Bethlehem and are enthusiastically welcomed by villagers who usher us to a stable where a mother and father are caring for their new born baby. One man explains that 'God is the light of the world which shone through ages past and guides people today and into the future'. As people sing softly, a woman's voice proclaims, 'God has become a human being and dwells among us. Let us celebrate this holiest of miracles.'

Gazing at the tiny child in the manger, we recall the narrator's words at the beginning of the walk-through. He said, 'the prophets predicted that the Saviour would be born to save us from sin and bring us to eternal life (Matthew 1: 18-25 and Luke 2: 1-7). That is the real message of Christmas.

AIM - Questions and actions for you

■ Before Christmas, give yourself a REAL CHRISTMAS STORY present. Either alone or with family and friends, gather in your warmest room, sit in comfortable chairs, sip on a favourite beverage and read aloud the real Christmas Story from the Bible. Begin with the Old Testament prophets, Isaiah (Isaiah 9:2-7) and Jeremiah (Jeremiah 23:5-6). Then move to the Gospels of Matthew and Luke as they describe the birth of Jesus Christ (Luke 1:26-38, Luke 2: 1-7, Matthew 1: 18-25, Luke 2: 8-20, Matthew 2: 1-12).

■ Talk and think about the true meaning of Christmas in your own lives, and what you are doing to celebrate the Birth of our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

■ Hollis would appreciate your feedback on this series. Contact him at hollism@hotmail.com

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The Reverend Hollis Hiscock, a retired priest, lives in Burlington. He is available to do multimedia presentations on spirituality, the Bible and the Christian Faith.

The Niagara Anglican

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The Diocese of Niagara

The Diocese lies at the western end of Lake Ontario, and is defined roughly by the Niagara Escarpment from the Niagara River in the east to the Dundas Valley in the West and north to Shelburne, Mt. Forest and Orangeville.

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PEOPLE IN THE NEWS

■ The Reverend Aaron Orear and The Reverend Paul Maynard will be ordained to the priesthood along with Ms. Nancy Rowe, who will be ordained to the diaconate, at the Christ's Church Cathedral on December 9 at 4:00 PM.

■ The Reverend Robert Tilbury, retired from ministry in July, 1986, passed away October 23. The funeral service will be held from All Saints Church, Hamilton, on Saturday, November 3, at 2:00 PM. Please remember to keep members of the Tilbury family in your thoughts and prayers.

■ Congratulations to Don Porter

for all of his work at All Saints. The Welland Horticultural Society awarded All Saints a 3rd prize recognition for the garden and environs on Tuesday October 23.

■ Canon Michael Patterson, Diocesan Director of Evangelism, has accepted the position of Executive Archdeacon of Niagara to be effective January 30, 2008. Archdeacon Marion Vincett will remain at Synod Office until her retirement at the end of January.

■ The Reverend Paul Maynard has accepted the position of Assistant Curate at St. John's, Ancaster, effective November 1.

■ The Reverend Katherine Feher has been appointed Priest Associate, half time, at Church of the Nativity, Hamilton, effective November 7.

■ Congratulations to Delbert and Elizabeth Reed, faithful members of St. Mark's, Orangeville, who will celebrate their 65th Wedding Anniversary on December 24.

■ Sympathy is extended to the family of Harvey Dewhurst, O.N., a long time and faithful member of St. Alban's, Acton and St. Alban's, Glen Williams. Mr. Dewhurst passed away on October 1. Funeral service was held from St. Alban's, Acton on October 5.

■ The Reverend Carole Langlotz was issued a bishop's permission as honorary assistant at St. John's, Burlington, under the direction of the interim pastor.

■ The Reverend Maria Nightingale was issued a bishop's permission as honorary assistant at St. Elizabeth's Church, Burlington, under the direction of the rector.

■ Canon Laurie Duby was issued a bishop's permission as honorary assistant at Christ Church, Flamborough, under the direction of the rector.

EVENTS

Penny Sale

Saint Luke, Hamilton
The best little penny sale in the North End is happening in the parish hall.
December 1, 10:00 AM - 3:00 PM

Niagara-on-the-Lake Wine Tour and Tasting

St. James and St. Brendan, Port Colborne
The wine tour is free. We will be going to Betty's to eat following this event. Please sign up in the Narthex.
Cost: \$10.00 per person (if tasting wine)
December 1, 10:00 AM

Christmas Bazaar

St. George's, Niagara-on-the-Lake
Mixed gift baskets, various crafts, varied jams, chicken pies, bake table, deli, books, candy sale, children's items, and lunch.
Cost: \$7.00 per person
December 1, 11:00 AM - 1:30 PM

Canadian Orpheus Male Choir in Concert

St. George's, St. Catharines
Fundraiser for St. George's Anglican Church, 83 Church Street, St. Catharines. View their website at www.comc.ca for their accomplishments and talents. Tickets can be obtained from church office. For more information call 905-682-9232 or send an email to stgeorgechurch@bellnet.ca.
Cost: \$15.00 per adults, \$10.00 per child
December 1, 7:00 PM

Craft Show

St. Luke, Smithville
Come and enjoy our annual Craft Show, featuring crafts, knitting, baking, jewellery, chocolate, and local vendors.
December 1, 9:00 AM - 2:00 PM

Christmas Market

St. Simon's, Oakville
Come one, come all to our Christmas Market. Drop your school-aged children off at our Craft Corner and shop without any distractions. We have baked goods, hostess gifts,

teacher gifts, Christmas decorations and much, much more. Once your shopping is done, sit and relax at our café and enjoy a light lunch. For more information, please contact us by calling 905-845-8351 or sending an email to admin.stsimons@bellnet.ca.
December 1, 2007 - 9:00 AM - 2:00 PM

St. Nick's Shopping Day

St. Paul's, Fort Erie
St. Nick's Shopping provides an opportunity for children to make three Christmas purchases in a relaxed and happy atmosphere. Assisted by 'Elves' each child's gifts are given special attention, wrapping and tagging. This all day event is greatly anticipated by all. Mark your calendars.
December 1

Hetherington and Deans Memorial Service

Holy Trinity (Chippawa), Niagara Falls
Memorial service for all who have lost loved ones and for whom Christmas is difficult. Reception following.
December 2, 2007 - 7:00 PM

Kids Only Shopping Day

St. John the Evangelist, Winona
This is shopping for kids only. They do their shopping for their friends and family. Everything is wrapped while Mom or Dad enjoy a cup of coffee.
December 2, 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Raise the Roof

Church of the Ascension, Hamilton
This is the fourth of our series of Fun/Fund Raisers to help pay for our new roof. A fabulous meal including ham and pineapple and sweet and sour meatballs will be served. There will also be raffle tickets and a cash bar for wine and beer. Please join us, it's a good cause. You could win stuff. You'll have a great meal. There will be great conversation. You'll have a great time!
Cost: \$15.00 per person
December 7, 2007 - 5:30 p.m.

Youth Dance

St. David's, Welland
Dances are held every other Friday for those in grades 5-8. Pizza and pop are available.
Cost: \$5.00 per person
December 7, 7:00 PM - 10:00 PM

Ladies Morning Out

St. James and St. Brendan, Port Colborne
Hot and cold buffet style breakfast at Portal Village in the 'Pine Room'.
Cost: \$6.00 per person
December 8, 9:30 AM

Corporate Breakfast

Saint Luke, Hamilton
Don't mind the stuffy name. It's just all of us great fun folks at Saint Luke's setting down for a wonderful feeding after the Sunday Mass at the start of Advent. It really is a brunch and you are asked to bring your favourite nosh to share with us all. Happy times!
Cost: Optional donations
December 9, after 9:30 mass

A Christmas Carole

St. Matthew on-the-Plains, Burlington
A performance of A Christmas Carole featuring Bishop Ralph Spence as Scrooge! Don't miss this one!
December 13

Bake Sale

St. Cuthbert's, Oakville
Proceeds donated towards our sponsorship of the Thursday evening suppers which we host at Kerr Street Ministries.
December 15, 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Roadshow Christmas Concert

Transfiguration, St. Catharines
5th annual concert put on to raise funds for non-profit organizations outside the parish. A fun and informal evening of wonderful music by the roadshow band, and a wine and cheese reception during the concert. Please come and enjoy.

Cost: \$10 per person
December 16, 7:00 PM

Carols on the Green

St. John the Evangelist, Niagara Falls
Join us as we sing the Christmas story carols under the stars. Hot chocolate provided. Free donkey and pony rides for the kids. All are welcome.
December 22, 6:00 PM

Advent/Christmas Lessons and Carols Service

St. Cuthbert's, Oakville
Join us for a special service of Lessons and Carols to celebrate the season. Music from our Senior and Junior Choirs under the direction of Bruce DuPlessis.
December 23, 10:00 AM

Christmas Eve Mass

St. Cuthbert's, Oakville
Join us for our traditional and late night candle light service of the Eucharist with music led by the Senior Choir.
December 24, 9:30 PM

Children's Christmas Eve Eucharist

St. Cuthbert's, Oakville
Join us for our very popular Christmas Eve service designed with children and families in mind. Storytelling, favourite carols, and a child-friendly communion service. All are welcome!
December 24, 4:30 PM - 5:30 PM

Christmas Day Eucharist

St. Cuthbert's, Oakville
Join us for a quiet and cozy service to celebrate the morning of our Lord's birth. Said Eucharist with hymns.
December 25, 10:00 AM

St. James Gaudy

St. James, Dundas
Join us for a festive night of Celtic music by the Allison Lupton Band and dinner. Contact the parish office for more information.
December 30, 5:00 PM

Niagara Youth Conference 2007



Participant at the recent Leaders Training Event in Youth Ministry, Looking Forward. This provincial training event attracted participants from the Diocese of Niagara, Toronto, Huron, and Ottawa. The theme of the weekend was "The Walls Fall Down!", integrating practical youth ministry and the call to justice.