



Niagara Anglican

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

Now is the time



MICHAEL PATTERSON
DIRECTOR OF EVANGELISM

The Diocese of Niagara is on the cusp of one of the most important decisions it has faced in a generation. Within days of this newspaper being published, we will elect a Bishop for our diocese who will be confronted by some of the most challenging and difficult issues that he/she has ever encountered in their professional lifetime.

The spiritual guidance and leadership that our new Bishop will bring will have implications, not only for our diocese, but certainly for the National Church and potentially for the world wide Anglican communion. To, once again, quote Loren Mead of the Alban Institute, "The issues facing the Christian Church are as great as at any time in its history; the challenges we face today will make the Reformation of the 16th century look like a ripple in a pond!" These are critical days

and we, corporately, have a critical decision to make.

Right person at the right time

Bishop Ralph has effectively guided us through some fairly turbulent waters in recent years. He has lovingly and pastorally journeyed with parishes whose ministries had come to an end. He has cared for and supported his clergy and laity who were in times of crisis in their lives. He has ensured he was always available to the people of the diocese no matter how angry some of them were. He has borne the scars of many who have believed he was leading the diocese in the wrong direction and done so with grace, integrity and that ever present Spence-ian humour. He has encouraged us to debate, dialogue and struggle with the issue of the blessing of same sex unions, probably more than any other diocese in the country. And he felt his own personal agony when he refused to give his consent to an overwhelming majority of those voting in favour of blessing of same sex unions at Diocesan Synod 2004. He was and remains the right person for our diocese at this time in its history.

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PHOTO: VIANNEY (SAM) CARRIERE, GENERAL SYNOD COMMUNICATIONS

Bishop Spence and Dr. Williams, Archbishop of Canterbury reflect at Niagara Falls during the House of Bishop's retreat.

Garden of Eden or Kitchen of Paradise?



NISSA BASBAUC
TRANSFIGURATION, ST. CATHARINES

If Adam and Eve's first face-off with God had been in a kitchen instead of a garden, I might be convinced to become a biblical literalist. As it stands now, the fact that paradise is described as trees and flowers rather than cake and ice cream makes the story just too unbelievable for me!

In my years as a priest, there have been a couple of scriptural stories that consistently have caused many of my parishioners' dismay and alarm; primarily, the Parable of the Prodigal Son and the Parable of the Vineyard. Apparently, the message in these stories is patently unfair. True, but how many times did one or the other of my parents tell me, "No one ever said life was fair. Get used to it!"

For me, unlike for these parishioners, the alarm bells are set off when summertime rolls around and the Sunday gospels are packed full of those wretched "garden" stories. You know the ones: the parable of the mustard seed and the parable of the sower, to name just a couple. I say, "Bring on the unfairness of the prodigal any day of the week. Just don't make me read those agricultural stories Jesus so loved to tell!" I wonder if any of you have any inkling how hard it is to be an Anglican cleric who detests gardening? Have you any idea of the profound impact our English cultural and religious heritage, filled as it is with bucolic images of agricultural bliss, has on someone whose only response to the feel of rich, dark dirt beneath her fingernails is an obsessive compulsive need to scrub her hands raw to rid them of such dirt?

For so many years, reading those garden parables left me feeling guilty because I would rather have done almost anything other than dig weeds and plant flowers. Even though there was nothing about tending gardens in my ordination vows, somehow I couldn't

help but feel that to be an Anglican priest, I needed to learn to love all that dirt! I can't tell you the number of vegetable patches I have planted over the years as a means of overcoming my distaste for gardening. At least if there were vegetables, I surmised, I could use these to great advantage in the kitchen, my much-preferred choice of environment. Yet, even those vegetable gardens had a way of becoming the enemy, rarely producing enough for much more than the odd salad or two.

When Robin and I moved to St. Catharines, we chose the house we did for a number of reasons, not least of which was the amazing garden it had in the backyard. Recognizing that neither one of us liked to spend our free time digging in the dirt, we thought discretion would be the better of valour; so we bought a property that was already landscaped. It took us about three summers to destroy the magnificence of the landscape that had been created by the previous owners. It was about two additional

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Worship from the mouths of moms

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

We have a couple of small groups that meet here at St. Jude's comprised of that all-important demographic—parents in the process of raising children. These groups have emerged from our baptism classes as a way for people—to about the same age and stage of life—to get together once a month and talk about life, politics, religion, families, jobs, faith... our conversation winds up on all kinds of interesting tangents.

A face-value assessment

At one recent meeting, we drifted into talk about Sunday worship. Several of the parents were comparing notes about how difficult it is to get to church with young chil-

dren who fall between the ages of babe-in-arms and Sunday-school-ready. "And then when I discover it's communion," one person said, "I just about give up. Ten more minutes on top of the rest of the service to keep the kids under control while everyone lines up to get their wafer."

I was, I admit, taken aback by the comment, for a variety of reasons. First of all, every Sunday is communion, so "just about giving up" would be the norm of how this person was encountering our worship. But more than that, I've always assumed that communion would be the most freeing part of the service for anyone, a time where we can lose all of the words

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140th Anniversary at All Saints, Erin

KATHRYN DANCEY
ANNIVERSARY COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN

The 140th Anniversary of the building of All Saints Church provides us with an opportunity to honour the past, encourage the present, and prepare for the future. It is a time of celebration and renewal, a time to thank God for those who have come before, those who are with us today, and those who are yet to come.

It is shaping up to be a very meaningful year as we engage in a number of projects and plan events which will reflect on and give thanks for the wonderful legacy of former parishioners, celebrate the current ministries happening at All Saints, and look to the future with faith and optimism.

We began the celebration with an Epiphany breakfast which drew

rent members, former parishioners and clergy, alumni members of the choir, and friends of All Saints joined us for Homecoming Sunday services (8:30 and 10:30 am). Former clergy were invited to robe and participate in the services, and the choir stalls were filled with present and past members. Some of the descendants of the original founders of All Saints were with us on that day, including Mrs. Pat Clarke, whose antecedent gave the ground on which the Church is built. Refreshments following both services provided a time for sharing many reminiscences.

Between the two services there was a blessing of a red oak tree, planted in celebration of the ministry of Canon Ian McGibbon. It is fitting that we should remember one who did so much for All Saints Church

It is a time of celebration and renewal, a time to thank God for those who have come before, those who are with us today, and those who are yet to come.

together the 8:30 and 10:30 congregations. Wonderful food, great conversation, topped off by the choir singing the especially composed anniversary song "This Church of Ours," combined to make this a happy introduction to our anniversary year.

As one of our 140th Anniversary projects, the people of All Saints have been inspired to create a beautiful garden on the land behind the Church. The garden will celebrate the lives and ministries of many people who have had a connection with All Saints over the years. This will be a garden that can be shared by the community, a place of peace and quiet, a place to pause and refresh, a place to rest while sitting on a bench, a place to reflect and offer a personal prayer.

Our many thanks go to Hermann Topolsek who, with great creative artistry and imagination, has drawn the design for the garden. The plan includes walkways, benches surrounding the central water feature, and attractive plantings of varieties of flowers, shrubs and trees.

It was a nice surprise to discover that Doors Open Ontario, had chosen All Saints Church to be on their tour list this year (May 5 and 6). Doors Open Ontario is a province-wide celebration of community heritage, designed to create access, awareness and excitement about our heritage. Seizing this opportunity to share our history, the Church was opened and staffed with welcoming parishioners. On Sunday, the services were conducted from the 1959 Book of Common Prayer (men only in leadership roles—what a long way we have come since then!)

An exciting weekend was planned for the end of May. Cur-

and for the Niagara Diocese.

It was with great pleasure that on Wednesday, May 30 we once again welcomed back to All Saints the famous Three Cantors and Angus Sinclair. Both members of the congregation and the community listened to their outstanding performance of traditional church music, contemporary anthems, spirituals and Broadway hits, wit and humour.

Throughout the warm months, work will continue on the 140th Anniversary Garden project. On September 23 we will welcome back our former rector, The Ven. Marion Vincett, who will celebrate with us in worship and then dedicate the garden. On this day, the Sunday School children will plant 140 daffodil bulbs, a statement of faith in the strong ministries which will flow from and through All Saints for generations to come.

We feel especially privileged that on All Saints Day, November 4, The Right Reverend Ralph Spence will be at All Saints to preside and preach on that day. There will be one service only at 10:00 am followed by a luncheon.

Our final planned 140th event will take place on December 1. A reading of "A Christmas Carol" by Charles Dickens—with CBC participation—will provide a great outreach opportunity for All Saints to share the Christmas spirit with the community of Erin. Along with the Advent and Christmas services and events, this will bring our wonderful Anniversary year to a conclusion.

It would give us great joy to share our 140th Anniversary year with as many as possible. This article is an open invitation to visit All Saints!

Earth Day at St. James' Dundas



Dennis Guy provided the homily at St. James' Dundas as an initiative of the social justice committee.

It is not often that someone can "talk trash" to a congregation, but that is exactly what Dennis Guy, head of the recycling program for the Public Works Department of the City of Hamilton did at St. James' Anglican Church in Dundas on Earth Day. Dennis explained the "ins and outs" of the recycling program related to the green boxes, blue boxes and the recent effects

of changes to the regular garbage component. Currently, the City of Hamilton is at about 40% of material being diverted from the landfill sites, a tremendous increase in the past five years; however, we are not done yet. The goal of the program is to make 65% of the material collected (by weight) diverted from traditional landfill sites to recycling programs.

Dennis also commented on some recent "incorrect press" about water bottles. It has been intimated that these plastic bottles (with tops) go to the dump, and are not recycled; this is not correct—they are punctured by a machine and recycled. However, it makes the process much more efficient if the water bottles (and others) are put out "topless".

A holiday with the Lord



The Reverends Dave Ponting from Christ Church, Brantford, Stuart Pike from St. Andrews, Grimsby and Joseph Asselin from St. Cuthbert's, Oakville, spent a week at the Society of St. John the Evangelist Anglican/Episcopal Monastery in Cambridge, Massachusetts. The retreat theme was, "Time for God" and was designed as a week of renewal for clergy. Much of the time was spent in silence while following the monastic cycle of prayer which comprises the

four Daily Offices and a Eucharist. Time was also available for private retreat direction with either Brother Geoffrey or Brother Eldridge who were the retreat facilitators. The monastery is about an hour and a half plane ride from Toronto or Buffalo (which is cheaper) and a wide range of retreats are available for both clergy and laity. Full information about the SSJE monastery and its retreats are available at www.ssje.org You are also free to give the Reverend Joseph Asselin a call at

St. Cuthbert's since he's an associate of the order (called the Fellowship of St John) and a regular retreatant at the monastery. He can be reached by phone at 905-844-6200 or by email at rector.stcuthbert@bellnet.ca. The retreat was called a "Holiday with the Lord" by Brother Geoffrey since vacations are those occasions when we dedicate a specific amount of time to be with our beloved. Retreats then are specially dedicated times to spend time in the Lord's presence.

Green church and seeker church



ALAN L. HAYES
THE ITINERANT CHURCHGOER

Although my Sunday morning itinerating usually takes me to churches in the diocese of Niagara, twice in April I ventured further afield. One week I worshipped at "the greenest church in Canada" and the next week at "the most influential church in America." My experiences there inspired me, and I'm sure that we Anglicans could adapt some of their ideas.

St. Gabe's, Toronto

First let me tell you about the green church, which on May 1 won this year's Green Toronto award for design. It's called St. Gabriel of the Sorrowsful Virgin Passionist Church, and it's on Sheppard Avenue east of Bayview. The Passionists are a religious order in the Roman Catholic Church, and they own and run this parish church.

The old St. Gabriel's was a boxy, poorly insulated, post-war church, and heating was its number one expense. So finally parish leaders tore it down and built a new church, using the proceeds from selling part of their land.

The new St. Gabriel's, which opened last fall, is interesting partly for its environmental science. It's

built so that it's comfortable inside in the summer without air-conditioning and in the winter without furnace heat. Its secret is its orientation to the sun, its building materials, its overhead design, and a natural air circulation that depends on convection generated by differential temperatures in the room. A garden of indigenous vegetation, to the south of the building, is irrigated entirely from rain water stored in cisterns. Most parking is underground, in order to minimize the artificial footprint at ground level. There's preferential parking for car pools and hybrid vehicles.

But I was more interested in the theology than the science. The design of St. Gabriel's was inspired by a Passionist eco-theologian named Thomas Berry. One of his followers, Stephen Dunn, has retired from teaching at the Toronto School of Theology and serves at St. Gabriel's.

Creation and scripture

Berry teaches that the natural creation is as much a source of revelation of God's providential and redeeming love as Scripture. So the church is designed to connect Scripture and creation. It does this by integrating a straight-line liturgical axis extending from the tabernacle at the front of the church, through the altar, the ambo, the baptismal font, and the southern glassed wall, into the garden that I just mentioned. If you've followed this, you'll realize that the church faces north, not the traditional east. At St. Gabriel's, creation trumps tradition.

The congregation sits collegiate-style facing each other along this axis. To keep the focus on the liturgical axis with its reminders of creation, word, and sacrament, all artificial visual distractions are minimized. There are no plaques, banners, paintings, stained glass windows, monuments, chapels, or memorabilia on the walls. There's only coloured sunlight streaming down from hidden skylights.

Oh, yes. Our guide acknowledged apologetically that they couldn't avoid putting stations of the cross on one wall. He evidently wasn't happy about it.

You'll find more at www.st-gabesparish.ca.

The worship I attended would have made a perfect Anglican service, although not many Anglican services attract 600 people of all ages and colours. I admired the confident, friendly, and reverent liturgical leadership, the fine choir, the eager congregational singing, and an elegant, wise, and moving sermon.

Saddleback

The following Sunday I attended Saddleback Community Church in southern Orange County, California, along with 20,000 other people. Its pastor, Rick Warren, wrote *The Purpose Driven Life*, which has been translated into over 50 languages, and was the best-selling book in the world in 2003, 2004, and 2005. He has helped train 350,000 pastors. He's also known for antagonizing conservative Christians. He's an AIDS and environmental activ-

ist and a buddy of Barack Obama, and he soft-pedals propositional doctrine and avoids moralizing. He takes no salary from his church, and reverse-tithes by giving away 90% of his income.

The church reminded me of Disneyland, which is half an hour's drive away. I don't mean this as a criticism, but as a slightly doubled-edged compliment. It's exciting, fun, family-oriented, very creatively conceived, and organized with astounding precision. You arrive at the Saddleback campus of 120 acres up on a hillside, and traffic control ministers guide you efficiently to a parking space. You can choose to worship at the main service, the traditional service, the loud-music service, or another service. Or if you prefer, you can take your children to the café and watch the service on TV. Greeters shake your hand when you arrive and say good-bye when you leave. There are lots of pavilions where you can buy books and sweatshirts, sign up for classes, get information, or join ministries.

The double-edged part is that the ethos is very southern California. I lived near Los Angeles for four years, and it's not my style.

At the main service, the worship lasted 75 minutes; 45 minutes of that was a totally engaging sermon preached with humour and passion and utter respect for non-Christians. We sang gospel music to an excellent band, and listened to African music from Rwandan drummers. There were two prayers, each less than a minute long. Television

screens at the front showed faces and actions, like the JumboTrons in the baseball parks.

You don't exactly meet anyone, but it's easy to join one of their small groups in over 40 cities.

Won over

I confessed to my friend John Bowen later that I had gone prepared to be critical, but the experience won me over. What's the matter with brilliant, challenging, and hopeful preaching in an exciting and non-judgmental atmosphere?

I guess if you want categories, St. Gabriel's is liberal catholic and Saddleback is protestant evangelical, but that makes them sound like opposites, which they aren't. What they share is an upbeat, world-affirming, prophetic, socially engaged, life-changing worship of Jesus Christ that has been creatively and effectively designed.

And they share something more than that. Sometimes I attend churches where people seem to be going through the liturgical motions without much conviction. At these two churches you meet the assurance that faith in Christ shows us a better world, and both are very, very clear about their theology and mission. And people respond.

We can learn something from their examples. Here's to an Anglicanism that can become more green, more evangelistic, more in love with God's world, more non-judgmental, more passionate, more on-message, and more spiritually inebriating!

Climb every mountain in faith

LYNNE CORFIELD
ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST, NIAGARA FALLS

I have been pretty blessed since birth with a strong mind and good instincts, which means that when an idea crosses my mind, I actually think that it is doable. For as long as I can remember I have had more ideas in a day, than could be carried out in a lifetime. So when I got the idea that I would like to climb Kilimanjaro, I also knew there was a way for me to accomplish this goal. I got the idea from watching a documentary one evening, and at that point I had not realized that there was a mountain that could be hiked, as opposed to climbed with ropes and axes! I thought, I am going to do that one day. I did not know how or when at that time, but I had a seed planted in my mind and there it would be cultivated. Over the next few years I saw the same documentary, and another one, and each time I thought—one of these days...

There is much in the news these days about 'The Secret' which is no big secret as this is the law of attraction. So within a five year period I met up with an old friend who was getting married and contacted me regarding the wedding...

and she was about to lead a group of people up Mt. Kilimanjaro. That was it, I was 'in'. And in 2003, along with a group of 14 other people I managed to climb all 19,350 feet of that mountain.

Beginning the journey

No sooner had we gotten back when we (my trainer and friend) had decided that the next trip would be to Base Camp Everest. This goal would have to wait though as I had already made plans to walk the El Camino in Spain in 2004 and she had plans to do the TransRockies mountain bike race in BC in 2005 and then the TransAlps in 2006. Everest would have to wait. That is okay because the seed was planted and the time would come. In early 2006 when seats had to be reserved and deposits paid there was political unrest in Nepal, and students were rioting in the streets of Kathmandu. The trip was in jeopardy again. We held our breath as we watched and waited, and then the time came to make a decision, the trip was on, the time had finally come. That time is now, May 2007! As I sit to write this article it is no wonder that my mind goes to this topic when

my bedroom is covered with equipment and clothing that will soon be in my suitcase, and by this time tomorrow I will be on the plane on the first leg of this journey that will bring our group to Kathmandu and the beginning of a 12 day trek to Base Camp.

Of course things like this don't just happen. It takes a lot of planning, training, saving, determination, sacrificing and sometimes patience to make a goal like this a reality... but most of all it begins with an idea. The whole time that Jesus was with the disciples he was planting seeds that would much later be cultivated and bear fruit. During the season of Easter we are hearing the stories of the early church and times when the disciples finally came into their own and got busy spreading the good news. It did not happen overnight though, did it? In the first account that we hear that the disciples are hiding behind locked doors, fearing for their lives, when Jesus comes amongst them and gives them the opportunity to see for themselves that he is risen and they receive the gift of the Holy Spirit so that they can begin their work. Thomas of

course, is missing and so he does not believe—not until he can see for himself, and so we get the story of 'doubting Thomas.'

This is the story of 'us' whenever we doubt ourselves. To my mind it seems that if you have the idea, then you have the choice to make it happen or to second guess your instincts and gifts, and say no, I can't. Even after three years of intense training and first hand witnessing of miracle after miracle, the disciples had doubts. They were full of fear and became immobile. Doubt and fear and inaction all seem to go hand in hand. It took a visit from the Risen Lord to put some courage back into the disciples and get them moving again, so what will it take to get us moving? Doubts are normal and happen to the best of us...it is how we move through our doubts that is important. Events of late have shown me and reinforce that we are who we are under adversity. We all have a mountain to climb, or an El Camino to walk in life.

Just do it

We all have ideas, but many of us follow them up with doubts and a thought process that starts to tell

ourselves that we can't do it. Nike understands this process very well and that is why they have their slogan, 'Just Do It!' A few weeks ago I had an amazing experience that was born of doubt. My daughter who is in the early stages of pregnancy invited me to accompany her to an ultrasound appointment because her hubby was out of town. At thirteen weeks she was having this test because, like many Mom's to be, she could not get the seeds of doubt out of her mind, 'is the baby okay?' Well, in these days of modern technology it is possible to look inside the womb and see what the baby is up to! Well, baby was busy waving arms, and getting comfortable, and then baby fell asleep! Oh my! I was standing in a tiny room, in a lab, in St. Catharines, looking into the womb of my daughter and seeing my first grandchild who seemed to be waving to us! All I could think of was Psalm 139, 'For you yourself created my inmost parts, you knit me together in my mother's womb. I will thank you because I am marvelously made; your works are wonderful, and I know it well...

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2007 Episcopal Election

The Reverend Canon Dr Alyson Barnett-Cowan



As Bishop, you will be the public face of our Church in Niagara. What will be the central focus of your message to the rest of society?

We are committed to persons and communities and to the care of all creation. Where there is injustice, inequitable access to resources, exploitation and greed, we will stand with the dispossessed and show our concern by our actions as well as our words. I would want any specific message to be based on policy of the Diocese and of the Anglican Church of Canada, developed together and drawing on expertise in the area being addressed. I would want to speak ecumenically, whenever possible, and, when appropriate, with leaders of other faith groups.

How do you see your spiritual life helping you to nurture and fulfill the role of Bishop?

I am sustained by the liturgy of the church and there should be lots of opportunity for that! I also need time alone with God, preferably in a quiet place, either a peaceful room or outdoors. It would be important for me to establish a rhythm of engagement and solitude, making

sure that there is time for contemplation, and for considered prayer and reflection before action. The Psalms, the Prophets and the life of Christ are the biblical sources I turn to most frequently, although I am often surprised by how frequently the lectionary will supply the word necessary for a particular moment. I see the work of the church in meetings and decisions as no less places of prayer than church buildings and would want to bring conscious focus on God to every gathering, particularly pausing before important decisions, and consciously holding each person in prayer. In times of crisis I am inevitably brought to the cross, where only God's profound love can bring us through and transform situations by the Spirit of Resurrection. I would hope that that mystery would always be central to my thinking and deciding.

As bishop, you are interviewed by the press and asked insights into how you will encourage youth involvement and growth in parish life. How would you respond?

I would be quite surprised and pleased if the media asked a bishop these questions! "We are trying to

meet the needs and aspirations of young people by first asking them what they need and hope for. That may well mean meeting them outside of churches.

Like all people, youth vary greatly and one program can't be made to fit all. I think that for young people, as for many people, church is attractive at particular moments—in times of community crisis, personal crisis, when searching for meaning or facing an ethical decision. We are trying to make our churches places where children feel at home and where they can participate in the life of the community—they are ministers too. If people find church meaningful as children, they are more likely to explore what it has to offer when they are older. Establishing relationships, offering beauty and challenge, and acting with integrity, strike me as the most important things that church can do, for young people and for all people. It is also important to invite people in—specifically, on a one to one basis, inviting them to bring their unique gifts to the community, whether that is music or other artistic expression, community activity, advocacy or prayer.

Churches grow because of a combination of factors—they do tend to grow when the community is growing, so demographics play a role. They grow because people in them are genuinely welcoming and interested in newcomers because of who they are, not because they can fill vacant positions. They grow when they welcome people with questions. They grow because there is spirit and energy and a sense of the holy. They grow because people are responding to exciting proclamation of the good news of Christ, and are being fed spiritually. In many places in this diocese there is the luxury of having a choice of church, and

parishes should delight in being different from each other, because people are different and have different spiritual needs. Growth, of course, can't be measured only in terms of people. If a community is growing in their faith and in their sense of mission and service, it can be a very healthy place, even if numbers are few.

What are some of the guiding principles with which you would lead, both within and outside the Diocese, such that a healthy diversity within our common fellowship may be maintained?

The church is God's church and it already has a Saviour. Everyone is loved by God and called by God; the church's business is to be the community of God's love, feeding, equipping, challenging and making room for God's transforming grace. Everyone has a ministry and it is part of God's mission of love. Church buildings and structures need to serve that mission. The Anglican Church is Episcopal led and Synodically governed, an important part of the Anglican Communion, and part of the Holy Catholic Church. The participation of laity and clergy in decision-making is one of our great gifts and I believe that while the church is imperfect and can and does make flawed decisions, it is also a community in which the Spirit speaks; we are more likely to hear the Spirit when we discern together. Transparency and openness should characterize our life, except in situations where personal confidentiality must be ensured. Don't be afraid to admit mistakes, and give thanks for good things that are happening.

At the House of Bishops, you are queried by a colleague about your strategic priorities for the diocese. How would you respond?

"As a coadjutor bishop new to the diocese, I am spending a lot of time with the leadership of the diocese to learn what strategic priorities are already in place and how they are serving the mission of the church. It is likely that a review will be necessary and programs and priorities evaluated in a consultative process."

I would think that some areas that probably need strategic thinking and planning would be stewardship, communication, building companion relationships (e.g. companion diocese and partnership with the Council of the North), education, care of the clergy and their families, ministry support (including the ministries of children and youth), evangelism, church amalgamations and planting, and how to do all these ecumenically wherever possible.

Priorities should be implemented within existing structures possible and draw on the gifts of those who know how to think creatively about these and other matters. Decision-making needs to be communal, careful and based on discernment of where the Spirit is leading. It's important to take the time needed to make good decisions and to involve everyone who might be affected. Make sure that groups are composed of people from diverse backgrounds and with diverse views. Develop and communicate plans and seek feedback as they are put into place. Change course if necessary. Celebrate achievements and make them known.

What legacy do you wish to leave at the end of your tenure?

Healthy Anglican Christians in healthy congregations rejoicing in each other's gifts and differences, engaged in mission and service, cheerfully living with God and trying to be faithful disciples.

Neither right nor left, but faithful



JOHN BOWEN
PROFESSOR - WYCLIFF COLLEGE

Old jokes sometimes bear repeating. Here's one of my favourites: "Did you know? The world divides into two kinds of people: those who divide the world into two kinds of people, and those who don't."

Right now, Anglicans do generally divide themselves into two groups. If you doubt me, I challenge you to describe the present debate on homosexuality without using the terms "left" and "right" or "conservative" and "liberal." Part of the reason we seem so stuck, I believe, is because we insist on using this kind of language. But do we really need it?

The terms left and right in this sense originated at the time of the post-Revolutionary French parlia-

ment in 1791, when those who supported the aristocracy sat on the right of the house, and those who supported the revolution sat on the left. It was that simple. This means that the terminology is relatively new (200 years is not much for Christians, who celebrate events from two thousand years ago and more). It is also worth noting too that the language comes from a secular source—not that there is necessarily anything wrong with that, but we might well be cautious before adopting language into Christian vocabulary that might distort the reality of who God has made us.

Unhelpful terms

In a sense, Christians ought to be both conservative and liberal. To be conservative is to conserve what is good from the past. Every Sunday, Christians around the world express their profound conservatism by enacting an ancient rite called the Eucharist. This is one of those times when we agree that saying "we've always done it this way" is a good thing. But equally all Christians are liberal, since liberal

means free, generous, fully alive. The apostle Paul (oddly enough, seen by some as conservative) says, "For freedom Christ has set us free: stand firm then, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery." Strong words!

Of course, there are distinctively Christian constraints on both our conservatism and our liberalism. They are not blanket approvals for any kind of behaviour or belief. We are not conservative to the extent that we want to reintroduce the Jewish temple sacrifices. Neither are we liberal to the extent that (say) we think promiscuous expressions of sexuality are just fine.

As Christians, we take our cues on both fronts from Jesus, who was a peculiar mixture of the two. On the one hand, he lived his life faithfully according to the scriptures: "the Son of Man must go as it is written." So he's conservative, right? On the other, he interpreted Jewish law and tradition pretty freely—to the horror of the religious leaders. So he must be liberal, surely?

But to suggest that Jesus was both "liberal" and "conservative"

highlights how unhelpful these terms are. He really doesn't fit those tired old French Revolution categories, and why should he? He marched to a different drummer he called "my father in heaven", and if we are worried about whether he was more of the left or the right, we are probably missing the point. It's as short-sighted as speculating whether he would prefer Coke or Pepsi. He demands to be considered on his own terms, not ours.

The old language does not help

Recently, the Archbishop of Canterbury spoke at a convocation at the University of Toronto, where he was given honorary degrees by Trinity College and Wycliffe College. His topic was "The Bible Today: Reading and Hearing." (The text is available online.) If one asks (as our culture has conditioned us to do), "Did he seem more conservative or liberal?" the best answer is "Yes." One did not need to agree with everything he said to realise that he was talking about a Christian faith that is deeper and wider—not to mention more life-

giving—than any superficial left/right distinctions.

Just before Williams' visit, Archbishop Andrew Hutchison was quoted in *The Daily Telegraph* as saying, "like me, the Archbishop is a liberal." It was an unfortunate choice of words. Clearly, Rowan Williams is not quite that easy to pigeon-hole. A bit like Jesus, I guess.

Within Christian faith, there are legitimate distinctions to be made. Jesus clearly made some. But he tends to call them by more challenging names than left and right. He invites us, for example, to faith rather than mistrust, to obedience rather than disobedience, to fidelity rather than independence.

The growing Emergent Church movement, with leaders like Brian McLaren and Shayne Claiborne, actually describes itself as "post-liberal" and "post-conservative." Apparently, young people seem to have figured out that the old language doesn't help us very much, particularly if we want to be faithful followers of Jesus. The rest of us could learn something from them.

2007 Episcopal Election

The Venerable Michael Bird



As Bishop, you will be the public face of our Church in Niagara. What will be the central focus of your message to the rest of society?

I am committed to finding new and creative ways to speak to those who are searching for a sense of meaning and purpose, in the context of a culture that so often robs people of an identity beyond that which comes from the things we own or the things we produce. It will be my privilege if I am elected Bishop to uphold our parishes as places where people are welcome to search for that meaning and purpose and to find a sense of community and belonging that is absent in so many lives today. I also believe that we have an opportunity and a duty to rediscover the prophetic tradition in our mission. We must be prepared to stand in the midst of a society that can often appeal to people's worst instincts and to challenge those behaviours.

As Bishop I would lead and share in the work of proclaiming a strong message that indicates that we are called to serve and stand with those who are marginalized and who have no voice. I know firsthand the impact that this kind of message can have in the life of an individual. During my years at university, I experienced a period in my faith journey that was filled with questions and doubts and I remember that for many months I wrestled with my identity as a Christian. In the midst of this turmoil I had the opportunity to attend a worship service at our Cathedral and I will never forget the sermon that was delivered that day by Bishop John Bothwell. In it he provided a clear and inspiring articulation of why he was a Christian. It was not a sermon that provided me with all the answers, but rather it challenged me to go back to my studies and continue my wrestling and my questioning. It also set that process of searching within the context of a community to which I belonged. This experience and others like it began to empower me with a confidence, a new eagerness to explore the Bible and to dialogue with others in my parish, and I soon had a greater sense of the hand of God working in my life. I emerged from this period of doubting and questioning with a very strong awareness that I was being called to ordained ministry.

How do you see your spiritual life helping you to nurture and fulfill the role of Bishop?

My relationship with God calls me to acknowledge the work of the Holy Spirit within and it invites me to anticipate the manifestation of that Spirit in others. In the course of an incredibly demanding timetable, the space that I create on a daily basis for meditation, bible study and prayer inspires me to continue to make a space for God in

all that I do that day. It is an integral part of my personal strategy for wellness. As I continue to read and reflect upon the scriptures, I find it helpful to return again and again to the two foundational stories in the Bible; the Exodus and the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. In all of the challenges we face as a Church, it is important to recall that the story of God's people is one of journeying. When we follow in the footsteps of Jesus and as we carry out our mission in the world, we are rarely on a straight path and the way ahead is often obscured. Nevertheless, we continue to journey, just as the people of Israel did, with God before us, God with us and God within us. The message of the Passion and Resurrection present us with a call to costly servant ministry. They also offer us a share in the new life of the risen Christ and point to the restoring presence of God that makes all things new. For someone like myself who has a real passion for congregational development and a desire to see our diocese "grow" in every sense of that word, my spiritual life calls me to remember that success is not measured in worldly terms. It offers me a freedom that emerges from the fact that whatever this success might look like, I am not wholly responsible. Incarnation ministry means that it is God's mission and that success and failure remain in the hands of the one who graciously invites the people of God to share in that mission.

As bishop, you are interviewed by the press and asked insights into how you will encourage youth involvement and growth in parish life. How would you respond?

Leaders in Diocesan Youth Ministry have created many settings for our young people to express and live out their faith, to worship in meaningful and relevant ways, to build community and network with each other, and to articulate their dreams for their church and for the world. My three children have all benefited immensely from several of these programs. This work should be supported, encouraged and expanded. I believe that we must learn from these successes and find ways for this to be duplicated at the regional and parish levels. If we could replicate some of these same experiences of worship, faith expression and community building in the regions of the diocese, we could widen the impact, involve parishes that have only a few young people and make connections to all those who provide leadership in parish youth groups. The youth community of this diocese is one of the key constituents that must be tapped into as we implement the priorities I have set out in the second to last question and as we explore and develop fresh expressions of ministry. More than this,

these young people and their leaders are providing us all with the inspiration and the models of ministry that point us toward those new initiatives that we need to begin building now.

What are some of the guiding principles with which you would lead, both within and outside the Diocese, such that a healthy diversity within our common fellowship may be maintained?

Beyond the promises that make up our Baptismal Covenant, I would add:

- The mission of the Church is primarily to bear witness to and to be agents of, the transforming work of God in our world.
- At the heart of this transformation is the gift of God's love that is freely and unconditionally given to every human being.
- The good news of this transforming gift is fully realized in the birth, the ministry, the death and the resurrection of Jesus Christ and in the leading of the Holy Spirit.
- To hold in balance the Church's traditional sources of teaching; namely, scripture, understood in the light of tradition and reason, including experience. It is also the case that people are nearer the truth in what they affirm than in what they deny.
- To live and to grow is to change. Conflict, when we manage it honestly, respectfully and creatively, creates the energy that makes change possible.

At the House of Bishops, you are queried by a colleague about your strategic priorities for the diocese. How would you respond?

My strategic priorities beyond the youth work mentioned above, would include the following:

- To meet personally with clergy, parish and Diocesan divisional committees, in a variety of forums and to begin by listening very carefully to those voices. To allow this listening process to help us develop new strategies and resources for supporting our present parishes and to create short and long range plans for alternative ministry initiatives.
- To explore, redefine and articulate our mission and to accelerate the work of evaluating and evolving our processes, structures and ministries to better position us as a mission shaped Church and diocese.
- To encourage, expand and raise up the work of outreach across the diocese.
- To pursue vigorously, excellence in lay and ordained ministry, building on the fine work that has been carried out in the areas of Evangelism, Stewardship and Leadership.
- To create new opportunities to enhance clergy and licensed lay worker networks and support systems. To explore new opportunities for team ministry in the diocese and to engage further with the Compensation Task Force Report.

What legacy do you wish to leave at the end of your tenure?

My legacy—several sets of bald tires, many tattered diocesan maps and clergy/parish lists, a worn out prayer desk and a Diocesan Clergy Curling team. Our legacy as the people, clergy and bishop of Niagara—a diocese envisioned and empowered to meet many of the challenges of doing ministry in an incredibly fast paced, broken and changing world. Many vibrant parishes where people encounter the risen Christ and embody the Gospel message that he came to bring.

Paws for reflection



MARNI NANCEKIVELL
TRANSITIONAL MINISTRIES

DC, our orange tabby died on Monday this past Holy Week. DC was 16 years old.

Named for my the first parish I served after ordination, All Saints in Dain City (Welland), he was, to say the least, a character. The cat, who was for the first ten years of his life an "only cat" grudgingly weathered the addition of three other cats, over time. But even with cat siblings, DC was clearly the "head cat" in our household.

I say that he was a "character", and that was true. An aggressive little kitten turned into a fierce guardian of our home. I suspect that was because he bonded with our Barkley, the Wonder Spaniel, who was at the end of his lifetime when DC entered our lives. He was an amazingly dog-like feline, who would guard the front door, scramble to the doors whenever he heard our cars in the driveway, and come running when he heard us say Grace at the beginning of a meal, which must have, to his feline ears, sounded like "the food chant". In his role as protector, DC had a tendency to "hug people with his teeth".

As he aged, I began to suspect that his protective behaviour seemed to be directly connected with the life energy of visitors who came to be with us. Either highly energetic people, or folks with whom I had a strong emotional bond tended to receive nips on the ankles. DC also had a "thing" for my Church Wardens, who visited frequently over the years. As a young kitty, he would love to walk on the dining room table, where we would frequently have meetings. (He knew that there was a strict "no table" rule if there happened to be real food on the table.) But there was so much fun to be had in "helping" the papers from meetings onto the floor. And he discovered that inevitably he could be the centre of attention that way.

War with the Wardens

My Wardens, some of whom were not "cat people" rarely appreciated DC's willingness to be part of the meeting, and frequently he was tossed from the table, with some of them being more disdainful of his assistance than others. When my daughter was younger, it was frequently of help to have Corporation meetings in my own home, but I noticed eventually that others were suggesting that they would be happy to host our meetings. Then one Warden, a former cat owner himself, began to suggest repeatedly that perhaps the cat was the cause of my asthma. War had been declared between DC and the Wardens. The Wardens apparently held the same opinion as Fran Leibowitz, who once wrote that:

"No animal should jump up on the dining room furniture, unless he is certain that he can hold his own in the conversation."

When DC was about 10, Ash-

ley came to live with us. She is a black domestic longhair, a cross, I believe with something a bit more exotic than your average housecat. In Ashley, DC met his match. The cat who had chased after people, biting their ankles for so many years, was now being chased. He was getting a taste of his own medicine. In time, Ash and DC began to co-exist reasonably peacefully, carving out territories within the house that were "theirs". They would groom one another, and wrestle frequently.

Some 3 years after Ashley's arrival, a friend who is a Lutheran pastor from Pennsylvania was trying to find a place for her two cats to live. She and her husband were moving to Hawaii, and couldn't take their cats off the mainland without an extensive period of quarantine. So it was that Clawed and Little One joined our animal menagerie. I began to suspect at this point that I was destined to become a "crazy cat lady". Me! An avowed dog lover!

Clawed, an elderly tortoiseshell cat born in Texas, had a Texas sized purr. But as another male, he and DC fought for their territory. Everything, even the litter boxes were up for grabs. Sadly, Clawed died after about six months with us. Meanwhile Ashley began a rivalrous relationship with Little One that continues to this day. Little One, who had been abused in a home previous to the one she shared with my Lutheran friend, all too readily ceded power to the reigning Queen, Ashley.

Elder states cat

But DC was the center of things. The day after Clawed died, DC began a different phase of his relationship with us. Instead of a mischievous cat, he became the "elder states cat". He sat with us on the couch, when my husband returned from work—naturally, as he was the center of the universe, he sat between us. He changed from soulfully looking at me when I was having yoghurt, to demanding yoghurt or ice cream as his due. He frequently asked for kitty treats, the only of our feline four to do so.

DC also appeared to be in charge of play, for the kitty toys, stored neatly in the basket at night would be scattered by morning, and he would plaintively howl when he sat on them... something which I learned was an expression of kitty ecstasy. We never were certain which of the cats brought the toys upstairs at night, leaving the prizes by my bed. But when he died and the toys stopped we learned that indeed it had been DC who was bringing things to his "Mom".

Marking his contributions

But DC was beginning to wear out. His arthritis was becoming a greater issue. And he began to lose weight. Sometimes, he spit up. Always a voracious eater, his appetite became picky. We tried him on different cat foods, and yes, I confess that we tried to tempt him with shredded pieces of chicken, or his favorite, "tuna juice", the water drained from the can when I made tuna sandwiches. From time to time he still ate his

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2007 Episcopal Election

The Reverend Canon Dr Cathie Crawford Browning



As Bishop, you will be the public face of our Church in Niagara. What will be the central focus of your message to the rest of society?

The central focus of my message to society would be the joy and hope found in the transforming power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. As Anglican Christians, we believe and trust in a God who loves all people, who understands, redeems and inspires us, and who invites us to share in a relationship which gives meaning, purpose and value to our lives. As members of the Body of Christ, we participate in a community, albeit an imperfect one, where that relationship is nurtured, challenged and sustained; in which counter-cultural morals, values and principles of love, compassion and justice that are God—and other-centered, rather than self-centered, are upheld and modeled; from which we are encouraged and empowered to reach out in the name of Jesus to our world; where we find the grace, vision and promise to live our lives ever becoming more the people God calls us to be.

How do you see your spiritual life helping you to nurture and fulfill the role of Bishop?

My spiritual life is grounded in and lived out through prayer, the reading and study of Scripture, and Christian community. I see this helping to nurture and fulfill the role of the bishop by providing the foundation upon which I would continue to grow in my relationship with God and engage in ministry. My life of daily prayer would nurture the role of the bishop by nourishing my spirit, guiding my relationships, helping me to set priorities and make decisions, and empowering me to pray not just for, but with, those with whom I minister. My commitment to my ministry being founded on Scripture would nurture the role of the bishop by ensuring that all that I do takes as its starting point the written Word of God. My spiritual life is intimately connected with and nurtured by corporate worship. The form of worship (BCP, BAS, contemporary) is never as important to me as is the experience of worshipping together with other Christians. I see this nurturing the role of the bishop in the joy and delight I would find in the breadth of worship in parishes across the diocese. My commitments to engaging in regular self-examen, working with a Spiritual Director, and making semi-annual retreats would ensure that I would continue to be held accountable as a Christian of maturity, honesty and integrity.

As bishop, you are interviewed by the press and asked insights into how you will encourage youth involvement and growth in parish life. How would you respond?

My response would be that I will do the following:

- Personally remain involved in youth ministry as the bishop—I have always been not just a supporter, but an active participant in youth ministry: in my congregations, I am/have been involved in the Sunday School, baptism/first communion preparation, servers, youth groups, special education days, our annual Kids' Fair, and the development of our 'God's Café' youth-friendly contemporary liturgy; at the regional/diocesan level, I am/have been involved in Children's Festival, the Children's Ministry Committee, Jr. Youth Connections, regional confirmation preparation, and inter-parish youth activities.
- Support, encourage and promote our diocesan youth ministries because of the way that I have seen those transform young people who have been through them—wider church ministries such as Youth Synod, YLTP, NYC have given young people whom I love the opportunity to experience worship, music, and Christian community in ways that speak powerfully and lastingly.
- Encourage parishes/clergy to ensure that parishes are welcoming and inclusive of young people, with accessible language, quality programming, youth-friendly resources, opportunities for ministry so that youth aren't referred to as potential members of 'the church of tomorrow' but rather as vital and valuable members of 'the church today'.
- Consult with young people across the diocese about why they think that more youth are not involved in the church and what we might do to more effectively attract them to faith in community.

What are some of the guiding principles with which you would lead, both within and outside the Diocese, such that a healthy diversity within our common fellowship may be maintained?

- Some of the guiding principles with which I would lead to foster a healthy diversity in our community would be:
- That every human being deserves to be engaged with as a beloved and treasured child of God
 - That we all need to listen more than we speak.
 - That diversity is a wonderful, rather than threatening, aspect of our communion.
 - That attitudes of comprehensiveness and inclusion pervade our life—that we actively seek to include, rather than exclude, those who see things differently than we do.
 - That our apprehension of truth is a growing thing.

At the House of Bishops, you are queried by a colleague about your strategic priorities for the diocese. How would you respond?

My response to a colleague who asked about my strategic priorities for the diocese would be:

- An emphasis on the role of the bishop as the chief pastor of the diocese, both to provide care and support for the clergy and parishes of the diocese, and to foster our sense of connectedness as a diocesan family.
- To catch and cast a vision for who God is calling us to be as a diocesan church.
- To launch a 'zero-based' diocesan-level review, in which all diocesan ministries, structures, and finances are to be reviewed and evaluated for effectiveness.
- Promoting the life and health of every parish in the diocese (including our smaller ones, given that I'm convinced that people who come to the church in the future will increasingly look to us for intimate and meaningful community rather than large gatherings).
- An emphasis on stewardship education.
- An ongoing commitment to continuing our respectful and concerted ministry of evangelism.
- I would implement these by:
 - Spending much of my time out in the parishes as a pastoral leader, supported by staff in the diocesan office who are gifted at administration.
 - Listening to and praying with members of the diocese who have a passion for visionary leadership and ministry.
 - Working together with diocesan staff and committees, and using the data gleaned in the 'A New Niagara' process, set up a consultative review process regarding how ministry at the diocesan level is structured and financed.
 - Working together with clergy and people in all parishes, but especially those which are struggling, to discuss potential ways to foster healthy ministry in affordable ways, including ministry/mission review, part-time clergy, stewardship of resources, forgiveness of historic debt, evangelism, community outreach ministries.
 - Working together with the Director of Stewardship and the Stewardship Committee to continue to explore and develop stewardship education in the diocese.
 - Consulting with the Director of Evangelism and the Evangelism Working Group regarding how to foster the ministry of evangelism in the diocese in the future.

What legacy do you wish to leave at the end of your tenure?

The legacy I would like to leave at the end of my tenure would be a vibrant and healthy diocese. We would be a church that had grown: where individual Christians had grown in faith and commitment to Jesus Christ through quality ministry; where parishes had grown as caring and supportive communities, meeting the spiritual needs of their own members and reaching out in the name of Christ to their communities; where, as a result of all of this, parishes had grown in numbers because those who belong to our churches are so transformed by life lived within them that they enthusiastically invite others to share the experience. Our church would have changed in response to the needs of a changing world, while retaining all that is vital and life-giving. There would be no attitude of 'us and them' between parishes and the Synod office, but only 'us' as the mutually supportive, encouraging and outward-looking Anglican community in Niagara.

Now is the time

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

ory. These will not be easy shoes to fill and our new Bishop will have to build on Bishop Spence's legacy.

Church planting

There will be competing demands made upon the new Bishop. It will take time, prayer and dialogue for him/her to evaluate and discern the major priorities confronting this diocese. However, from where I sit as the Director of Evangelism, there are two major issues that must be addressed if we are to continue to be a vital, healthy and relevant faith community in this part of Canada. The first priority that we must address is the whole issue of *church planting*. That is an expression that has not been part of our day to day Anglican lexicon of late. We live in one of the fastest growing regions in the country and yet the last church plant that occurred in Niagara was twenty years ago. We have lived through a time of closure and 'downsizing' and many would argue that it would make no sense to plant a new church while having just closed many others. Church closures and church planting are not exclusive events.

Closing and planting churches is a process that should be in direct correlation to the changing demographic and growth patterns of a region. While we have closed some churches in areas that have been 'over serviced' with too many buildings, we have yet to make inroads in areas that are rapidly growing and 'under serviced' by our Anglican identity. Church planting is also one of the most effective and successful forms of evangelism! Areas such as north Burlington/Oakville, Milton (the fastest growing community in Canada), Waterdown, south Hamilton and the Meadowlands; there is an urgent need to address the issue of whether the current parishes in these areas have the resources and space necessary to offer the ministries to meet the growing needs. I do not think we presently do.

Same sex blessings

The second and most difficult priority that our new Bishop will face will be the debate over the blessing of same sex unions. It is clear to me, as I travel throughout the diocese, that people on both sides of the discussion are passionate and highly emotional. I hear people declare that "if this happens or that does not happen, I am leaving this Church!" This is deeply saddening because as the Church, there is so much more that we, the Body of Christ, can offer and respond to in such a hurting and despondent world.

We must reclaim ourselves as Church to be the sign of hope, compassion, and love of God within our

local communities. And yet, as we have debated this issue, I believe that we have lost sight of what are priorities truly must be. This issue has exhausted our spiritual well being and has paralyzed us with anxiety and fear about the future. It has caused us to stand in judgment of each other prompting us to circle our own theological wagons against the other. It has brought us scorn and derision in the media and within the general public; they question what kind of Christian community we are.

It is also very clear to me that we will never achieve a consensus on the place, authority and interpretation of scripture regardless of how hard we try. People are informed by the Word of God through and by the work of the Holy Spirit and each of us will encounter God personally and individually through His divine Word. It may well be that as I encounter and am informed by God through Scripture in particular texts, you, my neighbour and friend, may encounter and hear God differently. I will not and cannot change your personal encounter with God.

It is also my belief that we encounter God, the Holy Spirit, within the community that we call the Body of Christ. That is us, each of us, both individually and corporately as the Church. And sometimes as individuals the Spirit may lead us, the Church, to places corporately that we find challenging and difficult. I believe such is the case with the issue of same sex blessings.

We must make a decision

To continue to live as the Church in this place of uncertainty and fear will only serve to further erode our spiritual well being and accelerate our decline as the Anglican Church. In order to get on about the business of being the Church of Jesus Christ in this diocese, we must make a decision. Our new Bishop must listen to the diverse voices; put the question of whether we proceed with same sex blessings before us, the Church with which he/she has been entrusted, and then honour the will of the people of God. What comes next is up to the Holy Spirit.

One thing is quite clear and that is that no matter what happens, our beloved Anglican Church is at a crossroads in its history. Regardless of whether it is here locally within our diocese or globally as an Anglican Communion, we are in the midst of change and God only knows what that might look like. We must however, remain faithful to how God is calling us here at this time and in this place.

Please say your prayers for our new Bishop as the mantle is passed. S/he will need all that we can offer them. Thanks be to God!

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2007 Episcopal Election

The Reverend Canon Sandra Copland



As Bishop, you will be the public face of our Church in Niagara. What will be the central focus of your message to the rest of society?

Like each one of us, the rest of the world needs to hear how much God loves them and loves the world He created. The central focus of the message of any follower of Christ must always be Jesus—"Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again." As we read through the book of Acts in this season of Easter, we hear "sermons" by Peter and Paul that are simple and straightforward. God's intention has always been to convey love to His creation. He has spoken in the past by His prophets, through the nation of Israel and finally through the Lord Jesus Christ, God come to earth in human form. Jesus calls us to turn from our own self-centered way of living and live as He did, in obedience to His Father in heaven. As we leave behind our own self-determined course of life and turn the direction of our lives over to the Lord Jesus through the life-giving power of the Holy Spirit, we become new, Spirit-filled beings. Jesus called Himself the light of the world. Jesus told His followers that they were salt and light to the society around them. Salt and light have no effect if they cannot be distinguished from their surroundings. The new capacity to live as Jesus did makes us effective as bearers of light in dark places, preserving and medicinal agents in wounded and deteriorating situations and lives. As Jesus transforms us, we can be used by Him in the transformation of the world around us. The message then is one of welcome and invitation to follow Jesus.

How do you see your spiritual life helping you to nurture and fulfill the role of Bishop?

God has given us all, as followers of Jesus, gifts with which to grow our spiritual lives: Holy Scripture, prayer, the sacraments and the church community. As we spend time in prayer and meditation in God's word, the scriptures, we learn a way of living that models that of Jesus. As we obey what we find in His word and as we are guided by the Holy Spirit, we are given grace to deepen our fellowship with God and strength to serve our fellow humans. Prayer is simply conversation with God. As we confess our sins, flaws, faults and inaction God is gracious to forgive us. As we listen to God in prayer, our fellowship with God deepens and we are given direction and motivation to serve. The sacrament of Eucharist feeds us and gives us strength to serve the world around us. Close contact with the church community enlivens us and keeps us honest in our determination to follow Christ. These gracious gifts of God have sustained me throughout my life. I fully expect and trust that God will

complete in me the work that He has begun and will continue to sustain me in whatever work He gives me.

As bishop, you are interviewed by the press and asked insights into how you will encourage youth involvement and growth in parish life. How would you respond?

It is sometimes said that youth are the future of the church. I believe that they must be part of the current church. Our Diocesan youth staff has done a terrific job over the years of running diocesan events for children and teens and encouraging regional events. However, in order to develop and strengthen youth ministry locally, I think it is necessary for parishes to hire leaders whose calling and gifting is to youth and children. Where communities can cooperate and share a youth worker or pastor either among Anglican parishes or ecumenically, I believe there would be opportunities to run age-specific programs. Two successful examples of which I am aware, is the Church on the Rock in Hamilton which started out as a coalition of five Baptist church youth groups and the youth ministry operating in Port Colborne which started as a cooperative effort among three Anglican churches. Volunteers can indeed get the work started and a volunteer board can oversee the work, but in my estimation a person with specific responsibility and training for youth ministry would have a better chance of successfully developing and maintaining youth and children's ministry. The welcome given by the local parish in including youth both in special services and everyday activities is crucial. We cannot expect children and youth to have the tastes of our more mature parishioners. Their interests in topics for discussion and music styles, for example, may differ. As adults are we truly ready to welcome them? Archbishop Temple reminded us that the church is the one organization that exists for the benefit of its non-members.

What are some of the guiding principles with which you would lead, both within and outside the Diocese, such that a healthy diversity within our common fellowship may be maintained?

The first principle is that of invitation. Jesus invites all who are tired and burdened to come and walk with Him. He also demands that we take up our cross, an instrument of death, as we become His disciples—both sides of the same invitation. Jesus takes us as we are, but as we commit to follow Him, the process of becoming like Him means that much falls away. The second principle is that everyone who commits to follow Christ receives spiritual gifts which contribute to the life of the church body as well as the wider community. We are to be like a lighthouse that needs constant tending

in order to be effective, not a clubhouse where workers are paid and members relax. Every baptized Christian needs to feel themselves an important, useful and necessary part of the family, the body of Christ. Jesus reiterates the heart of the Old Testament teaching in the great commandment: Love God, love neighbour. The great commission gives us the responsibility of proclamation, invitation and disciple making. And the great requirement of Micah to do justice and love mercy directs us to set our heart, hands, minds and all other resources to look after the needy and vulnerable in our society. As Christians come to understand their gifting and role and as they are set free to attend their ministries we can expect that God will extend His reign ever wider and more deeply.

At the House of Bishops, you are queried by a colleague about your strategic priorities for the diocese. How would you respond?

I was told very early on in my life of public ministry that if I tended to the depth of my faith, God would see to the breadth of it. At the beginning of ordained ministry a senior cleric encouraged me to simply love the people in the parish and enjoy the ride! Simple as that sounds, it takes a lot of thought to figure out how to truly love the parish, the neighbourhood, the wider community. The early church as described in the book of Acts met often over word, sacrament and food. They studied the scriptures, served each other, gave sacrificially and cared for the needy. They proclaimed Christ to their own culture and also moved out of their comfort zones to take Christ to others outside their own circles. The Apostle Paul's ministry in Acts 16 gives us some examples. In meeting with the women at the river he called them to fresh faith by committing themselves to follow Jesus. In his encounter with the slave girl he frees her from her slavery to the ones who owned her as well as her slavery to occult practices. Jailed as a result, he and Silas praise God and witness their faith to the jailer who is baptized along with his family. The new Philipian church was composed of people from every strata of society socially, economically and ethnically: Jews, Roman, Greeks, men and women, rich, middle-class and poor, slave and free. Paul demonstrated his principle of being all things to all people so that he could bring them to Christ.

What legacy do you wish to leave at the end of your tenure?

The Anglican Church historically has a wide and deep reach throughout the world. My prayer is that we can maintain fellowship with our brothers and sisters around the world. There is much to learn from the church in developing nations about commitment, evangelism and suffering in the name of Christ. We have much to offer as well. I would love to see our local parishes work to strengthen partnerships by visiting and working in different parts of Christ's church nationwide and worldwide. Christian education is always a priority. Only as we come to know God through the His written word under the tutelage of the Holy Spirit, who is the Living Word for us today, can we be more fully empowered to take the Lord Jesus to the communities around us. What legacy would I pray to leave? A church deeply rooted in the love and knowledge of Jesus, Our Saviour, and a church with arms wide open to serve the world around us.

Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor, Please remove my name from your mailing list; I cannot belong to an organization that denies people their basic human rights and the dignity and respect of being equal before the eyes of humanity and the Divine. When 17 years old I left the Anglican Church, having been ostracized and condemned because I was a disgraced unwed mother, (times were different in 1963!), and yet, some things continue the same. I refer specifically to the denial of marriage and ordination of people, any person, on the basis of their sexual orientation or their biological sex. It is a flagrant violation of human rights and, in my opinion, a violation and denial of the

teachings of Jesus Christ.

Last year I returned, seeking a spiritual home and a community where I could share in the Sacraments and community of Christ. The priest there is a very wonderful, progressive and open-minded woman. However, I simply cannot associate myself with the Anglican Church as it is now organized and teaching. It is heartbreak but I now practice in solitude with the trees and birds for community.

Please remove my name from your records and do not contact me again in any form whatsoever. Thank you.

BONNIE J. MAGEE
Guelph, Ontario

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2007 Episcopal Election

The Venerable Lynne Corfield



As Bishop, you will be the public face of our Church in Niagara. What will be the central focus of your message to the rest of society?

In the world that we live in it seems to me that more and more people need the love of God and need to find ways to be in relationship with God, and yet we live in a time when less and less people are finding their way into our churches. Our lives are stressful, complicated, and incredibly busy. I am constantly trying to put myself into the head space of the person who is outside the church and I wonder what are we doing that is keeping them out and what are we not doing to welcome them in?

In parish ministry the strategies that have worked for me are to be compassionate, inclusive, hospitable, progressive and enthusiastic. The service needs to be easy to follow, and the message must be relevant to today. It seems to me that if the church is to compete with Sunday shopping and sports, we had better make the worship experience worthwhile!

Over the centuries our church has found a way to package God and has presented God to the world in a particular way... and the world, in many cases, is now saying to us, no thanks -and therefore leaving God on the shelf! We cannot continue to do the same things and expect different results. We have to be prepared to change and to 'get with the programme'!

Our main challenge in the church today is not only getting people to enter in, but to help those who attend regularly to understand the need for change. Not only to accept change but to be willing participants and catalysts. Change is growth. We really do have a lot to offer the world, we just need to

learn to re-package ourselves so that God's abundant love is accessible to the many, rather than the few.

I bring the gifts that God gave me to the role of Bishop. I am dynamic, courageous, passionate, honest, enthusiastic and visionary. I think society would see that in Niagara we are inclusive, progressive and ready to trust the leadership of a woman.

How do you see your spiritual life helping you to nurture and fulfill the role of Bishop?

Well, without God in my life there is really no point! God is the still point of my circle, around which I revolve. My spiritual life is mostly nurtured by personal prayer and corporate worship. Being an extrovert I can lead worship and at the same time enter into the worship experience myself. I think the Bishop gets to go to church a fair bit, so that would help.

My ecumenical and multi-faith colleagues offer stimulating conversations and lots of laughter as we share faith and friendship. I deeply value their contribution to my journey of faith.

I love to hike and spend time alone in nature so that my mind can wander and I can be open to listening for God's word. Taking care of myself and exercising is another way that I respect the temple in which my spirit abides... it also allows me to work lots without getting sick! In truth, as Bishop, I think I would have to be more fastidious in planning regular retreats... Not silent ones!! Jesus' model was to go away, up a mountain and pray, all by himself. That works for me.

As bishop, you are interviewed by the press and asked insights into how you will encourage youth in-

volvement and growth in parish life. How would you respond?

How long have you got? I am passionate about this topic so if you get me going this will take a while!

First of all, if I hear one more person say that 'children/youth are the future of our church' I think I'll go crazy! Children and youth are our present. If we do not have them in our midst NOW as important contributing members of our church, we certainly won't have them in the future. I am also deeply concerned at our lack of appeal to the '20 somethings' who are also conspicuous by their absence!

In our parishes children/youth must be the centre of our lives. We can no longer expect children to be seen and not heard. Church needs to be a safe place where children are seen AND heard. Church needs to be fun and NOT boring! Children have an important and vital ministry to share with us and their profound questions keep us honest.

As Bishop I think it is important to personally spend time with children, youth and young adults. Perhaps leaving with the children, rather than staying in church would be one idea! It is important to participate in youth events and to encourage true participation of youth in the life of our parishes and not just as nursery helpers.

Our youth and young adults can lead the way in teaching us how to take advantage of new technologies in worship, like working with sound boards, projectors, making DVD's, and podcasting. Many youth are concerned with environmental issues and can lead us becoming 'green churches' using Fair Trade products in our churches, increasing our recycling efforts and using environmental friendly cleaning products, just to name a few.

Perhaps monthly gatherings of youth around the Diocese to look at some of the Bible stories and how they apply to our life today. For me it would be a joy to sit and talk together—not to mention it would keep me on my toes.

Having just returned from the Holy Land I think there would be value in bringing youth on such a tour. I saw that in just two weeks, people's faith and understanding of the Bible was deepened in ways that it would take a life time of sitting in church to achieve. Encouraging pilgrimage type tours to Taize, and to walk the El Camino and other such active adventures would be

life changing and faith deepening for all concerned.

A Multi-faith camp would be a marvellous vehicle for getting children together so that they can learn about each other's faith and culture. I could go on and on!

Children, youth and young adults are crucial to our success as a Diocese. They must be at the centre of our lives in each parish in the Diocese. We need to be working hard to be creative in finding ways to welcome and incorporate the gifts and talents of our youth in both leading and serving.

What are some of the guiding principles with which you would lead, both within and outside the Diocese, such that a healthy diversity within our common fellowship may be maintained?

Maintained? Until we are ready to face the issue of including our gay and lesbian (LGBT) sisters and brothers then we do not have a healthy diversity. I respect Bishop Ralph's decision to wait for the next General Synod to meet, and to align with the other Bishops to that point. It is time to get on with the decision and with ministry. I agree with the UNCSW delegates statement (March '07) who offer a women's way forward which has to do with "working for the welfare of creation and the full flourishing of humankind." "The mission to work together to heal God's world takes preference over their theological differences." It takes courage to make this decision to move forward and will take compassion to work together in the days that follow, as we did after the decision to re-marry divorced people; to ordain women. It is time. The leadership team that I would gather would work diligently to ensure that the door is open, the table is set, and there is a place at the table for all people. That is what being Anglican means. Draw the circle wide, draw it wider still.

At the House of Bishops, you are queried by a colleague about your strategic priorities for the diocese. How would you respond?

Building on the innovation of Bishop Ralph's three legged stool we continue to focus on Stewardship, Evangelism, and Leadership, but we have added a fourth leg to the stool, Diversity. Four legged stools are far more stable!

We have doubled our efforts in the area of Gift Planning and this is

paying off as we see wonderful gifts coming into our parishes. This will enable us to continue to offer wonderful worship and programmes for years to come.

Evangelism is still a top priority and the parishes have really latched onto the importance of welcoming and all that encompasses. We have had wonderful leadership in this area and we are now seeing the benefits in our parishes.

Wellness is a top priority. Healthy leaders are more able to deliver care and love to their parishes—love your neighbour, as yourself. Taking some of the money from 'Clergy in Transition' we have been able to offer wellness incentives to clergy and licensed lay workers; we model good self care and encourage the clergy to take their days off and vacations; not to mention our health and fitness consultant who makes presentations giving wellness tips at each Clergy/LW day and conferences.

Focussing on excellence in liturgy has also been a huge success. Striving for inclusive language, varied images of God and creativity in worship have been some of our goals. We are using innovative technology to respond to God by broadening our liturgical horizons to include liturgy more than just the BAS (or BCP). We have great resource people (mainly from our youth and young adults) who are enthusiastic about helping parishes to obtain the skills and education that they need to provide inclusive worship using new technologies that are available to us. We are diverse, and no two parishes are alike, but what we do, we do well.

Most important of all is the sense that many parishes have a keen sense of mission! They have identified their reason d'être and are focussed on serving the needs of their immediate community. As a result many of our parishes are thriving and growing. It's exciting!

If you would like to know more, I do believe it is your round!

What legacy do you wish to leave at the end of your tenure?

A 5 star church! In the same way that we have 5 star hotels and we know what that rating means; regardless of being rural or urban, traditional or contemporary, we set the standard and raised the bar for being healthy, welcoming and full of life; children and youth are at the centre of our lives, at the centre of our church.

The wonder of Easter is more than one week in Spring



GRAHAME STAP
RECTOR - ST. ALBAN'S, GLEN WILLIAMS

After all the Easter services are over and we take time to relax and think about Pentecost, the summer picnic in June and all the other things that make up the church year it seems that the promise of Easter

is quietly put to one side. It merges into the background with all the other parts of church life that are over.

We worry about the passing of time. It goes so fast that we don't seem to have time to reflect on the wonder of Easter. We have the Sundays of Easter leading to Pentecost and the Ascension of Christ but it is not quite the same. The church is not filled with the people that come only at Christmas and Easter—not that there is anything wrong with that. It is better twice a year than never. The Easter flowers are gone and it sometimes seems that the stone has been rolled back.

I am not sure why this is so; maybe it is because the pressures of society press so heavily upon us that it does not seem possible that Jesus could have died to make all things right. However that is exactly what took place.

God so loved the world that he sent his only Son so that we might not perish but have everlasting life. I don't believe that God sent Jesus to die. Just as a country or a parent does not send their children into war to die but knowing the possibility of death is always there. I believe that God sent Jesus to do whatever was necessary to lead us to the love that

God has for all creation. In following the will of his Father, Jesus paid the ultimate price.

Jesus died a horrible death upon the cross and it seemed that it was over. All the promises seemed to be lost. Even Mary could not accept that there was anything other than death. "If you have taken him away, tell me where he is so I can take him away." To Mary the body of Jesus was what was most important. It was not until Jesus called her by name that the penny dropped and she knew it was not over but just beginning. The wonder of Easter did indeed make all things right.

We worry about not doing all the things we need to do before we die, not saying all the things we need to say, not telling someone that we love them. But the reality is that we do not die and it is never too late. Jesus calls each and every one of us by name just as Jesus called Mary. Life goes on in a different form, but never the less it goes on and we can know that all things do come right because of Easter.

This year let us not let Easter pass, but truly remember each and every day that nothing, not even death can separate us from the love of God.

2007 Episcopal Election

The Reverend Canon Dr Richard Jones



As Bishop, you will be the public face of our Church in Niagara. What will be the central focus of your message to the rest of society?

The Anglican expression of Christianity is an important voice that our Society needs to hear. The best is yet to come! Our society is hungry for spirituality and not religious dogma. Let us talk about Jesus, God's love for all humanity, the stewardship of Creation and the implications for personal transformation and social and environmental justice that flow from the Gospel. The Anglican Church is a Church that takes this world and our society seriously. We want to listen more carefully to society, and be better at offering an expression of the Gospel that is relevant and accessible to main stream Western culture. We are not dogmatic, and we dialogue with others. Therefore, when we engage in conversations about ethics, morality, social justice or the environment, our opinions can be taken seriously. I believe our Church has a voice that Canada needs to hear. These are a few examples:

- Affirming the full humanity of the refugee claimant, the poor, minorities, and those of different faith groups.
- Affirming the goodness of all God's creation and our role as caretakers.
- Affirming values of safety and respect in our schools and other institutions.
- Affirming that because God's

reign is always ahead, and more than we can ask or imagine, we can work with others for a better future in our society and in the world.

How do you see your spiritual life helping you to nurture and fulfill the role of Bishop?

My spirituality is rooted in the knowledge that while we are co-creators with God in the work of the Church it is ultimately God's grace that redeems and sustains us. This means that as Bishop I would face the stress of the challenges of the position, such as the conflict and the loneliness of the position, by remembering this is ultimately God's work. Through meditation and centering prayer throughout the day, I hold myself open to the guidance of the Holy Spirit as I listen to genuinely good people holding irreconcilably different positions, and yet work toward gaining consensus. I have a spirituality of gratitude and hope that enables me to cast leadership visions and to inspire the best in people and in our organizations. Through prayer, Bible reading, and sharing the Eucharist in community I find the courage to make difficult decisions and seek always to speak the truth in love. The discipline of balancing family, self care and ministry as Bishop creates a positive emotional system in the Diocese that can reduce stress in myself, my family and others, promoting health, joy and productivity.

As bishop, you are interviewed by the press and asked insights into how you will encourage youth involvement and growth in parish life. How would you respond?

We value youth participation in our Diocesan Youth Programs and in the life of our parish communities. Joyce Wilton and Christyn Perkons, our Diocesan youth ministry program leaders, have suggested that key values for young people today are positive relationships and communication. These are core values for all Diocesan youth programming. Our Diocesan programs for youth are so successful we often have waiting lists! We value the opinions of our young people. If you want to know what youth want, you need to ask them! And we do! For example, Youth Synods have been advocating a more responsible attitude toward the environment, a more inclusive attitude toward gays and lesbians (over 13 positive resolutions from 1990 to 2006) and more responsible consumer practices. They are impacting our congregations. In our parishes young people are becoming the "go to" people for ideas about what would encourage youth involvement. Creative parishes are experimenting with drop in centers for high school students, a coffee house for university students, alternative forms of worship planned by and led by youth. These parishes are listening to the youth, meeting them where their needs are, and developing relationships with them. It is through relationships and communication that we build the bridges between young people and our Church.

What are some of the guiding principles with which you would lead, both within and outside the Diocese, such that a healthy diversity within our common fellowship may be maintained?

A healthy diversity within our common fellowship is a characteristic of what it means to be Anglican. It has been a particular value in the life of our Diocese. As Bishop within the Diocese and outside Niagara, I will value prayer, dialogue with Scripture and with one another, participation

in Holy Eucharist together, and the guidance of the Holy Spirit. I will look for increased peace, joy and justice as affirmation of good decisions. I would hope that as Anglicans in the Diocese and beyond, we will show real love toward one another and commitment to the values we hold in common, recognizing that healthy diversity has always been one of those values. Thus modeling unity in love, and not uniformity in dogma. I believe this is most faithful to the Anglican Way. We have modeled these healthy principles of leadership at our Diocesan Synods where controversial issues have been discussed in small groups and debated on the floor of Synod. We have valued respect for the dignity of every human being, and taken that baptismal promise seriously in our conversations with one another. We have prayed for, and been open to, the leading of the Holy Spirit in coming to decisions in the past. I would expect no less in the future.

At the House of Bishops, you are queried by a colleague about your strategic priorities for the diocese. How would you respond?

Bishop Ralph has left a legacy of three strategic priorities, leadership, stewardship and evangelism. They are all critical to the health of the Diocese into the future. I will seek to build on this momentum and not disrupt the good work that is going on. As Bishop I will promote dialogue, hope, and innovation in the Diocese." We have tremendous resources of creative leaders in Niagara. We need to help them find new ways of dialoguing, working, and learning with one another. For the Greeks dialogue meant the "word" or meaning flowing between people. In our case it is not only that, but also the "living word", or Holy Spirit, that we seek to hear as we talk to one another. I would hope that this kind of dialogue would lead to inspiration and courage. Individuals and groups will attempt creative experiments in mission and ministry. I have learned that people give to worthy causes not needy organizations. We can expect people to be generous with

their time, talent and treasure if our ministry is inspiring and worthy of support. We can become Spirit led, mission focused, learning organizations, continually improving.

I will foster the Stewardship of healthy clergy and lay leaders, healthy parishes and the health of our unique Carolinian Environment here in Niagara. I take a systems theory approach to promoting healthy congregations. As Bishop I will provide education and other resources to leaders in our parishes so that individuals and parishes can better manage anxiety and change. Parish leaders need to learn how to "work their community turf", identifying needs and creating accessible open door faith communities. I will encourage, wherever possible, a team approach to ministry so that leaders are not isolated, and gifts can be shared. I will continue to support clergy in transition and work to provide the best matches between clergy and ministry situations. A shared covenant of realistic expectations at the parish level, resourced by the Diocese, with clear accountability helps us all.

The good work of Canon Michael Patterson and the Evangelism Working Group needs to continue. I hope that no more parishes will be closed in our Diocese but that we will begin to plant churches. I will seek ways of reducing the DM&M burden on struggling parishes to provide resources for revitalization. I will promote a green Diocese that will show environmental leadership in policies, and our stewardship of lands and buildings.

What legacy do you wish to leave at the end of your tenure?

The Diocese will be a learning organization continually improving and focused on mission. It will have healthy clergy and lay leaders, healthy parishes and new church expressions. It will be known for leadership in justice and eco justice issues. It will be looked to by others as a model and a resource for the mission of the Church. It will be filled with people committed to living out the Good News of God's love in Jesus, the Christ.

Climb every mountain in faith

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

your eyes beheld my limbs, yet unfinished in the womb; ahhh!

As a result of this marvellous sighting, my daughter said, "I don't need the test results, I know the baby is doing okay, I have seen for myself." Hmmm, sounds familiar - somewhat like the words that Thomas spoke when Jesus came to him one week after the resurrection to offer his comfort and support. Just like the disciples our doubts make us fearful and then fear makes us immobile, and we figuratively lock ourselves away behind the closed doors of our minds, and thus rob ourselves of marvellous experiences and challenges that await us.

Mountains to climb

When we pick up the story of the disciples in Acts we find that the seeds of doubt have been replaced

by confidence as they venture out into the world to teach, preach and heal in the name of the Lord. They begin to climb their mountain. The faithful will never need to be fearful, for we find safety not in the absence of danger, but in the presence of God. The disciples lives were not plain sailing from here on in, rather they suffered persecution and dangerous times, being thrown into prison and in some cases martyrdom. (I think that they would all say it was worth it if we could ask them today.) When I get back from Nepal, we as a Diocese will soon have a mountain to climb, that of choosing a new Bishop, and I know that the voting delegates are feeling the weight of that responsibility. Then in June, we as the Anglican Church in Canada face another mountain to climb, choosing a new Primate and the motion regarding same sex blessings.

As we face these challenges, our 'mountain to climb', let us remember the example of the disciples in the early church, these were scary times, and they had every right to be scared. However, fear and doubt immobilized them whereas courage and confidence go hand in hand and led to action. Once they had gathered their courage and went out into the world, the good news spread like wild fire! If we are prayerful and seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit we will have the presence of God with us, and the right decision will be made. Particularly as we discuss and vote on the issue of same-sex blessings, it is important to remember that we are all children of God and that we are all marvellously made in God's image. "My body was not hidden from you when I was being made in secret and woven in the depths of the earth."

Take courage and venture out

My daughter and her husband have no control over the work of the womb; they cannot choose gender, sexual orientation, eye colour, nor hair colour; that is all mysteriously going on in the womb, but the child has a guarantee that it will be unconditionally loved and welcomed by us all as a gift from God, and as such deserves to be welcomed into the church. Glimpsing a child in the womb through the wonder of ultra sound gave me a glimpse into the heart of God. Our life is a gift from God, and what we do with it is our gift to God. 'Lord, you have searched me out and known me; you know my sitting down and my rising up; you discern my thoughts from afar.' Let us take heart and have courage to leave the upper room and venture out into the world, knowing that God will not only go with us, in fact God urges us to go!

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Explore the church Explore the world Be transformed

BILL MOUS
DIVINITY STUDENT

On my first day in Grenada, I attended an afternoon tea put on by the Mothers' Union. As I was leaving a woman, originally from Toronto, came up to me and asked several questions about my internship in Grenada. Later she told me that she had come to St. George's as part of a Canadian relief team shortly after Hurricane Ivan. Her experience as a relief worker had been so powerful that she decided to stay on as a development worker and has lived in Grenada ever since.

As our conversation drew to a close, she spoke about how her understanding of God had changed during her time in Grenada, and then quickly shifted to some words of wisdom about various cultural aspects of Grenadian life. Even though we had only met a few minutes ago, I felt as though we had a conversation on par with one I might have had with one of my friends at home. Pondering this the next day, I surmised that this affinity likely resulted from a common bond we shared: being Canadian.

One of the themes during my internship was an awareness of Canadians ministering in Grenada. There were the mental health and reconstruction teams from the diocese of Calgary, an evangelical group from Ottawa distributing Bibles to school children, and the Canadian flags which reminded visitors in the room where St. George's hosted its outreach ministry of a Canadian connection. The Canadian International Development Agency also had signs in a couple places throughout the

country announcing its various development projects.

I wonder, however, how we might expand that common bond by being Canadian and its corresponding pride, to a common bond of being Christian—or even human? Much like the Theological Students International Internship program in which I participated, one way might be to enable opportunities that offer personal contact, experience and the opportunity to serve. Perhaps not surprisingly, our church offers several such opportunities which aim to do this; thereby plunging participants into experiences which reveal our common humanity and common Christianity and in doing so deepen our understanding of each.

One of the flagship programs which the Anglican Church of Canada offers for people of all ages, backgrounds, skills and professions, is the Volunteers in Mission (VIM) program. Through this program Anglicans offer themselves for voluntary service for one to two years to fill specific needs identified by our partner churches and institutions around the world. There are currently opportunities to be an Episcopal Assistant with our partner diocese of Uruguay, a Youth Coordinator in Madagascar, and openings for a variety of teachers in Tanzania among the many other volunteer opportunities.

VIM, guided by the Anglican Communion's Principles of Partnership and a sound understanding of development, "recognizes our need

CONTINUED ON PAGE 16

At the end of the day

RON SHANTZ
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR - KERR ST. MINISTRIES

There seems to be much discussion about 'social justice' these days. When you ask the question, there are as many different opinions, perceptions and definitions as there are respondents. It is easy to look at distant lands where starvation, injustice and the HIV epidemic define national identity, but what is not so easy, is when we look within our own community and find injustice staring us in the face. When it comes down to it, a child losing their hope and dignity through poverty is not much different than a child from Malawi who loses hope for the future because their parent, the provider, has died from AIDS.

Both are victims, where is the justice? When kids show up for camp, we don't know from whence they

come, but tragically, too often their families have become unglued and although everyone loses, the children are the ones who bear the brunt of a separation. This is often the tipping point that will send a lone parent and their children into poverty and the ensuing downward spiral.

And so the cycle begins, or continues. It is in the midst of these circumstances, that we see the Grace of God most evident, through the laughter and carefree afternoons the kids are able to spend at our Kerr Street Day Camp. God isn't to blame when our families break or life goes south on us, however He won't forsake us. His love shows up in the most simplest of ways, through people like you and me... so, at the end of the day, we hope we have been a faithful agent of His mercy, and in so doing help to bring justice to the social order.

Lives still in the balance

A review with discussion questions



COLLEEN SYM
SOCIAL JUSTICE COORDINATOR

Lives Still in the Balance, Ontario's Social Audit should be mandatory reading for every person of faith who intends to vote in the next election, has made a donation to a food bank or averted their eyes from a homeless person on the street.

Released just a few weeks ago, it is a hard-hitting new book about poverty in Ontario, published by Ontario's major faith communities through the Interfaith Social Assistance Reform Coalition (ISARC). This edition updates a book first published in 2004 and is edited by Murray MacAdam, the Social Justice Consultant at the Anglican Diocese of Toronto.

"We chose the book's title because people's lives are at stake," says editor Murray MacAdam. "Why does our wealthy province tolerate allowing one citizen in six to live in poverty? Where are our values? The true test of a government is how well it responds to people in desperate need, not to those blessed with abundance. Will the government, and the opposition parties, develop and promote a credible anti-poverty agenda?"

The Interfaith Social Assistance Reform Coalition, created in 1986, is made up of many different faith communities including the Anglican Church of Canada and organizations representing Islam, Judaism, Buddhism and other faiths. Recognizing and inspired by the call from within their faith to do justice, members of the coalition have become a highly credible voice calling for greater justice and dignity for Ontarians marginalized by poverty.

All too often the perceived magnitude or complexity of issues like poverty, cause us to feel helpless and at loss as to what to do other than try to alleviate the most im-

mediate needs of those who seek our help. In doing so we are demonstrating our love for our neighbours and our actions are consistent with the Anglican mission of responding to need by loving service. But unless we also strive for long term and sustainable change within our society, our mission work is incomplete for it is also a mark of the mission of the Worldwide Anglican Communion to seek to transform unjust structures of society.

Lives Still in the Balance drawing from its community based social audit, explains poverty in Ontario through giving voice to the stories of those living in poverty and expert analysis of how our economic model and political policies have impacted on our society. The combination of story

when it comes to poverty". Our goal should be that there is no one in need among us.

While its clear throughout the book that the faith communities fill many gaps in government's response to poverty, towards the end of the book there is a special appeal to all Ontario's faith communities to respond not just through individual charity but also through involvement with the poor and community groups in calling for just solutions which involve public policy choices. This is a call for social justice and for all people of faith to assume the role of advocate.

"This situation calls all people of faith to respond," says Father Paul Hanson. "The poor are still left aside in our wealthy province. Yet if you take the poor out of the

The poor are still left aside in our wealthy province. Yet if you take the poor out of the Gospel, you don't have the Gospel that Jesus intended.

telling and analysis puts a human face on the statistics and connects abstract politics and policy to what it is really like for those who fall on hard times to have to ask for help. Chapters cover topics including the social assistance road block, challenges faced by people with disabilities, food insecurity and hunger, the housing crisis, the working poor, the effect of poverty on children and families. There are also chapters on the relationship of poverty to poor health.

The picture that emerges is that nearly half a million Ontario children are growing up poor, hunger is widespread, food banks serve 330,000 Ontarians each month, many are working people whose low wages trap them in poverty, and people on social assistance who have plunged far below the poverty line. While we are all familiar with the notion that the poor will always be with us, the chapter "No One in Need: Strengthening Our Social Foundations" by Greg deGroot-Maggetti includes a reminder that "the Bible offers no justification for complacency

Gospel, you don't have the Gospel that Jesus intended. We need to put the issue of poverty front and centre, in our faith communities and our society."

This is a challenge for us all. As a place to start, the Diocesan Outreach Committee has arranged for a limited number of copies of *Lives Still in the Balance* to be made available to parishes. To find out more, contact Karen Nowicki. Additional copies are available from Pandora (www.pandorapress.com) and sell for \$19.95 each.

As part of your summer reading, pick up a copy of the book and read it. Pass it around your parish and hold a discussion group using the questions developed by Murray MacAdam to facilitate dialogue in your parish.

To learn how to become an anti-poverty advocate and put poverty on the agenda for the October 2007 election, attend the Toronto Diocese workshop on Saturday, September 8, from 9 am to 3 pm at St. John, York Mills, in north Toronto. Representatives from all four major parties will be present.

Discussion Questions

- Did the book change your understanding of how people of faith and faith communities should respond to poverty? If so, how?
- Did Rabbi Dow Marmur's article change your understanding of the difference between charity and justice?
- How did you feel reading the first-hand accounts of people living in poverty?
- The book underscores that, despite our society's affluence, many people live in deep poverty. Yet as Armine Yalnizyan notes in her chapter, the capacity of our governments to respond to poverty has shrunk. She asks if it is possible for "community voices to shape public choices?" What do you think?
- Did Dennis Raphael's chapter about how poverty can strongly affect a person's health surprise you?
- Despite minimal resources, the Interfaith Social Assistance Reform Coalition (ISARC) was able to bring together over 1500 people across Ontario to discuss the reality of poverty and inadequate public policies, a "community social audit" that led to this book. Can you envisage a similar community consultation process here in Niagara? If so, what issues should it focus on?
- The book wraps up with proposals to government for action, on specific issues (Chapter 9). Would you be willing to ask your MPP to endorse them, or some of them? Why or why not?

Signs of new life



BILL MOUS
DIVINITY STUDENT

A few weeks ago my Dad and I went hiking through Grand Etang National Park. Located in the heart of Grenada, its flora and fauna are something to behold. Huge ancient ferns line the rich black soil. Colourful flowering epiphytes hang from the nooks of trees. Hummingbirds zoom by at lightening speeds. Our hike took us around the crater of the now extinct volcano which formed the island of Grenada. The crater—the depth of which no one has ever been able to measure - is now a beautiful lake and one of only a handful that supply fresh water to the island.

Yet as we concluded our hike and viewed the pristine rain forest of Grand Etang from an observation point, we were aware of thousands of dead trees which were scattered throughout the forest. While we were in the understory of the forest, everything looked lush and green, but the view from above told a very different story. When we saw the whole picture and saw images on the park taken two years ago, the forest told the story of Hurricane Ivan. Like so many other aspects of island life, Ivan had touched Grand Etang too. Many of its oldest and tallest trees were snapped in two, ripped from the ground or simply left stripped of their foliage. In a mere seven hours one September afternoon, the entire ecology of the park was changed.

What is old is made new

Many were devastated by the destruction. The local population of Mona monkeys was decimated by falling trees and starvation in subsequent months because many trees were not able to bear fruit. The human population grieved the loss of the park as they knew it. Many vowed to restore it to the way it was.

Yet many others found hope in the new life which would no doubt spring forth from the forest floor. Just like the volcanic crater found new life as a beautiful and life giving lake, Grand Etang will rise again in new life. This is basic biology: that what is old is made new through the process of primary or secondary succession.

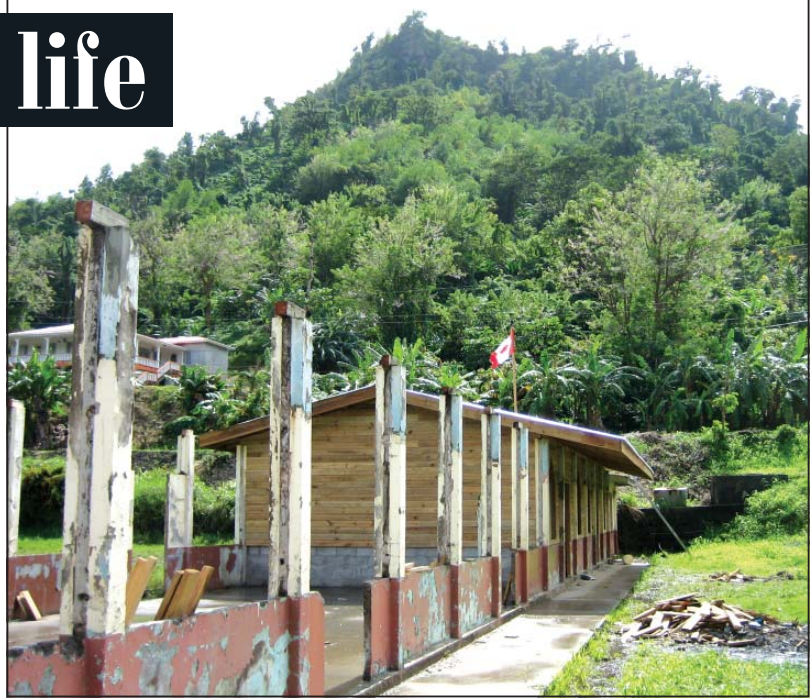
During the Easter season, the church celebrates a similar process—a process that is found throughout the Bible—as it contemplates the Resurrection and new life. During my experience in Grenada I have seen countless examples of new life: throughout my hike at Grand Etang, the reconstruction of a church building after Ivan, and the fruits of a new rector's ministry. I too have found new life in my spirituality and my understanding of the world during my time here.

We have several new opportunities

I think one of the important catalysts for new life to sprout is an openness to change and transformation. One of the challenges in Grand Etang is that forest workers want to replant the fallen trees so that the ecology of the park will be 'just as it was'. Change is often scary and our fear of the unknown without a doubt often leads us to re-establish what was in the midst of a 'new life opportunity'. I wonder if there would be a Christian faith had the disciples missed the opportunity presented by the Resurrection and decided to err on the safe side and go back to the way things were before Jesus.

It seems to me that in Niagara, we too are facing several opportunities for new life in our mission and ministry—quite fitting given we are in a season that is so focussed on new life.

First and foremost in many of our minds is the Episcopal election in June. The election of a bishop is a significant event in the life of the church. It presents us with an opportunity to discern how we as a community feel called and who we feel might enable that calling for our community and in the wider church. How might we fully realize this opportunity to engage in such an important discernment? While



The beams of the old church building and school in St. Luke's Grenville Vale stand before the newly reconstructed church of St. Luke's.

profiles and answers to questions from candidates are helpful, are they enough? I wonder how many churches will engage their members in conversation with their synod delegates about the values, gifts and vision they might wish to see in our next bishop.

There are also no less than ten parishes which are in some stage of discernment around the appointment of a new priest. These are opportunities to examine a church's past ministry, and in the words of Parker Palmer "let your life speak". In hearing one's church speak, it seems to me that the question here is very similar to the one facing us for the episcopal election: given our past and current ministry and context, where and how does our community feel called to ministry? After answering this question, one can ask the next one: who might enable that calling for the community?

We are called to trust God

Then in late June delegates from Niagara and across the Anglican Church of Canada will descend upon Winnipeg. This triennial meeting will be another opportunity in the church's life for new life: a new

primate will be elected, a resolution about the merger of the Ecojustice and Partners in Mission committees will be brought to the floor along with countless others, and new representatives will be elected to give voice to the local church on the General Synod's councils, committees and boards.

Of course, there will also be a resolution about whether the blessing of same-sex unions is a matter of doctrine and to what degree it may be, in light of the St. Michael's report. An additional resolution will be presented about permitting dioceses, as they discern for themselves, to authorize the blessing of same-sex unions; another one requesting that the Marriage Canon be revised to provide a theological rationale for the marriage of all persons legally permitted to marry will also come to the floor. Here again the church finds itself with a significant opportunity for new life as it discerns its understanding of human sexuality.

General Synod will also celebrate new life in the form of a joint Anglican-Lutheran day during General Synod. Ten years ago, we as a church entered into full

communion with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada. Since then we have seen many branches grow out from this new relationship: ministry appointments between our denominations, the amalgamation of ministries in some communities, enhanced cooperation in others.

In all these opportunities which are upon us, I think it is helpful to remember that as unknown as the future may be, we are called to trust God, to follow the example of Jesus and to let the Spirit work. Such opportunities, provided we allow them to happen, permit our community to adapt to the current realities we face, putting us in a strong position to respond to the realities we will face in the future.

Throughout Easter—and really every Sunday—we as a Christian community celebrate 'new life'. I wonder what this will mean for us in the months to come as we discern the many opportunities for such new life we have. Perhaps we may not see something as dramatic as a volcano turn into a lake, but I know that through the working of the Spirit, we will see signs of new life in our midst.



Reflecting on the environment: Christian perspectives

DOROTHY WILSON
ST. SIMON'S OAKVILLE

Climate change, greenhouse gases, energy use and overuse in the developed world... The environment is on everyone's mind as we grapple with the role our government should play nationally and on the world stage, and what we should be doing as individuals.

Kairos is providing a venue for all those who feel compelled to reflect and take action on these issues. Kairos: Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives, is a dynamic church-based social justice group,

representing 11 different churches and church organizations (including the Anglican Church of Canada and PWRDF) who are working in partnership to promote human rights, justice and peace, viable human development, and ecological justice. After coordinating campaigns related to water over the last two years, Kairos is changing its focus to energy in 2007. The thrust of the new campaigns will be to encourage the government to create a just and sustainable energy policy. As in the past, Kairos will produce well-researched background information

and excellent resources that will aid in animating the campaigns.

In October 2007, the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Region of Kairos is hosting its annual conference in Ancaster, Ontario. The theme of the conference "Just Power: Sustainable Energy for Today" will inspire all those who want to look at the issues from a faith-based perspective. Ian Thomson, the keynote speaker, is the Program Coordinator for Corporate Social Responsibility at the national Kairos office in Toronto. Workshops will be given on topics as varied as "Transporta-

tion and the future of cars", "The Green Rule", "Peak Oil and Powering Down". Also included in the conference, which will take place from October 12 -14, 2007 at the Mount Mary Retreat Centre in Ancaster, is time for worship, an AGM and opportunities for networking with like-minded people. Registration information can be obtained from Kairos at www.kairosCanada.org or locally from Gail Lorimer (Hamilton-Burlington Kairos) at 905-634-7654 or Dorothy Wilson (Oakville-Mississauga Kairos) at ah_wilson@sympatico.ca.

Changing the world one Youth Synod at a time

**NICK HEAD-PETERSEN
KRISTI BOULTON**

"Be the change you want to see in the world." These words, spoken by Gandhi, were lived out at the 19th Session of Youth Synod. A group of about 120 delegates ranging in age from 13-21 discussed motions that affected us both directly and indirectly. Motions ranging from Global Warming to iChurch (based on encouraging the use of technology in youth worship), and from the Election of a new Bishop to Safe Injection sites, were all discussed. The discussions were wrapped around the theme of "Our World, Our Future" and were carried out with respect and dignity. The art of persuasion shone through as people delved into different techniques to get their points across. Some used fact, others passion, and others the Bible; most used a combination of all three. The most important thing was the fact that whatever the topic, differing opinions were heard and respected.

This year's Youth Synod was held at St. George's Church in Guelph, a magnificent stone church with stunning stained-glass and lots of space to welcome a hoard of youth. The thing that makes St. George's wonderful though, is its people. The local planning committee, who had been meeting since January, had countless volunteers from not only St. George's but all of the Guelph

churches. These volunteers cooked our meals, washed our dishes, and supervised us over night to make sure everyone was safe and much more. All the volunteers worked tirelessly to make Youth Synod run smoothly, and to make sure all of the hungry youth were well fed. They did a fabulous job, and a deep amount of appreciation must be shown to them. Thank You!

The whole weekend went off wonderfully! Friends were made and change occurred. The youth voted to start compost programs in their churches, start discussion groups that will "talk and debate current issues: identifying biases and practising the development of independent opinions," and write letters to their Member of Provincial Parliament asking that more safe injection sites be opened for those who have become addicted to heroin (in the hope to stop the spread of such terrifying diseases as HIV/AIDS). This year we took risks and pushed people to think outside the box. After the debate was conducted on each issue, it was always a democratic vote which prevailed.

Excitement was created when the nominees for coadjutor bishop, who were present, had a chance to speak about what they had experienced and their vision for the church. This occurred because of a motion that was passed earlier in the day. The nominees spoke eloquently and



with passion. They also all sang a song or played an instrument, as was suggested by a delegate that, since music is a big part of our worship, choosing a song that reflects their leadership style would be more than appropriate. A special thank you must be given to these nominees.

The way the delegates of Youth Synod 2007 used the Synod process to evoke change with confidence was wonderful to see. The weekend encompassed the Synod Proper session, as well as worship, socials and a swim break. The wor-

ships were also planned around the theme of "Our World, Our Future." They incorporated music, scripture, and time for reflection. They ranged from a quiet, contemplative worship Friday night, to a worship with the NYC band (a group of Anglican musicians from our diocese that uses contemporary music to illustrate God's message), to the Sunday morning worship with the congregation of St. George's which incorporated liturgy from around the world. This was a very fitting end to our amazing weekend.

Our chancellor, The Reverend Dr. Steve Hopkins, challenged us to "make it our change." Whether we do this is up to us. Change is needed in our world and to see a group of globally-minded and engaged youth striving for a better world was a great sign of what can be done now. There is no need to wait. These youth are making change now. We are the Church's present and future, and as Bill Mous (the chair of the weekend) stated, "the transformation of ourselves and our world will move out of this place."

MARK YOUR CALENDAR NOW!

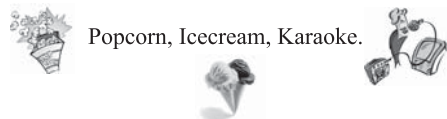
FUN FOR THE ENTIRE FAMILY

SING ALONG Sound of Music

Friday, October 26, 2007

7:00 p.m. at Christ's Church Cathedral

\$10 per person, children under 12 free



Popcorn, Icecream, Karaoke.

Come dressed as your favourite character from the movie!

For ticket info watch the next issue of the Niagara Anglican or call 905-527-1316 ext 240.

CARING CHRISTIAN HOST FAMILIES NEEDED

Caring Christian host families needed in Burlington and Oakville to host a student from Spain in July or August. Students attend school Monday to Friday and spend evenings and weekends with their host families. Remuneration is paid to the family. For more information, please call Megan or Veronica at 905-637-0879.

Youth alternative to Maundy Thursday Vigil



Shawn Brown celebrates his birthday during the Maundy Thursday Vigil.

**LAURA MCKENZIE
ST. ALBAN THE MARTYR, HAMILTON**

Around eight years ago I was explaining to our youth how many churches observed all night vigils on Maundy Thursday. (With our aging members and safety reasons this practice was discontinued.) They asked if they could do it as a group.

Knowing they would not be able to stay awake (in silence or prayer) all night we came up with the idea of sleeping around the altar. With permission from the rector, the following has become an annual event.

After the Maundy Thursday evening service the youth assemble in the church hall, share snacks and talk

about why we are doing this. We prepare for bed or quiet activities in the hall, as when they enter the church they must be quiet (no talking) and either read, pray or settle into their sleeping bags. The female adults sleep in the adjoining chapel, the boys in the Maddock study room with a male adult just outside. Wake up time is around 7:30 am Good Friday and we assemble to do a youth version of The Stations of the Cross with everyone taking their turn reading at a station. After this service we enjoy a breakfast prepared by two or three men from the parish at 8:30.

After breakfast we clean up, join the congregation for the service at

10:00 or go home. This year some of them even stayed for an outdoor Stations of the Cross at 2:00 pm in the park across the road.

This activity is open to any youth and it's surprising how many bring along their friends to take part. This year we had twelve youth and three adults. The fact that some of their friends are not regular church attendees this activity has become a way of showing the true meaning of Good Friday and finding out it's not just a holiday from school.

I've already been asked about next year so if anyone is interested in joining us just give me or the church a call.

EXTRA! EXTRA! Read all about it!

Hamilton shouts about an Extra-Ordinary Children's Festival



Music was awesome and extra-ordinary. The songs were interactive and lively.

SUSAN LITTLE
SAINT JOHN THE EVANGELIST

No, that wasn't what over 220 people were shouting at the Hamilton Children's Festival on the last Saturday in April at St. John the Evangelist. What they did shout, however, was something that sounded like this:

"Extra-ordinary!"

During the opening, each side of the church shouted out its part of the chant, with one side shouting "Extra" and the other side yelling "Ordinary". Put together, the shouts of children from Mohawk and Undermount Regions made a tremendous "Shout to the Lord", but not the kind of shout as traditionally expected.

On April 28, children aged 5 - 14 gathered together to celebrate the ways God moves in Extra-Ordinary ways to demonstrate His love for all people, young and old. Through Singing, Games, Crafts and Drama, the children learned that God loves us with an Extra-Ordinary love, a kind of love that transforms us from the 'ordinary' into a special relationship with God. Now that's something to shout about!

And if the shouting wasn't loud enough, the singing sure was! During the day, each age group went to Singing, and they got to sing their favourite, "Shout Hosanna!" as well as shake the dust from St. John's rafters. Another favourite song was the action-filled "Days of Elijah" that activated even the sleepest or worn-out person. Quiet songs, too, helped children reflect on the Extra-Ordinary ways that God takes 'ordinary' people out of difficult situations and transforms them. The younger group enjoyed using rhythm instruments when they sang "The Forgiveness Song", a song reminding them of God's unconditional love. The older groups made the place shake when they joined in on the rock 'n' roll tune of "Call Out to Jesus (Bop Bop)"

In Games, children loved Xtreme Soccer played with an exercise ball. Another favourite for the older group was the challenge of walking

on wooden skis, working as a team. For the younger groups, they couldn't get enough of the parachutes!

Crafts scored high in everyone's evaluations again this year, partly because of the wide variety of crafts available for each child to do and partly because of the unique things they could make. One of the favourites was a rainstick, capturing the sound of a gently falling rain in a long colourful tube; another prized creation was a kaleidoscope, using a prism and 'ordinary' colours



to become an Extra-Ordinary treat for the eye.

Drama was a hit this year with all age groups, focusing on the resurrection appearances of Jesus: the Extra-Ordinary discovery of the empty tomb, the Extra-Ordinary response of doubting Thomas, and the Extra-Ordinary reconciliation with Peter. The best part for the children was an opportunity to participate in the action, as the narrator re-visited these Extra-Ordinary events. Too often we forget how Extra-Ordinary these events actually were and we fall into a way of looking at them like ho-hum 'ordinary' everyday occurrences. The Drama this year certainly changed that for both adults and children!

At lunch, the children created birthday cards for a child they don't even know, a seven year-old boy who is fighting cancer and wants to set a Guinness record of receiving the greatest number of birthday cards on his upcoming birthday. If their cards can help him achieve his

goal, or if they can add some happiness to this boy's life, what an Extra-Ordinary act of love the witnessed and performed.

When Bishop Ralph visited the Festival organizers on their Extra-Ordinary accomplishment, too, because this Hamilton Children's Festival is their 25th successful event in Niagara Diocese. The key organizers of the first Festival in 1983 still form the core of the Hamilton event but into their ranks have

poured the children and grandchildren of some of the people who planned the early Festivals in this diocese. The Hamilton Festival is credited with also engendering the growth of the other three Festivals over that last two and a half decades. Now that's Extra-Ordinary!

The Extra-Ordinary milestone of the Hamilton Festival includes plans to celebrate the 25th Anniversary of Children's Festival on Saturday, June 9 at St. John's from 4 until 7 with a potluck supper at 5 pm. There will be displays and special events, too. Over the years, children and adults have signed their names to the banners, so there will be a literal 'walk down memory lane' when all twenty-five banners are hanging on the walls of the church. Their names testify to the power of God's love, the "power working in us" that "can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine"! Now that's something to shout about—something Extra-Ordinary!

An Extra-Ordinary Children's Festival in Greater Wellington

JUDY-ANNE CHAPMAN
ST. JOHN'S, ELORA

Saturday, May 5 was an "Extra-Ordinary!" celebration of 5 Greater Wellington parishes at St. Paul's, Mount Forest. Drayton sent their first children ever to a Festival, and host Mount Forest welcomed us with their beautiful fenced backyard for games on a sunny warm day.

Matt Adams, just finishing second year at Wycliffe, wrote a theme song "Extra-Ordinary"; words, chords and suggested actions are available on request (mattthew.adams@utoronto.ca).

Matt and Laura Adams again led the music sessions with interactive music and games.

Holly Howe joyfully engaged the youth with soccer, relays, Bible dodge ball, octopus, kickball, monkey in the middle, tag, and water balloons. One of the first sunny warm days was enjoyed by all on the lovely green backyard lawn. Her supply of candies was a highlight of groups visiting and leaving, energizing the youth to full participation.

Toni Stevens and Alex Magennis were valuable assistants with crafts. We remembered the source of our Resurrection power decorating a sun lit cave with sparkles and bright foil gem sequins, a mirror magnet got the same additions to

remind us about our Extra-ordinary status, new life was represented with googly eye decorated eggs and shiny heart and butterfly necklace.

Everyone signed onto fluorescent pale streamers of the Festival banner.

Steele Lazerte, currently a Chaplain to the Armed Forces and formerly Rector in Mount Forest and Arthur (and active Children's Festival leader) was sent encouraging greetings from the group on a banner that will be forwarded to Afghanistan where he is serving.

Everyone made a banner for the parade to Main Street behind the Festival banner, accompanied by guitar music and singing, and distribution of Festival invitations to come join the excitement at St. Paul's on a Sunday.

The enduring focal highlight of the special day was a spectacular banner created by Erin Eastmure and Calee Stimpson with multi-colour sparkle glue and metal foil sequin fireworks exploding, a large silver sparkle cross inside gold "Extra-Ordinary!" with 3D white doves and pink foil hearts flying off from the top of the cross.

Bright gold sparkle hanging tabs, hologram red and gold strip edging, and the fluorescent pale streamers for signing complete the tapestry that will hang at St. Paul's and may be seen at the next Niagara Synod at the Children's Festival booth.

An Extra-Ordinary day for Lincoln/Brock

BETH KERLEY
CHURCH OF THE TRANSFIGURATION

"EXTRA-ORDINARY" What does this mean to the children ages 5-12? What message do we want the children to take home? These questions framed the work of the planning team from December until March. And then, on Saturday, April 28, 2007, one hundred and twenty children, adult volunteers and activity planners came to St. John's, Niagara Falls for the Lincoln/Brock Children's Festival.

In the opening service the children were asked a question; "What does 'Extra-ordinary' mean?" Well, they thought and thought! A piece of plain white 8.5 by 11 paper was shown to them. "This is a plain piece of paper was said, 'very ordinary. A brief moment went by; then paper airplanes were shot into the crowd. Now the paper has become extra-ordinary! Something very simple became something special. And that set the theme for the day which was echoed in the festival theme song. 'Isn't it Extra-ordinary' written by Dorothy Brown.

Children rotated through activities throughout the day, among them storytelling where each age group heard a different story about being special. The older children played a game called "Who wants to be Extra-Ordinary?" In the crafts rotation, the children had the opportunity to make something very ordinary become Extra-ordinary; plain white bucket hats became individualized; clay flower pots were painted and planted with a pansy; plain wooden frames were painted and then filled with a mirror to reflect back an extra-ordinary person; and wind chimes were individually designed and crafted.

Energetic games loved by all included relays with whipped cream and cheerios, and with dress up clothes. The laughter, energy and gasping could be heard throughout the building. The music rotation gave everyone an opportunity to sing all their favourite songs as well as learn this year's theme song. Shakers added to the lively fun! At lunchtime, Images Puppet Productions held everyone's rapt attention with a puppet show; both entertainment and message.

This year's Festival banner depicts silhouettes of people looking up in the sky to watch fireworks. The children put their name on a star (the colour of their age group) and placed it on the banner as a reminder that they are all stars and are made special by God's love.

The day closed in the church with a raucous "YES!" in response to the question, "Did you have a great time?" One last round of the new theme song ended a fantastic day and children were sent on their way singing "Look around see how God made us/Made the earth to be our home/Sun to warm and star to guide us/For our nightlight God created Moon.

The festival would not happen without the support of all the volunteers from both Lincoln and Brock Regions. We are so blessed with so many people who support the festival. I would like to thank the parish of St. John's, Niagara falls for their "extra-ordinary" welcome and hospitality. I would like to thank all of those individuals who helped during the day to make the festival run smoothly. Remember that we are all made special by God's love. We had an "Extra-Ordinary" day.

Servants of Change



MICHAEL THOMPSON
ST. JUDE'S, OAKVILLE

"O tongues of fire come and kiss my brow, if I ever needed you, I need you now!"
Bruce Cockburn, "Incandescent Blue"

Have you ever noticed how very little there is in the bible about social continuity, how little attention scripture pays to "general conditions"? For the most part, the God revealed in scripture is not the theological foundation of continuity, but a restless and implacable agent of transformation.

When God shows up, it would seem, it is to make things different—to call "general conditions" into question, to divert persons and communities from their habits, to challenge unexamined practices, to stir the settled into motion, to direct pilgrims in new directions. In some cases, (Abram-Abraham, Jacob-Israel, Simon-Peter, Saul-Paul) the transformation is so thorough that the person receives a new name, becomes, in fact, a new self.

We have trouble with this in part because we tend to think of creation as something God did a long time ago, and not as a continuing activity into which humans, creatures in God's image, are called to participate. Out of some deep well of mystery, God fashions time and space, and calls us to delight in filling that time and space with human activity that is aligned with God's dream for creation.

We, of course, are a bit willful and clumsy, putting our lives together in the same way that many of us assemble IKEA furniture (or more worrisomely, gas barbecues)—that is, without reference to the instructions. And we end up with some pretty sorry and sometimes dangerous contraptions. Add selfishness to carelessness and it is no big surprise that God's decision to involve us in the continuing work of creation sometimes seems, well, ill-advised.

God persists. The work of redemption—enacted in the call of Abram, in the wounding of Jacob, in the Exodus, in the fierce nagging of the prophets, in the provocative ministry and courageous passion of Jesus—is intended to restore us, God's human creatures, to our purpose.

In fact, we could do worse than think of the work of redemption as, in Jack Biersdorf's words, the "healing of purpose". We have all, from time to time, and many of us more routinely than that, adopted the "default" human purpose that the world offers us. That is, we act in the world to make it work for what we perceive to be our own best interests—comfort, security, and pleasure.

To that end, once we have achieved some measure of those perceived best interests, we settle into a kind of guardianship of current arrangements. We trade down, from the Kingdom of God to a piece of the action. Fashioned to embody and fashion our lives as parables of God's desire for creation, we abandon our nature and take up something easier and less than being

human. We "deem" ourselves successful (or not) on a basis other than God's proposition that we, with him, are to serve creation—indeed, to continue creating the world as an expression of God's beauty, justice, and love.

All of which leads to the celebration of the eucharist in our churches, and the sudden appearance of Jesus with Cleopas and his companion between Jerusalem and Emmaus. The Greek word for the ritual words and actions around bread and wine is anamnesis—literally "un-amnesia" or "unforgetting". It is an encounter with God in Christ that takes place in the blessing, breaking, and sharing of bread. For centuries, we have focused on how the bread changes to become the body of Christ. But the purpose of the encounter isn't to change the bread so it becomes the body of Christ, but to change the persons who share the bread so they—we—become the Body of Christ. We were made part of that Body, grafted into it in our baptism, but because we forget to "deem" ourselves members of that Body and agents of God's Kingdom of beauty, justice, and love, we need re-deeming. The encounter with Jesus as we take, bless, break and share the bread, redeems us, and we forget.

All of that is played out in the Emmaus story. Cleopas and his companion are getting out of Dodge. There is danger there for them, because they have been associated with the provocative ministry of Jesus of Nazareth, and might be identified as worthy of sharing his fate. They default to security and head for the hills—in this case for their home in Emmaus.

Along the way, a stranger joins them, out of the blue. He engages them in some pretty deep conversation, and when they get to their home, it is dark. The darkness is dangerous for them, and they are glad to be home. Somehow, it occurs to them that the darkness is dangerous for their sudden companion as well, and they prevail on him to stay the night.

He picks up bread from their table, blesses and breaks it, and offers it to them. Their eyes are opened, they recognize that their sudden companion is Jesus, and he vanishes. What happens next means, I think, to tell us what ought to happen as a result of our church services. They head back into Jerusalem. The encounter with Jesus in the breaking of the bread overcomes their amnesia, and they un-forget that they are partners with God in proclaiming and planting seeds of a kingdom of beauty, justice and love. Back they go into danger, to be with the others who gather around that partnership.

Not only must we endure change, as it turns out. We are meant to bring it about, to join God in calling into question the adequacy of current arrangements—in our neighbourhoods, in our workplaces, in our cities and towns, in our legislatures and parliaments and council chambers, and in our churches. If the encounter with the living Christ in the un-amnesia of Eucharist is doing its work, we will be servants of change every moment of our lives.

If that makes you tired, remember the apostles gathered in the upper room, a bit at loose ends themselves about what their redemption might require of them. Until the wind and tongues of fire sent them into the streets and began a movement that, though it has not always had that first Pentecostal vigour, has never quite yielded to current arrangements.



Shoot, Ready, Aim

HOLLIS HISCOCK
RETIRED PRIEST - BURLINGTON

SHOOT - The photograph

I shot the above photograph of the river below Niagara Falls, Ontario on a beautiful autumn day. The river, the hills and trees as well as the accompanying sounds of nature spoke volumes about life and its stages.

READY - Words behind the photo

Take a detailed look at this photograph, then read slowly my reflections.

The river cascading down tens of metres of mountainous rocks symbolizes the turmoil, trials and troubles we face as we journey through childhood into adulthood. Over 4000 years ago, caught in a situation proving that bad things do happen to good people, Job (read his story in the Old Testament) was reminded by the Lord that, 'even if the river is turbulent, it is not frightened; it is confident' (40:23). We need the river's courage and confidence as we experience life in all its ups and downs.

In contrast, as the river meanders quietly across low lying fields, it represents for us occasions and opportunities for healing and renewal of body and spirit. As the writer of Psalm 46 observed, 'There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God.' Generally, as the river runs slowly it tends to massage and soothe every living creature it touches. Similarly, we need to schedule regular check-ups in the midst of our hectic lives to ascertain what we are doing, where we want to be and make adjustments to get there.

The river arrives from somewhere and is heading elsewhere. The writer who penned the second creation story in the book of Genesis (2:10) assures us that the 'river flows out of Eden to water the garden, and from there it divides and becomes four branches.' The Psalmist (80:11) predicted where the river was going as 'it sent out its branches to the sea.' We are considered the 'waters of life', who stream from God, sail with God on this earth and are anchored at death in that special place God has prepared for each individual.

We can join and leave the river at various locations and the process can be repeated. Floating with the river can be easy and pleasant, even though we always need to be aware of lurking dangers. Sometimes life forces us to travel upstream against the surging waters. These occasions can test the extreme limits of our endurance and could be disastrous or even devastating. Yet often, during these difficult times, we mature as individuals by developing our hidden strengths and potentials. Maybe the Psalmist (65:9) was right when he discerned that 'You (God) visit the earth and water it, you greatly enrich it; the river of God is full of water; you provide the people with grain, for so you have prepared it.' Maybe God's 'grain' means more than physical food; perhaps it also means food for our spirit, our intellect and our emotions.

Life thrives along the river. The shrubs and trees cling precariously to the steep rocky topography and send out their roots into the river for sustenance. The fish and plants below the surface receive their nourishment not only from deposits on the rich fertile river beds but also from particles transported by the ever rolling streams of water. Ezekiel, my favourite Old Testament character, describes a vision in which God brings him to the bank of a river where 'a great many trees' grow on either side. As Ezekiel stands there, overwhelmed by the majestic scene, God tells him, 'on both sides of the river, there will grow all kinds of trees for food. Their leaves will not wither nor their fruit fail, because the water for them flows from the sanctuary. Their fruit will be for food, and their leaves for healing' (7:12). Approximately 600 years later, in the last book of the Bible, John would describe the river of life flowing through the streets of the new city. He wrote (Revelations 22:2), 'On either side of the river is the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit... and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations.' Both writers concluded that God is the source, not only of our physical needs but also of the nutrients we crave for our spiritual wellness.

The endless persistent power of the flowing river gradually grinds down the jagged rough rocky shoreline and transforms it into a smooth, welcoming, resting place. Similarly, we humans are moulded by our life experiences, and the quiet constant presence of the living God can transform us into new people.. Perhaps Jesus' baptism is our prototype. Mark (1:5) in his gospel writes, 'people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him (Jesus), and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins'. The essence of baptism into a new life can be repeated over and over whenever we confess our sins or say that we are sorry and express our resolve to make changes in our lives.

The river has made us READY to take AIM at ourselves.

Aim - Questions and actions for you

- Spend a few minutes considering each question and write notes if necessary.
- Reflect on several encounters with God along your river of life.
- How do you handle the rough and smooth waters of life?
- What is God calling you to do today for yourself and other people?
- Hollis would appreciate 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.

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SICO

Getting to know you And also with you

**The Reverend Anne Crawford, Deacon at St. Luke's Church, Burlington
Deputy Director of Deacons, Diocese of Niagara
National Secretary of the Anglican Association of Deacons of Canada**



FRAN DARLINGTON
HONORARY - ST. JAMES, GUELPH

Since Christianity began, tradition has included diaconal ministry. Historically, the Anglican Church has ordained men and women to the order of Deacon as a prelude to ordination as Priest. In 2003, with several other Canadian Dioceses and after considerable prayer and discernment, the Right Reverend Ralph Spence, Bishop of Niagara, began ordaining people to this ancient office, not in preparation for priesthood, but as "vocational" deacons, called to that particular and profound servant ministry. Of approximately two hundred such deacons across Canada, eighteen now serve in Niagara. Recently, the Reverend Anne Crawford, Deacon at St. Luke's Church, Burlington, was appointed as Deputy Director of the College of Deacons of Niagara, the community of Diocesan Deacons.

As Deputy Director of Deacons, a commitment of one day per week, Anne works with the Reverend David Long, (Director, Human Resources, Diocese of Niagara) recognising "what work is involved... It's very early days for the Diaconate in this Diocese. The diaconal ministry is still evolving... Eventually things will need to be looked at very carefully." She smiles, "We do things slowly in the Anglican Church! There are more important things to worry about, including global warming."

Her ministry as Secretary of the national Association of Deacons means quarterly conference calls, an annual meeting and about two hours work each week. For the eight-member working board, Anne is "good at taking minutes. I try to keep it to two pages." She is also involved in preparation for next year's conference in Vancouver.

With Ron Pincoe and Richard Beaudoin, Deacons at St. Mark's, Orangeville, Anne is an elected delegate from the College of Deacons to Niagara's Diocesan Synod. Anne is clear about her ministry: "A Deacon is a Deacon. Most people have been priested, but I like to call myself 'a Deacon.' I'm licensed to my Rector and pledged obedience to my—I take those vows very seriously."

Compensation? "People think I'm paid, but all Vocational Deacons are voluntary."

How has Anne come to this responsibility?

Essential in the journey to ordination as Deacon is recognition by their parish of an individual's suitability for the "office and work of a deacon." Anne has explored her

profession in many ways for many years.

A nurse trained in gerontology and palliative care, and member of St. Luke's, Burlington, for eighteen years, Anne was asked to run St. Luke's Phoenix Fellowship, a seniors' drop-in centre initiated by the Reverend Carol Skidmore. A few years later, when the then Rector, the Reverend Ralph Spence, became Bishop, Anne trained as a parish nurse, taking an intensive ten-day course at McMaster University, ultimately earning certification a year later. "I was already doing what I would call parish nursing with the seniors. I took a week's silent retreat to contemplate that, came back and decided that was important to do.

"I so enjoyed studying that I stayed at Mac for my own pleasure!" Anne earned a Master of Theology degree, "but in the back of my mind, I was in a spiritual journey. I had a sense that God was calling me to be ordained. I struggled with that, but it didn't feel right, I didn't want to be a parish priest. When it was lifted up to me that I might consider ordination as a Deacon, that felt right. Now I'm right where I belong!

"I was very much helped in the process. (St. Luke's Rector, the Reverend Canon) Michael Bird was an encouraging presence; the parish was an affirming presence. I was encouraged to find a spiritual director—I've been going for ten years!" Having found a "spiritual home" at Loyola House, Guelph, "I've done one, two, four and eight day retreats, and I'd like to do the forty days. As an extrovert, it's very refreshing to do a silent retreat," Anne grins, "but people laugh!"

In 2004, Anne was ordained with six others. (The first three "vocational" deacons were ordained in December, 2003.) To be considered for ordination as a Deacon, one meets several times with a parish committee, giving them the background of one's spirituality, then is interviewed by David Long and one's Rector. "If the committee decides you are an appropriate person to be ordained, they bring a motion to Vestry. Also, at St. Luke's (there was the question), did the parish want a Parish Deacon?" Obviously, the parish did; as Anne says, "the bottom line is that you are lifted up by your parish."

New adventures in ministry

After Anne's ordination ("the most joyful occasion!") at Christ's Church Cathedral, "I was still doing the same things, but the role changed. I now robed on Sunday. I have always read the Gospel, but now I may do the Ministry of the Word at the early service. I administer Communion, preach, lead prayers. I made it clear when I was ordained that I didn't want to displace lay people. St. Luke's has a strong lay ministry... a wonderful team ministry. We couldn't do what we do without it!"

Anne took on hospital ministry: "That's where my nursing back-

ground fits in very well." Parish pastoral ministry also became her duty: "One of my responsibilities is to look at who in the parish needs pastoral care and how that can be shared among the parish clergy (the Reverends Michael Bird, Sharyn Hall, Paul Tinker, Peter Case, William Gibb and Anne). (We all have) different skills, but there's only so much time. If I can free up time for my colleagues, that's a great joy for me."

For home Communion, "one of the most powerful things in my ministry," Anne uses a set given to her by Canon William Hill. Originally given to the Reverend J. Walker of St. John's Church, Whorlton, England, in 1870, the beautiful silver set came to Anne via Lloydminster, Saskatchewan, "but no one knows how it got there." Anne explains, "I'm very aware that I'm an ambassador for God, the Anglican Church, my parish; I take it very seriously."

She contracted with St. Luke's for ten hours a week: "I probably put in a lot more hours, but that's my choice. I'm learning that you're better to know your limits, rather than becoming resentful. You're of no value if you're burned out. The most important person to care for is yourself. I need time to refresh spiritually, to do prayer time, and to study for my course (in spiritual direction)."

World traveller, committed Canadian

Born in Derbyshire, Anne spent the war years in Manchester, and went to school in Nottingham. In an era of masculine dominance, her role models were her teachers, the Vicar's wife, and her mother, who "became the Town Clerk's wife and supported him—that's what women did!" Anne's father was a staunch member of the Church of England. Her mother, equally committed to the Methodist Church, said the Church of England "didn't know how to sing!" Anne remembers growing up in "a very structured and very loving Christian home."

After training as a nurse, Anne worked in a family planning clinic in Brixton, London, where her mentor was Dr. Eileen Snow, a missionary in India and friend of Niagara's Bishop Wilkinson. Since then, Anne has lived all over the world, working in a missionary hospital in Nazareth for one year, several years with the Flying Doctor Service in Australia, six months in Hong Kong, three months running a Family Planning Clinic in a hotel room in the Seychelles... as well as becoming mother to three children, all born in different countries in less than four years. Her husband's medical practice finally brought the family to a six month commitment in Uganda, at a time of great turmoil there. "When the time came to leave, we couldn't get a flight, but I finally did, with the children, and their father came a month later." Back in England, her daughter exclaimed, "Mummy, don't drink (a glass of wat-

ELEANOR JOHNSTON
ST. THOMAS, ST. CATHARINES

Oh no, you may think as your eye scans down this column and notices the word "homosexual," not another article on sexual orientation! Keep reading: I hope you'll find that I'm approaching the topic from a useful and original perspective.

First, a personal story. I grew up in a rural Ontario society in which everyone was Caucasian as well as heterosexual. Hold on to that second label for a minute; I'll get to it. But, you might ask, how could everyone have been white? They simply were. The only non-whites I saw were the protesters on TV news and the stereotypes on TV shows. I knew about racism from my high school history courses but in everyday life I had no interaction with people of color.

This state of ignorance lasted until my first week of initiation at the University of Toronto. During a midnight raid on the men's residence, all the freshies (I can't use the term "freshmen" without a digression on the fact that we were all female) of our residence eagerly followed the instructions of the older students.

One of them was, to my consternation, African-American (although we said "negro," a term that was politically correct then but soon gave way to "black," a term that... ok, no more digressions). I watched how the other girls didn't seem to notice her race. When it was my turn, however, to clamber over the brick wall of the Annesley Hall grounds, I had two thoughts. Wouldn't it be easier to walk down the lawn and around the wall? And, I'm going to have to touch her hand! The black girl was giving each freshie a hand-up over the wall, and I was afraid because I had never before touched a person of another race.

I didn't want to embarrass her, so I reached out and she gave me a lift. Her hand felt, to my relief, just like anybody's hand. By the time I had landed on the other side of the wall, I'd overcome my fear of people of other races and realized that I could be friends with non-whites. Racism is often fostered for more sinister reasons (think of Hitler, or slavery), but for many individuals, racist fear is based primarily on inexperience.

What has this to do with the homophobia of people who believe that homosexuality is a sin? Is this judgment not the product of fear? Many people in Canada over the age of 50 were brought up in a world with no homosexuals. Ok, statistically speaking, "they" must have been there, but "we" didn't see "them." "They" were so carefully hidden in their closets that, like the people of many of today's Anglican churches in Africa, "we" could say that homosexuality did not exist in "our" society. How is it that, in Canada, some middle-aged and older heterosexuals have come to accept homosexuals and some have not? I think it's a question of whether or not they have been helped over the wall of fearful inexperience.

Thinking about pro-gay straight (to use shorter and more contemporary labels), I see three main types. There are those in the helping professions (medicine, education, religion, law) who have grown used to working with all people regardless of their race, sexual orientation, etc., as required by the law of the land.

There are those in the fields that gays traditionally have chosen, such as the arts; the straights will naturally interact with and accept gays while working beside them. And there are the people whose families or friends include a beloved gay; these straights have watched the gay person from childhood and can see that he or she did not choose this sexual orientation; the gay is simply gay by nature, as another person might be left-handed.

You'll have noticed that I included religion in the helping professions even though a lot of religious leaders have been the first (and will perhaps also be the last) to condemn homosexuality. Ted Haggard is a classic example of religious hypocrisy that the secular world is so quick to denounce and mock, and a stock gag of TV comedy suggests that all priests are homosexual pedophiles. The practice of religion is now rejected by many because of our historic intolerance.

Nonetheless, I can see how confusing it is for older conservatives to rethink their theological understanding on this issue. They must feel that to change their beliefs is to reject "the faith of their fathers." With all due respect to the distress that they are experiencing, I invite them to explore the works of contemporary theologians who explain how the full inclusion of homosexuals in the church is, in fact, the will of God. We have, thanks in part to the cogent arguments in this publication, learned that to use the Bible to denounce homosexuality is to misuse it.

Yet still the conservatives in our communion are reluctant to change their condemnation of what they see as a sin. It is difficult, especially for older people, to overcome the assumption that homosexuality is a disgusting taboo. Most younger heterosexuals, accustomed to seeing gays on TV and to reading stories about gays, are free of such unease and can more easily support the equality of homosexuals as a justice issue. They've seen that "Will and Grace," those popular gay and straight roommates with their highly symbolic names, are at times admirable and at times silly and, consistently, likeably human.

Younger heterosexuals are also divided into pro- and anti-gay positions. What are the determining factors? It seems that young people generally agree with their peer groups and/or families. Certainly more young than old people are pro-gay; the former were taught at school, if not at home, the values of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Yet in the elementary schoolyard, the bully's most common put-down is still, "You're so gay!"

The longer we Anglicans debate this question, the more we damage our church and each other. The Anglican Church of Canada needs to move on, to concentrate on doing God's will in serving the poor, preserving creation, and seeking justice and peace. Hopefully, homosexual Christians will be able to move past the hurt they have endured and take every opportunity to reach out their hands to conservatives in order to help them over their fears.

May the leaders of our Church, as they meet in General Synod, make the decisions that will enable all Anglicans to share the Peace with each other and worship the God of Love in full communion.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 20

2007 Episcopal Election

The Venerable Bruce McPetrie



As Bishop, you will be the public face of our Church in Niagara. What will be the central focus of your message to the rest of society?

My message to society stems from my identity as a Christian. In faith, our community believes that we are called by God to share a faith whose purpose is to extend and to live out the good news given by our Lord, Jesus Christ. Our mandate is to proclaim Christ's message of love and hope to the poor, to the marginalised and to those who have lost direction. We are to challenge injustice and discrimination. The first obligation of the Church is not to judge but to offer reconciliation in a broken world. The Church is a welcoming community where spirits are renewed, hope is rekindled and life is given a new sense of direction. Though we acknowledge that in the past the church has stumbled, we seek to renew and to advance the bonds of family and our sense of community because society is greatly devalued without them. As Christ is our example, we are to be servants working to improve the quality of all human life regardless of race or creed.

How do you see your spiritual life helping you to nurture and fulfill the role of Bishop?

In my life I am aware of the divine presence continually. In time of uncertainty prayer is my most valued resource. In prayer, I have often discovered inspiration and new possibilities which motivate me further. Without this depth of communication through prayer an empowered episcopacy cannot survive. The daily reading of scriptures and personal devotions provide a Bishop with the armour necessary for the duties of this office. I believe

that only by emulating this spiritual bond with Christ, may a Bishop preside at the celebrations and sacraments in and for gatherings of the larger Church community. Working with others is always stimulating for me as it feeds my desire to further our various ministries. As chief pastor in our Diocese, the Bishop's role translates into considerable time dealing with parishes and clergy who are in need of inspiration, spiritual support and encouragement. Previous experience in a variety of parish circumstances and personnel issues are prerequisite. In my role as a priest and as an Archdeacon, I am called upon to share my faith in a variety of ways. As an administrator, there are times which necessitate my ability to reach a deeper level of faith in order to offer guidance and to make crucial decisions. In faith, I must summon all my resources to provide fair and just counsel, spiritual support, buoyancy and most of all optimism and hope. I know that before our Diocesan family, our Bishop must be seen to be front and center in times of difficulty as well as on occasions of joyous celebration. Liturgically, a Bishop must be seen to be faithful, competent and personable in these settings. Throughout my ministry, I have tried to work actively to promote church unity by doing my utmost to keep the doors of conversation open. I know that beyond our Diocese, a Bishop is called to consult and deliberate with others in both the Provincial and National Houses of Bishops as well as their respective Synods. In these forums, a Bishop will be required to give prayerful concern, offer diplomacy and calm amid the storms of controversy. The Bishops of our Diocese have left an admir-

able legacy of respected leadership in the heat of debate as well as rational counsel in those discerning times in between.

As bishop, you are interviewed by the press and asked insights into how you will encourage youth involvement and growth in parish life. How would you respond?

Presently, our youth are a valuable asset to the Church as change and challenges arise. As Bishop I must seek to motivate our youth to make their own personal faith journey. This message is communicated through, being present at youth gatherings, by nurturing opportunities and by personal example. Like the Apostle Andrew, who was known for bringing people ever closer to meet Christ, a Bishop must endeavour to do likewise. A Bishop should be approachable and be a sincere listener to the concerns of our youth. However, our youth should not be offered mere token involvement on the sidelines, they should be invited to participate in all forms of ministry commensurate with their own level of commitment and the time available to them. I have learned from my own children as well in the parish, that it is prudent to listen intently because our youth often ask the most elementary and poignant questions on issues of faith. They have the ability to strip away the complexities and get to the bottom line. I believe that our youth want to feel that they can make a real 'hands-on' difference in the lives of others in the name of Christ. There are opportunities for ministry in the areas of Child Poverty, Human Rights and Issues concerning our Environment.

What are some of the guiding principles with which you would lead, both within and outside the Diocese, such that a healthy diversity within our common fellowship may be maintained?

As each circumstance arises, I find myself being guided by principles appropriate to the occasion. I strive to treat others, as I wish to be treated. My personal sense of vocation serves as a strong and guiding force. It constantly demands my being more open, listening to the Holy Spirit as it now bids me to take another step placing myself in God's hands. I believe that if one's vocation does not grow and evolve, neither will the individual. Whenever I think that something may be

beyond my skill set, it is often then I discover that God extends more grace so that it becomes, "more than I could ever ask or imagine." Instilled in me from my youth is the credo that I will not ask anyone to do a job that I would not do. I often choose the hands-on approach because challenge often demands some personal risk. This is, I believe, my own take on trying to live out a servant ministry. My family is also at the centre of my life. They enrich my capacity to love, my joy and my sense of well being. They instil fond memories while keeping me focused on the future. My family is a major source of inspiration to me and I trust that this trait is reflected in my ministry as well.

At the House of Bishops, you are queried by a colleague about your strategic priorities for the diocese. How would you respond?

I am aware that things which may appear to be simple are often more complex than we may ascertain at the outset. I must remain attuned to the greater needs of the Diocese and the Church universal.

- It is my hope that together we may continue to instill a deep sense of spiritual commitment in Christ. This is what makes our faith contributions to our society a rich source of inspiration and so vitally necessary.
- To ensure long-term stability in leadership, I wish to ensure that the discernment of vocations for ordained ministry continues to be considered with the utmost care. It is important that all candidates are made fully aware of and are sufficiently prepared for the realities of contemporary parish ministry. I want to establish a covenant with each of our seminaries ensuring that certain minimum standards will be mandatory for all Niagara postulants. Within our Diocese, I want to offer additional training prior to parish placement.
- I must work consistently and pastorally for the cause of church unity, to harmonize the diversities in our Diocese within a context of mutual acceptance.
- People need to see their Bishop as one who has the capacity to heal and as one who raises hope: to our first-nation peoples, to the misguided and to those who feel alienated from their own church. Parishes and clergy who are experiencing distress, need to be cared for with experienced pastoral skills.

- As far as this is possible, we need to create a strategic plan for our regional ministries. I know how truly difficult this task is because changes arise so quickly. Undoubtedly, some unpopular decisions will result from this process. We need the involvement and co-operation of both laity and clergy to assist us. Given the changing demographics, attendance patterns and our need to deliver ministry more co-operatively and more effectively, some degree of re-organization will result. I suggest we begin with a reduction of the number of regions from six to four. This initiative might be the logical first example for further consolidation.

- More Community Outreach ministries should be investigated and encouraged across our Diocese. We need to raise our own profile within each community with efforts to improve services by joining in partnerships with other churches and organizations.

- The membership, function and the effectiveness of Diocesan committees should be reviewed regularly that each might be confirmed, altered or discontinued. It is not easy to retain balance between continuity and setting new directions.

- Ministry to our Seniors needs to be developed further.

- I would like to establish a body of knowledgeable people to assist with the 'greening' of our church facilities. The resources of our Diocese would be able to offer parishes recommendations and assistance to improve energy efficiency.

What legacy do you wish to leave at the end of your tenure?

Over a period of time, I believe that a symbiotic relationship develops between a Bishop and a Diocese. It begins with the Bishop becoming more closely attuned to the Diocesan family. Our bishop will better be able to reflect this general character across the Diocese and beyond its boundaries. Like all who are engaged in ministry, a Bishop will undoubtedly leave her or his own imprint upon our Diocesan family. Since history often passes its own assessment using an entirely different set of criteria, perhaps another generation will, more objectively, be able to comment on a Bishop's legacy. This being the case, we should all pray that this legacy might say, "This Bishop proved to be a person of resolute faith in Christ Jesus."

Explore the church, explore the world, be transformed

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10

as Canadians to learn and to share, as well as to give and receive gifts and ministries from people of other countries, cultures and churches." Since 1986, VIM has sought to respond to this need by offering opportunities with our partner churches and institutions. You can find out more about VIM by checking out their website at www.anglican.ca/partnerships/VIM.

Another opportunity to engage with the wider church and the wider world comes through our companion diocese relationships. Niagara has had a long history of companion diocese relationships—from the Seychelles and Keewatin, to Cuba

and Uruguay. Several of our churches continue to undertake visits to their twinned parishes in Cuba and maintain communication with their twinned church. Grace Church in Milton has even organized a national website to raise funds to support ministry in the Diocese of Cuba. Through 'Coins for Cuba' parishioners can designate their loose change towards ministry projects in Cuba. Check out www.coinsforcuba.ca for more information. The Diocesan Outreach committee has also recently supported a request for Bibles for members of Anglican churches in the Diocese of Uruguay by sending a grant to Bishop Tamayo for their purchase.

With summer coming many

other opportunities will no doubt arise as we head out on vacation. It seemed there wasn't a day that went by during my time in Grenada when tourists didn't stop to take down information from the large sign about St. George's Reconstruction Fund. These visitors often returned to their home churches to raise funds for St. George's Church. Global travel has made this trend a reality; coupled with the growing trend of short term mission trips, the possibilities for participating in mission and ministry projects—both with our Anglican partner churches and with others—are limitless.

The Canadian Churches Forum for Global Ministries Training, an organization supported by our

General Synod, specializes in helping Canadian churches "reflect and work together on global mission issues." As such, they are a great resource for churches or people who find themselves with an exciting global ministry opportunity but don't know where to begin. In addition to a wealth of resources available on their website, the Forum offers training programs of education, training and dialogue that challenge participants to "prophetic global witness." One such program is specifically designed for Mission Trip Leaders. It will take place in Toronto next September. You can check out www.ccforum.ca for more information about the Forum and its programs.

Perhaps you might consider exploring one of these opportunities over the summer, whether it is a long-term ministry program like VIM, a correspondence opportunity through our companion diocese relationships or a short-term ministry trip which appeals to you. By participating in the wider church and exploring our world, one shares in our commonality both as Christians and as humans. In doing so, just like the woman from Toronto who was transformed by her experience as a relief worker in the wake of Hurricane Ivan, we too have an opportunity for transformation. So explore the Church, explore the world and be transformed!

2007 Episcopal Election

The Reverend Canon Dr Margaret Murray



As Bishop, you will be the public face of our Church in Niagara. What will be the central focus of your message to the rest of society?

The message: Within the embrace of God's incredible graciousness, each person, each creature, each life is precious and lovable, invited always to discover resurrection and experience newness in life. In Jesus, we see divine compassion and justice-making demonstrated in human life and through the Spirit, we see grace everywhere! The Church is an outward and visible sign of that communal experience of the sacred. With honesty and humility, I would represent the Church as imperfect, self-critical and still learning to hear and respond to the prompting of the Spirit. When interpreting the Church in our world, our messaging needs to reflect our engagement of today's critical questions, instead of the Church's dilemmas about self-preservation. In the midst of speaking through challenges, I would hope to speak with genuine warmth and welcome, so that the messaging points beyond to a hopeful people, who are finding meaning and mission for their life and would invite others to engage their spiritual quests within the heart of transformative Christian communities within Niagara and beyond.

How do you see your spiritual life helping you to nurture and fulfill the role of Bishop?

I am becoming more and more deeply rooted in my search for wisdom. As an extravert, I experience

the presence and call of God in my ordinary life. While intuition, intelligence, and information all influence my discernment, it is my search for wisdom that grounds my pathway. Thankfully, the wisdom I discover is not always my own! But my search for wisdom keeps me listening intently, hopeful that I'm accessing the best wisdom available. It shapes my attentiveness to Scripture, reflection, journaling, retreat-time and my alertness to the Spirit-wisdom evident in my interactions with others. I believe that it is my yearning for wisdom which has grounded my ministry so that I can remain healthy, hopeful, open-minded and integrated. I believe that it is this spiritual gift, the persistent search for wisdom, which makes me a credible candidate for the role of Bishop in the Church. I also believe that our diocese needs a bishop who is wise, a bishop who is an experienced 'wisdom-seeker' to help us navigate within the ever-changing seascape of today's challenges.

As bishop, you are interviewed by the press and asked insights into how you will encourage youth involvement and growth in parish life. How would you respond?

I find youth to be open to 'spirituality' in life, to meaningful relationships and new insights. I see them as role models in the area of commitment; they invest incredible time and energy in things that matter to them! Yesterday, I asked the youth in our church what affects their involvement in the church, what

might enrich their participation and what might encourage other youth to connect within the church. They told me they find belonging, acceptance, and respect and they are challenged to show maturity in their relationships. They have fun and value the opportunity to ask questions and find their views taken seriously. They also spoke about the challenges affecting youth involvement: achieving a 'critical mass', continuity in programming, visibility within the church, and boring worship. They affirmed the critical place of both local and diocesan youth ministries. Again, I am inspired by their wisdom! To encourage youth involvement, I will engage the issues of continuity and visibility (which will impact on the issue of boring worship!). Through supporting parishes and diocesan programming, stronger and more visible youth ministry can be a blessing to people of all ages.

What are some of the guiding principles with which you would lead, both within and outside the Diocese, such that a healthy diversity within our common fellowship may be maintained?

I can't draw a decent stick figure and I don't have a green thumb; yet, I'm an artist and a gardener. In everything, I try to nurture life in individuals and within living communities. My guiding principles are evident in all living systems. Completely unlike machines and billiard balls, the individuals, communities, diocese and even the Anglican Communion are all engaged in life processes: growing, becoming, sprouting, healing, transitioning, adapting, withering, evolving, birthing, dying, reviving... My life and leadership is expressed through organic themes, seen in living systems and life processes.

▪ **INTERDEPENDENCE** is a good thing. It's called symbiosis! The evidence within living systems suggests that our culture is wrong in its assumption that independence is possible and interdependence is some kind of failure.

▪ **HEALTH** is contagious. Deepening the health in our relationships and communities happens when we gather and listen to one another.

▪ **DIVERSITY** is essential. Living systems depend on diversity, using their God-given life-processes to diversify in order to ensure the continuity of Life.

▪ **CHANGE** is normal. All living things know how to adapt to new conditions. Preventing adaptation and choosing to maintain unchanging, stable, predictable organizations compromises life rather than preserving it.

▪ **CREATIVITY** already exists. To access that Spirit, invite and involve those who already have the passion and imagination to live into a hopeful future.

Like a spider's web, these five principles are interconnected and interdependent. I would address our current challenges drawing on the wisdom arising from living systems (about seasons, local conditions, uniqueness, resilience, adaptation). We will not thrive as a living system if we seek independence, or fear diversity and change or ignore the signs of healing and creativity which already exist. I believe that the next bishop will need to trust these life principles. We have a long history of management rather than nurture. And, we still have trouble trusting the Spirit of life. In the time ahead, the Bishop will need to have a deep understanding of the good news of diversity and of interdependence and to have an instinct for working on the health of our relationships. The Bishop's role is central to the hope that we might learn to respond to the Spirit's persistent invitation to Life.

At the House of Bishops, you are queried by a colleague about your strategic priorities for the diocese. How would you respond?

With parishes and individuals, we are quite aware of the journeys being made, growing in faith and spirit. We sometimes forget to watch the spiritual and missional journey of the Diocese itself. As a community of faithful people, our Diocese needs to own its journey in insight and faithfulness. In faithfulness, our Diocese works to resource the ministries within parishes. But, a diocese also needs to engage its wider horizons. In the Diocese of Niagara, we need to develop deeper awareness of that missional journey,

particularly because of the white-water experience of change in our world. The lens of living systems can provide language and images to raise our awareness, thereby equipping us as a team to navigate in these restless seas. That lens will bring into view the quality of our connectedness and relationships.

We will develop a process to start new conversations within our diocesan community and refresh existing conversations, listening for the best wisdom available to us. Such conversations will deepen our awareness of our sense of identity and gradually widen the sense of ownership of the missional journey of the diocesan community. Likely, we'll find ourselves sitting lightly with our structures and questioning some of our operating assumptions. For example, hierarchical and adversarial relationships affect the praxis in our Diocese, predictably stimulating resistance rather than engagement. Previously functional structures now stifle healthy dialogue and relationships. I've observed a direct correlation between the depth of ownership within the community and its potential for the critical capacities of adaptation and creativity. For wisdom and for ownership, we'll need coaches, designers, healers, dreamers, midwives and people who care. We'll bring to birth initiatives, experiments, projects and occasionally strategy.

Our conversations will impact our decisions about formation, deployment and leadership development of clergy and lay leaders. We can tackle today's thorny issues and tomorrow's emerging questions. The conversation groupings will likely keep 'morphing' like the life stages of a butterfly. That's OK, since the basic goal is to ensure good process in order to nurture new life. And, the means to that end involves widening our ownership of diocesan processes and leaning into the future, aware again of our shared purpose and missional journey within the Diocese of Niagara.

What legacy do you wish to leave at the end of your tenure?

A legacy shaped by the 'ways' we work together.

Worship from the mouths of moms

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

for a moment and actually act, actually be, actually do something. I ended up being raised Anglican because my parents connected with a church where the service had a sense of shape, of ritual, of motion, rather than the talk-talk-talk that can so easily dominate our religious lives.

And finally, in the Anglican Church throughout my twenty-odd years in this denomination, there has been a concerted push to recapture communion as the central act of worship, to make the service of Eucharist the norm Sunday by Sunday. Rich and exciting theology has been emerging as we mine this communal meal for all of the varied, textured layers of meaning. And I have been

whole-heartedly supportive of this liturgical movement.

But... here is one honest, face-value assessment of how that liturgical movement boils down to a received experience: ten more minutes of waiting in line while I keep the kids quiet so I can get a wafer.

Different ways of understanding

It seemed to me like there was a good opportunity here for some further learning, on my part as well as theirs. I suggested that the next time we meet together I offer some teaching around the Eucharist—what it is meant to communicate, why it is so central to our worship—and that they in turn offer me some feedback about where and why this message and meaning is getting lost. In short: where are the

synapses just not firing?

I greatly anticipated this meeting imagining all of the constructive feedback I would receive. I was sure that we would talk about how to make communion feel more like a meal—less stylized, use of real bread, sharing the bread and wine with one another rather than waiting in line, de-cluttering the rest of the service, streamlining the action toward the table and the meal, interactive and simple prayers of blessing the bread and the wine, etc. My mind was spinning thinking of all of the possibilities for creating an alternative worship experience in which the symbols of faith were allowed a brightness, a sharpness that perhaps they don't always have on a Sunday morning.

The real conversation didn't go quite the way I anticipated. We

did touch briefly on a few of these issues, some suggestions were made (like "I have absolutely no idea why we have so many prayers every week for so many people and churches around the world, it just goes on forever"). But to my surprise, for each person that was part of that discussion, each had a different way of understanding what the worship was all about, and each person was happy to take something different away from that worship.

The way forward

In fact, what emerged particularly from our time together was not any consensus at all about future directions in worship. What emerged was gratitude for the conversation and learning.

It turns out that topics like "what

I find most meaningful about worship" or "what the Eucharist means to me" are not part of regular dinner-time or social-time conversation. It turns out that although most people in the room had been part of the church for 30 plus years, talking about the meaning of worship was a first-time experience for many of them. It turns out that there are some pretty substantial gaps in the new generations of faithful having the language, the tools, the permission, the forum, for incorporating the symbols of our faith into our own lives.

It also turns out that engaging this kind of topic invokes a great deal of spirited and lively conversation in worship. What emerged was gratitude for the conversation and learning.

And then again, maybe conversation is the way forward.

2007 Episcopal Election

The Right Reverend Philip Poole



As Bishop, you will be the public face of our Church in Niagara. What will be the central focus of your message to the rest of society?

The focus of my message centers on the Good News of Jesus Christ. There is a deep confusion in the world today about why human beings matter. Life is too easily taken for granted. Our baptismal covenant commits us to respect the dignity of every human being. The church is a place where people can belong and experience the deep and abiding love of God. The church is a place to believe in. The church alone among institutions exists for those who are not its members and as such brings a passion to care for the poor, marginalized and oppressed. Even in the midst of the current turmoil the message offers a sense of future, a sense of hope and a sense of mission. God's promise to us that unity overcomes estrangement and joy overcomes despair, gives me courage to engage in the deep realities of

life. I would emphasize that issues of faith are important and not marginal in our society. I would engage the wider society in issues that are central to the Christian mission, including justice, peace and reconciliation. I would develop partnerships within business, government and society which would enable us to achieve a better reflection of the Kingdom of God.

How do you see your spiritual life helping you to nurture and fulfill the role of Bishop?

As a Bishop I have found that the spiritual disciplines in my life are increasingly important to keep me grounded and focused. My day begins with Morning Prayer, scripture readings, a time of silent reflection and intercessory prayer. It ends with night time prayers. Spiritual direction and an annual week long retreat deepen my Christian journey in life. I am nourished by the sacraments of the church and by bible

study. These disciplines enable me to maintain a sense of balance in my life and deal with the daily challenges of Bishop. I often begin gatherings of clergy and laity with a short period of bible study which serves to remind me (and them) Whose I am and Who it is that I serve. I have found that this discipline assists me in identifying the spiritual issues facing the church and not to depend solely on responses from a best business and psychological practice. Family relationships support my ministry and deepen my spiritual understanding of life in community.

As bishop, you are interviewed by the press and asked insights into how you will encourage youth involvement and growth in parish life. How would you respond?

Niagara has an active youth network with which I hope to become familiar. The two years I spent with young people as chaplain in a boarding school environment, my background in church camps and my current engagement with young people have taught me that they seek answers to questions of faith. Youth want to experience joy and look for meaningful direction in their lives. The church is blessed when young people are prepared to invest their time and energy in parish life. I will be an advocate for youth ministry. I will encourage parishes to nurture the leadership skills in the young and to encourage vocations. I will create opportunities to nurture personal growth and development while encouraging engagement with others both locally and with the international church, including

mission trips and exchange programs. I will seek the counsel of young people in the decision making processes of the church.

What are some of the guiding principles with which you would lead, both within and outside the Diocese, such that a healthy diversity within our common fellowship may be maintained?

Four of the guiding principles with which I would lead the Diocese of Niagara include interpreting, listening, consulting and teaching. The bishop has a key role in interpreting the church to the world, the world to the church and parishes to each other. My ministry within the diverse membership of the International Compass Rose Society allows me to bring the experience of Canada to the world and the world to Canada. These diverse voices participate together in common cause for the mission of the church. The bishop needs to listen hard to the varied opinions within and outside the church seeking to discern the Spirit. Broad consultation is an important facet of leadership which creates dialogue and respect. Rooted in scripture, tradition and theology the Bishop exercises an important role as a teacher of the faith, which helps recognize the diversity of God's creation.

At the House of Bishops, you are queried by a colleague about your strategic priorities for the diocese. How would you respond?

The first task would be building an atmosphere of trust and relationship with the clergy gaining an understanding of the communities and

settings in which they minister. My strategic priorities are building a church which is faithful, effective and sustainable. By faithful I mean parishes which are rooted in scripture, grounded in engaging liturgy, immersed in prayer, diligent in teaching and open to the revelation of God in Jesus Christ. By effective I mean parishes which are welcoming, inclusive, diverse, creative, compassionate, teaching, enabling and engaging. I seek parishes and diocesan ministries which are making a difference both in the lives of its members and those whom it is called to serve. By sustainable I mean parishes which take stewardship seriously, live out a theology of abundance, are attentive to issues of ecology and move confidently into the future not with a mind-set of survival but with a commitment to God's call to mission. Faithful, effective and sustainable parishes make for a healthy diocese.

What legacy do you wish to leave at the end of your tenure?

Writing one's epitaph at the beginning of a ministry is a challenge! I am not interested in monuments. I seek to leave a church which is willing to explore faith seriously and creatively, whose parishes are places of compassion, joy and hope; which is an active participant in the major issues of our time; which is proud to be Anglican, and sharing their enthusiasm with others. I seek to leave a church which is welcoming and inclusive of people with diverse gifts and lives out its journey in the joy of the Lord. I seek to leave a church which is outward looking and which makes disciples in the name of Jesus Christ.

An Odyssey called General Synod

PETER WALL
DEAN - CHRIST'S CHURCH CATHEDRAL

People in Niagara remember very well the 37th General Synod of our Church, which took place in St. Catharines just three short years ago. In so many ways, it hardly seems possible that three years have already elapsed since we hosted the country here at Brock University, in Niagara Falls, and at the Cathedral in Hamilton. The 38th General Synod will convene in Winnipeg on June 19 and will be replete with the business of General Synod, special celebrations, and, again, the election of a new Primate for our Church.

As we well remember here in Niagara, General Synods don't just 'happen'; they take detailed planning and creative, sometimes complex and difficult work by both staff and volunteers across the country and, in particular, in the city where the synod is taking place. It has been my privilege (sometimes a dubious one!) to Chair the General Synod Planning Committee and to assume just recently responsibility as well for the General Synod Worship Committee. This has been my twelfth year of continuous involvement in planning for General Synod, and my last for awhile, I hope!

Intense work

It is invigorating, exciting, and chal-

lenging work—each Synod is different, and yet each one has certain characteristic similarities. General Synod is both an 'event' and a business meeting. Every three years, the Church comes together, from all 30 Dioceses in the country, to receive reports, hear about the diverse and gifted ministries of our church, and to look forward to new initiatives in the ensuing triennium.

Synod brings together all three 'orders' of our ministry—laity, clergy, and bishops—as well as partners from our indigenous communities, from other churches in Canada, from our international partners, and from our full-communion partners. Given that each Synod is held in a different city or region, it also allows members from around the church to experience the local church, meet members of the host diocese, and get a flavour of the city. Members of General Synod work and worship together, eat meals together, and socialize together through, this year, seven days of fairly intense work.

As well as the regular business of Synod, we shall spend a full day together with our full-communion brothers and sisters of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, and we will move into an electoral format, wherein the bishops withdraw to another meet-

ing space after a celebration of the Eucharist, and the clerical and lay members of Synod will elect a new Primate from amongst the nominated names sent by the Order of Bishops. Because of these two very special events, the remaining business of Synod has been somewhat truncated into a shorter meeting period.

Celebrating with Archbishop Andrew

We are delighted that the Most Reverend and Rt. Hon. John Sentamu, Archbishop of York and Primate of England will be with us throughout our Synod, as will The Reverend Canon Kenneth Kearon, Secretary-General of the Anglican Communion. The Most Rev. Katherine Jefferts Schori, Presiding Bishop of The Episcopal Church will be present for the Installation of the new Primate on Monday, June 25, and two Bishops from Africa will be with us as partners, as will be Dr. Helen Wangusa, Anglican Representative to the United Nations in New York.

The Rt. Rev. Mark MacDonald, newly appointed National Indigenous Anglican Bishop, will be at his first General Synod and will have a special opportunity with local indigenous people to be presented to the community. National Aboriginal Day (June 21) will be marked by special observances, includ-

ing some during our time with the members of the Lutheran church. The synod will also celebrate the important ministry of our Primate, Archbishop Andrew Hutchison, and will dine together in a special tribute to him, hosted by the Diocese of Rupert's Land.

Enveloping and surrounding all of this will be a challenging and complex agenda of resolutions, presentations, and decisions. The response of General Synod to both The Windsor Report and The St. Michael Report will be presented and discussed. Major presentations from The Council of the North, The Anglican Council of Indigenous People, and the Governance Working Group will be before members of Synod.

Engaging, engaging, enjoyable

In addition, Synod will receive several resolutions from the Council of General Synod dealing with the matter of the blessing of same-sex unions, including a deferred resolution from 2004 calling for Diocesan local option on this matter. As we know, this matter is a very difficult one for many, for a host of reasons. We are all aware of the significance of this matter for the Anglican Communion as a whole; we have received communication from the House of Bishops, and there are

various interested groups willing to put forth their opinion at any and all times. The media will be interested in what we do in Winnipeg, and many Anglicans across the country and around the world will be watching. No one seems bereft of opinion!

In our church, thankfully, all voices are welcomed and heard. We work together, prayerfully and carefully, to discern the moving of the Spirit, and to be true to our sense of justice and fairness as well as to our important heritage and traditions. These conversations at General Synod are not going to be easy, but we must engage in them. Those who will be members of General Synod from this Diocese (5 lay members, 5 clerics, a Youth member, and our Bishops) all will need our continuing prayers and support as they both represent our Diocese but also serve as 'members' of General Synod.

Synod will be what Synod will be—an interesting, engaging, enjoyable, spirit-filled moment when the Canadian church is all together. For me it will feel, in some ways, like watching over my own child! For us all, may it be a time of rich discernment and deep faith!

Watch us on the web—it will all be 'streamed' on the national church website!

2007 Episcopal Election

The Reverend Canon Dr Brian Ruttan



As Bishop, you will be the public face of our Church in Niagara. What will be the central focus of your message to the rest of society?

As Bishop, I would take every opportunity to witness to the reality of God in the world, transforming individual lives and public life to reflect God's reign. As Christians we participate in society at the same time that we share in the new order of Christ's reign (John 17:14 ff). Our theological task is to understand how we live in this tension and so discern and proclaim God's reign in all times and places. The sovereignty of God among us is mutual relationship by which I mean loving our neighbours as ourselves as the way we love God. I would be outspoken about areas of our common life where people are excluded, marginalized and isolated. Issues of fractured relationships include children growing up in poverty, a growing number of single parents, and a shortage of affordable adequate housing for low income families. I would also want to foster more skilful support for those who are grieving and for those who live with mental illness as part of our ministry. A focus would be on peacemaking and encouraging Anglicans formally and informally to seek out friendship with neighbours of non-Christian faiths thereby building a foundation for a peaceful multi-

faith, multi-cultural, multi-racial future. I would engage in conversation and discernment so that responses to these issues are actively supported or become part of the vision of each parish. These agenda are foremost because the children, the poor, the powerless, the grieving, those who hunger for right relationships, and the peacemakers are the first citizens of the kingdom of God (Luke 9:48, Matthew 5:1-10, Luke 6:20 ff). Learn more at www.brianruttan.com.

How do you see your spiritual life helping you to nurture and fulfill the role of Bishop?

I love the Bible. I read it every day and I am continually enriched by it. Reading scripture continually yields words and phrases anew and fosters new ideas. Reading scripture is the springboard to meditative prayer which I find deeply nurturing. I have been given the gifts of the contemplative and find times of solitary silence necessary and sustaining. I pray for my family, colleagues, students and clients as well as those known to me who are in challenging situations. The basis of my spirituality is the idea, repeated in John's gospel, of indwelling (e.g. John 14:20). I have a strong consciousness of sharing in the life of God. St. Teresa of Avila and others have expressed the idea

that we have a centre in our being which is an unbreakable connection to God. The immediate and enduring awareness of that connection is the core of my vocation. This spiritual foundation is essential to fulfilling the role of Bishop.

As bishop, you are interviewed by the press and asked insights into how you will encourage youth involvement and growth in parish life. How would you respond?

I have been deeply appreciative of the youth programs of our Diocese. They have provided a safe environment for my own children and many others I have known in spiritual exploration, emotional growth, and the building of lasting friendships. I have been a leader in the Youth Leadership Training Program (YLTP) and the Niagara Youth Conference (NYC) and I have learned a great deal in these roles. These are wonderful special events and the question is how to encourage youth involvement on a normal week to week basis. Let's start by asking what do we know about the religious development of adolescents? Research has given quite a clear picture of this. If young people have grown up learning about their faith at home and at church, they will quite likely hold to these teachings based on the authority of the Bible and of priests and teachers. Their faith is received faith. Faith is a building block of personal identity. The church can provide peers and resources to work out faith questions. Adolescents often have a strong sense of tradition and a strong sense of right and wrong. Involvement in some traditional liturgical roles fosters their faith development.

Activities that give an opportunity for actions that express faith directly such as "starvathons" in support of the Primate's Fund are also engaging for teens. It is also important to find opportunities for creativity to be expressed, drama and music certainly, as well as graphic art, writing, science and technology. Older teens particularly, have an acute nose for

hypocrisy. It is important to them that older Christians "walk the talk"; practice what we preach. Adolescents often remind me of the prophet Amos pointing out that our worship needs to be in tune with how we actually live. (Amos 5:21-24). What is most important is that we offer young people personal relationships in which they are heard and taken seriously. They need to be understood and know they are understood before anything we say can be heard. There is much to be learned from young people.

What are some of the guiding principles with which you would lead, both within and outside the Diocese, such that a healthy diversity within our common fellowship may be maintained?

The success of our ministry as a diocese depends on healthy and energetic clergy and lay leaders. Current research is showing low morale among the clergy across denominations. Clergy feel isolated, unsupported and ill equipped to deal with the leadership and pastoral demands of parish ministry.

My approach would include developing a strategy for helping our professional leadership identify what they need to improve their effectiveness and well being. My role would be to bring to bear my skills as a counsellor, mediator and pastoral educator in renewing the pastoral role of the bishop particularly in support of the clergy and licensed laity. We need to find new ways to share ideas, access expertise and make available other resources by fostering mutually beneficial partnerships among parishes across the diocese. I believe that the biggest challenge facing us as a diocese within the communion is to come to an understanding of how we regard and use scripture. I would take the initiative to understand the theological and pastoral foundations cherished by parish leaders in the diocese. I do not believe that agreement is possible or

even desirable. My aim would be mutual respect and appreciation for one another's understanding.

At the House of Bishops, you are queried by a colleague about your strategic priorities for the diocese. How would you respond?

My first priority would be to foster conversations within parishes that move toward new or renewed vision. Vision is what we want to accomplish in our neighbourhood in a given time frame. This would consider community needs, available resources, developing projects and identifying a leadership team for implementation. Related to this would be fostering conversations among parish communities. One objective of such conversations would be to increase mutual support so that we may be more effective in outreach ministries. Another objective would be to foster the development and implementation of one another's vision. My goal, in keeping with the theme of mutual relationship, would be multi-level partnerships that would share expertise and other resources between parishes across the diocese.

What legacy do you wish to leave at the end of your tenure?

I should like to be remembered for leadership that fostered the development and implementation of parish and diocesan vision. I should like to be remembered for facilitating partnerships between parishes that made ministry more possible and effective. I should like to be remembered for proclaiming Jesus Christ as the lens of our vision and the motivation for our service. I would like it to be said that people felt attended to and understood by me. I would like it to be said that I was genuine. I would like it to be said that I had a high regard for all the people I met. I should like to be remembered for fostering greater understanding and mutual respect about what scripture is and how we use it in Christian ministry. Find out more at www.brianruttan.com.

Ask the children to share their wisdom



LINDA MOORE
CENTRE FOR LEADERSHIP AND HUMAN VALUES

To the seventh generation... that is a key criterion in some First Nations Councils. It implies that the impact of any decision made, needs to be considered forward through to the seventh generation. It is intended to create the best possible future for the children yet unborn. It is to ensure the narrow perspective of the moment does not do irreparable damage for future inhabitants on this planet. Deep, profound, important wisdom.

There is also another component of our population that can offer a valuable perspective on what is needed... the children.

Rooted in a primal understanding we have too long ignored, the children carry the seeds of new beginnings and eternal answers.

Their psyches are far less cluttered by judgment, power, greed and self interest. They see pain and injustice and envision simple and profound answers. They are our "world council to the seventh generation" if we simply ask and listen.

It has been our custom as adults, too often, to hold children small and needing protection from the world. In fact, they are whole, creative, resourceful human beings with thoughts and feelings of immense magnitude, unfettered by convention and our jaded perspective we as adults call "reality". The children are our hope for a better world. Right here. Right now.

A bit skeptical? Have you ever heard of a young Canadian, Craig Kielburger? At the age of twelve, he read of a Pakistani boy his age, who was traveling the world crusading against the horrors of child slave labour and was murdered for what he was accomplishing. That in and of itself is an amazing story. Craig was so touched he convinced his parents to let him go to India and see what was happening first hand. With his school friends at twelve in 1995

he started Free the Children to fight for the rights of children throughout the world; children helping children. Something we as adults were failing to do. Then in 1999 he started Leaders Today which has delivered leadership training experiences to over 350,000 youth. He is now twenty four and has already been nominated three times for the Nobel Peace Prize. An exception? Maybe, but I do not believe so.

Many young people like Craig and my eight year old friend, Meghan are accomplishing exceptional good on behalf of "other". They are awake, alert, and deeply connected to what is happening in the world. I believe part of what makes the difference for them, are the adults around them. Parents, grandparents, teachers and family friends take time to listen and support, not in condescension, rather in awe and curiosity for what they themselves can learn. Children inspire the "grown ups" to a higher calling, a more meaningful contribution. A heightened awareness of what needs to be done in the world. When children are successful in

mobilizing others to action it is because their belief and confidence in what is possible is unwavering and therefore daunting. Their determination knows no bounds. It brings the best out in everyone.

On behalf of all of us, I am deeply grateful to Brad and Sandra, Meghan's parents. Through their guidance and belief in her and their willingness to give her the support



Children carry the seeds of new beginnings and eternal answers.

and resources required she has assisted in sustaining a girl's school in India and has contributed her own resources for causes important to her. In fact, I am deeply grateful to all adults who listen to the children and support them in their solutions to the big challenges of life. The world is a better place for it and we all benefit.

As adults we have the ability to influence, provide resources, network, call in favours and mobilize

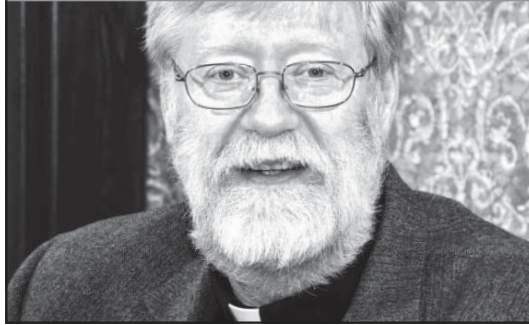
friends. As parents, teachers, grandparents and neighbours we all have the capacity to listen to our children. Their thoughts and ideas to change the world simply need our encouragement and support. We can invite them into the board room to sit on our community and non profit boards. We can invite them to any gathering of decision makers if only to hear a different and com-

elling perspective. Even better if a few brave entrepreneurs invited them onto the for profit boards as well! Imagine how the relevance of the topics to be discussed could shift. Imagine with support and resources the possibilities for us all!

Know this to be true. Our wise and beautiful children are waiting to be heard. They can guide us to a different future. Do not wait another day. Ask them to share their wisdom now.

2007 Episcopal Election

The Venerable James Sandilands



As Bishop, you will be the public face of our Church in Niagara. What will be the central focus of your message to the rest of society?

Several of these questions seem to me to call for an answer in the form of a prayer...and so...I pray, Gracious God, that when the world looks to me they might see a reflection of Love's Body; that in every word and action I may let them know your story revealed to us in Jesus Christ. May they see in me and in all of us a humble recognition of our brokenness and also our strength of generosity, loving kindness, tolerance, and vision for a just society. Grant that I may have the clarity of thought and language to acknowledge when I speak for myself. Through our common ministry may we show in worship, our structures, interactions with others, and diligence in prayer, our intention to be accountable to one another and to you.

How do you see your spiritual life helping you to nurture and fulfill the role of Bishop?

I give thanks for God's gracious love, for prayer, encouragement, counseling, therapy and spiritual direction (and editors). For the tender love, care and support of my family. For

dialogue, consultation within my own faith community and beyond. For the life experiences of work and family. For the learning that God's creative power can bring growth and hope even in wilderness times and places.

As bishop, you are interviewed by the press and asked insights into how you will encourage youth involvement and growth in parish life. How would you respond?

A learning I take from the Diocesan youth ministry team is in their approach. I would say that part of their success comes from the work of first becoming involved in the life of the youth rather than trying to pull them into Church. When Jesus, following John, began baptizing in the wilderness it was not to replace the temple but to fulfill God's call to bring good news to those outside the temple. As with youth we will need to practice evangelism which takes us beyond our current modes of ministry by seeking to serve God's people in every generation in ways that are best suited to their interests and needs. And speaking of encouragement I would encourage the media to interview some of the folk who are directly

involved in that ministry on the Diocesan and parish level so that we would all have the benefit of their experience. I might also say that some of the work of becoming involved in the life of youth is needed on the parish level as well as the Diocesan level. This is a growing edge for us but there are some parishes where this is taking place. I think, however, that there has been some good work in celebrating these successes by the Diocesan Resource staff. Just last week two young men from Saint James Dundas held a concert to raise money for rehabilitation of a student who was recently severely beaten. (This did receive some good media coverage in the Hamilton Spec). This took place because the parish invested time in letting these young men know that there music was welcome and appreciated. I might comment that the church is moving past the days when we could expect that people of any age would come to church as a matter of course. Youth ministry like many aspects of Church life is becoming more and more about evangelism.

What are some of the guiding principles with which you would lead, both within and outside the Diocese, such that a healthy diversity within our common fellowship may be maintained?

You bless us Creator with varieties of gifts of the Spirit. Agreement is often not possible. Sometimes disagreement is an opportunity for growth, usually it is a challenge. Prevent us from all activities which seek to silence, exclude, dismiss or neglect the honest attempts of others to do what is right. May we seek ways to understand one another, and when we cannot agree help us to find creative and loving ways of living out the diversity of your creation. May we practice the collective wisdom of the whole church, clergy and lay, in seeking unity if not in practice, then in toleration.

At the House of Bishops, you are queried by a colleague about your strategic priorities for the diocese. How would you respond?

One of my favorite analogies with regard to strategic development comes from landscape architecture. I am told that planners will sometimes put down sod across a large campus and wait to see where the people walk before putting down more permanent pathways. In these early days and in my current circles I have heard a real desire that the Diocese continue on its current path toward blessing of same gender couples. Those whom I know who are opposed as well as those in favour have expressed a real concern for the unity of the church and the hope of some mediated form of unity. There is a strong desire that this issue not overwhelm us, I find, and distract us from some of the pathways set out already for us, particularly in the areas of evangelism and stewardship. Some have expressed concerns and I would like to reflect back a concern for fiscal responsibility. There has been real improvement I believe in transparency and accountability in financial matters in our Diocese and a real desire to continue in this path. We have begun a good work in developing safety in practice with regard to issues of misuse of power. I am already committed to this work and would like to see it continue. There are some issues around professional practice in ministry and I would like to see us do some work on models of best practice especially in the area of reflective practice in which clergy and laity gather to discuss cases and reflect upon their work in an atmosphere of mutual accountability. Niagara has a reputation for progressive and creative approaches to ministry that I hope we can continue to develop especially in looking at new liturgies and forms of worship and in new models of ministry, particu-

larly in the area of non parish based ministries. As parishes have closed I would say that we have barely begun to explore other forms which might replace them. I understand that at least one of the nominees has a web site. I am envious. I believe that the Church has a lot to offer many in our culture who feel trapped in their work, in consumerism and are concerned for their futures and the futures of their children. The church can offer alternative ways of being in community which promote well-being for us and our world. The work of promoting these alternatives in new ways practically and liturgically is exciting. As an example we have developed Jazz Vespers and restored Evensong at Saint James because they provide opportunities for ministry. Programs throughout the week such as an after school hang out have great potential. I see our friends around the corner at Saint Paul's Westdale are making real efforts to reach the students in their neighbourhood despite the tensions around student housing.. And so it goes. By now I will be marvelling that another priest has let me talk this long and I would be asking, "So... what are your strategic priorities?"

What legacy do you wish to leave at the end of your tenure?

Grant Loving God that my service may be the continuance of the good work that you have begun in us through Jesus the Christ. I pray that all who serve in the church will celebrate the Grace that is ours through our common ministry in Christ. As I imagine what legacy I might leave, I can't help but reflect my gratitude to Bishop Spence for his work and his support of clergy, for his creativity and support of laity through the Order of Niagara. Should I leave a legacy wherever God calls me as generous and as hard working as +Ralph's I will be grateful indeed.

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



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Getting to know you

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 15

er)! You haven't boiled it!"

After arriving in Canada in 1974, Anne "became a Canadian citizen as soon as I could. I couldn't bear not voting. My mother always telephoned during any election to ask "Have you voted?" because she remembered that 'women and men chained themselves to railings so you could!'"

Anne remains a proud Canadian: "I love it, it's home! My heroine is Nellie McClung." Active in the Oakville and Burlington Little Theatres, Anne directed a play about her heroine at Roy Thompson Hall as a fundraiser for the Canadian Women's Lacrosse Team, and acted in other plays. "When I was younger, I wanted to do theatre or the Church; now I'm doing both, and they're intertwined!" She also ran a second-hand shop at one time.

Family, Fun and Faithfulness

Married to Arnold Crawford, a chalice bearer at St. Luke's, Anne is proud of her children, Jane, George and Hank, and of her stepchildren, Lou-Anne and Cameron, all living busy lives in various parts of North America.

For recreation, Anne swims every day ("I've been told we use our tongues more than our arms

and legs."), loves doing needlework, especially cross-stitch, plays piano and guitar (she has two), enjoys the Cryptic crossword in the Saturday Globe and Mail, and, like most clergy, reads a variety of books. She collects first editions of Nellie McClung's writings. Anne happily pokes fun at herself, admitting "I'm a compulsive Value Village and Good Will poker-around. I go to the hairdresser and read People magazine cover-to-cover; I don't know the people, but I love it!"

Anne cheerfully admits, "One of the great joys of getting older is that you're not out to prove anything. You're accountable to God—that may not be politically correct, but the question always is, 'Is this what God wants me to do?'"

As long as men and women find the faith and courage to ask themselves that question, ministry in our Diocese and beyond will thrive. For Niagara's College of Deacons, and for those who receive their care, Anne Crawford's commitment and delight in diaconal service are a profound inspiration and example. If you see a bright yellow Mazda beeping around Burlington, driven by a woman with a big warm smile, it's probably Anne on her way to do just what God wants her to do.

2007 Episcopal Election

The Very Reverend Peter Wall



As Bishop, you will be the public face of our Church in Niagara. What will be the central focus of your message to the rest of society?

I would strive to be the public face of a Church which is known as an inclusive and loving place, reflecting the love of God for the world and its entire people. I would focus on a message of justice and peace; a message which proclaims real openness and honesty in dealing with not only matters of religion and faith, but also with matters of politics and social justice. The church needs to listen, first of all to the narratives of all those who think that we have lost our relevance, and the church needs to give voice to the world on matters of the environment, poverty, the fairness of our society, and the responsibility we all share in speaking out clearly and articulately on the imperatives of the Gospel—feeding the hungry, welcoming the lost, bringing rest to the weary. We in the Church need to be 'in' the world, and not sequestering ourselves away from important societal matters. I would encourage others to see our Church—the Anglican Church in Niagara—as a place which is alive, authentic, joyful, and relevant. The Bishop bears the role of chief preacher and teacher for the people of God. As such, I would want the Anglican church to be seen as a community not of dogmatism and inflexibility, but one of openness to questions and struggles; a place not of judgment and doctrinal rigidity, but rather a place where all are welcome; all are invited to be part of the community; all are welcome to walk together; all are welcome to the exciting and invigorating business of kingdom making.

How do you see your spiritual life helping you to nurture and fulfill the role of Bishop?

I enjoy a deep and meaningful spirituality in my life. It is an integral and joy-filled part of my life—surrounding and comforting me in many and various ways. The regularity of and faithfulness to worship, both private and public, is a part of my life from which I cannot imagine being separated. I am also keenly aware of the spirituality of so many other parts of my life—Anne and our children, Emily and Patrick, my working relationships, our social friendships, my value of humour, my close friendship with many 'unchurched' folk—all of these feed my own sense of spirituality: encouraging me to think, pray and reflect clearly and unambiguously. Ultimately, it's fun as well as being very important! A bishop's role and life are lived and felt at a variety of levels; I believe that this comprehensive spirituality will serve me well.

As bishop, you are interviewed by the press and asked insights into how you will encourage youth involvement and growth in parish life. How would you respond?

Once I got over the shock of the media actually caring enough to ask such a question, I would tell the interviewer that our church is (in many places, though not all) an exciting and authentic place of lively and joyous worship, challenging and enlivening education, and a deep sense of community, providing ways of getting involved and making a commitment at a variety of levels and within a wide range of activity. As a sacramental church, we have a richness of worship which can involve people of all ages, worshipping together. For

many young people, though, what happens in our churches on Sunday mornings is irrelevant—we need to listen to their voices. We must try to offer new kinds of community that can meet their needs in the same fashion as Facebook or MySpace do. Here they find community, ritual, safety, diversity, common language, spirituality and a place to ask tough questions. We must learn to speak their language and not expect them to speak ours. We must create worship that honours our Anglican framework but speaks a new language that is accessible to a generation that we are in danger of completely losing. We have the resources, the skills, and the will to do these things; we need to trust the spirit and each other to be grateful for what we do have and do well (YLP, NYC, SpiritQuest, Youth Synod, some wonderful parish programmes) and also dare to find new things as well.

What are some of the guiding principles with which you would lead, both within and outside the Diocese, such that a healthy diversity within our common fellowship may be maintained?

The Anglican Church has always been a church of diversity—whether it is the old style 'high church—low church' kind of liturgical diversity or whether it is the more contemporary sense of 'conservative—liberal' 'left-right' diversity. Diversity in worship, leadership styles, judicatory influences, and even the basic 'character' of parishes and dioceses has always been our hallmark. We are a church which we describe as 'Synodically governed and Episcopally led'. This means that it is not The Bishop's church, anymore than a parish is The Rector's church—it is God's church, and we, as God's people, discern God's will for the church through prayer, through study, through honest and forthright debate, and through decision making which always must be respectful and welcoming of all points of view. I would want to be a listener; to be able to listen to diverse voices and to honour each of them; I would want to be someone who works hard for consensus, not for winners and losers. I would want to be a Bishop who both celebrates and welcomes all the voices both within the Diocese and within the broader Anglican communion, and who values them as integral parts of the rich fabric of our church. The com-

plexities of current issues, current communication possibilities, and current social realities all make the maintenance of that healthy diversity, within a common fellowship, a tremendous challenge. I believe that a willingness to listen attentively, to maintain a good sense of humour, to walk gently, to welcome questions and criticism, to encourage others to hear each other with love, to try with all one's might to find and nurture wisdom in oneself and in others—all of these would be important guiding principles for me. I also understand that the Bishop is the one set apart to guide and to lead, sometimes when tough decisions need to be made without consensus. The issue, for example, of unity in diversity and the potential cost of ensuring unity will be important ones in the immediate future. Difficult issues will require careful thought and prayer and may necessitate difficult decisions, which I believe that I can make.

At the House of Bishops, you are queried by a colleague about your strategic priorities for the diocese. How would you respond?

Niagara is a diverse, compact, historically significant, largely urban (i.e. city and town) and populous diocese, with an excellent staff and a history of the best of progressive orthodox Anglicanism. As the third largest Diocese (by population) in the Canadian church, Niagara continues to be strongly committed to the work of the Anglican Church of Canada and understands its privileged abundance and its resulting responsibilities. I would remind my colleague that my strategic priorities for the Diocese are, by our nature, those of the Diocese—not mine alone - that we have both developed and agreed upon those together. Those priorities include a well developed sense of stewardship and generosity, healthy and viable parish communities, enlivened and impassioned leadership from clergy and laity alike, authentic and transformative worship, the strong principles of inclusivity and justice, and, always, the sense of being a missional church—getting back to the basics of the early church's role in society. I would respond that, because of the ways in which we work together to discern our common mission and priorities for ministry, the Diocese is both unified in these goals, in the midst of the privilege of our splendid diversity and strongly committed to

the act of putting sinews and flesh on these foundational bones.

Implementation: This is a wonderful and exciting time to be the church, and I am seriously excited by the prospects for our future. I would try to implement things noted above by listening closely to others, encouraging those around me to be challenged and excited by these priorities, by encouraging Diocesan lay and clerical leadership to discuss and delve into these key messages, and by keeping all of these things before Synod for its reflection, consideration, and commitment. Part of this means examining whether our time-honoured ways work as well as they should—in what ways do we need to re-visit the basics of our polity and our structure? Sometimes, in the Church, these things take time—it is worth doing them well and comprehensively, or not at all. Sometimes we have trouble delivering on corporate vision or on cultural changes. Questions of resource deployment, parish alignments, governance structures, taking risks—all of these are tough! We will not all 'get it' together—and that's OK—we will be committed to working on them as a Diocese. I would look to all clergy and lay leaders to help be part of that discernment for a shared future.

What legacy do you wish to leave at the end of your tenure?

This feels like 'what do I want on my tombstone...?' I hope that I would leave a Diocese much healthier, more deeply committed, and more profoundly spiritual than I found it. I would hope that the incredible love of God and love for Jesus would be immediately recognizable in all that this Diocese is, not because of what we say, but because of what we do and how we do it! I believe that the next decade holds at least as much change (and maybe a whole lot more) as the last decade, and I would hope that, at the end of my tenure, the Diocese would be seen as a place that has learned to adapt, to transform itself, even as it attempts to transform the world. I would want Niagara to be known and valued as a Diocese where intellectual vigour, deeply broad acceptance of all persons, and breath-taking justice-making are the things by which we are known. Ultimately, I would hope that others would really see in us—each of us—the face of God and the love of Jesus.

Garden of Eden or Kitchen of Paradise?

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

summers before our neighbours began to wonder if, in fact, it had been a nice, quiet clergy couple that had purchased the house on the street, or were we Brock University students in disguise, swiftly lowering their property values?

The only saving grace in those years was our almost 90-year-old next door neighbour, who kindly said to me one summer day as, with shovel in hand, I grumbled my way down the property line that divided our two homes from one other: "I don't know why you even bother pulling out those weeds. They're only going to grow back tomorrow!" God bless the wit and wisdom of senior citizens who have

lived long enough to figure out that there is much more to life than what makes us all look pretty!

Today, however, I am happy to report that the gardening tide turned for me a couple of years ago when two people at Transfiguration offered four hours of yard clean-up as their donation to our bi-annual Talent and Gift Auction. On the night of the auction, I found myself in a bidding war with one other parishioner for the acquisition of this talent. I was bound and determined to purchase these four hours of clean-up. Indeed, I whispered in the ear of my bidding opponent that there was no way on God's green earth that anyone else was going to win the item; she might as well give up right then and there. The ante was raised just

slightly above its estimated value, and Robin and I became the proud owners of what I believed was my ticket to paradise. By the next summer, the neighbours once again might consider speaking to us.

Doris and Al Sherwin have procured my salvation on our cul-de-sac and helped me overcome my seemingly unending guilt about our property. And they have done this by creating that wonder of wonders, "low-maintenance gardening." Good looks; not much work to make it so! In fact, last summer, on one of those wretched "garden gospel Sundays," I opened my homily with the confession that I am a "born-again gardener!" Spending less than five hours a week pruning bushes, digging weeds and dumping mulch has

almost transformed me into a flower lover. No longer intimidated by the beauty of our neighbours' landscape designs, I now even can appreciate the odd flower or two that pops up out of the ground in our front and

with who I am and what I do best. But, perhaps not necessarily so. After I preached that homily last summer, someone in the congregation came up to me and said: "Don't sell yourself short. You may

Yet, even those vegetable gardens had a way of becoming the enemy, rarely producing enough for much more than the odd salad or two.

backyards. I no longer feel like a failure at being an Anglican priest because I can't make things grow.

No doubt, I still would be much happier if the original Garden of Eden were a Kitchen of Paradise. This would fit much better, I think,

not be very good at making plants and flowers grow but I think you're great at making people grow."

I wonder why it took me so long to figure out the metaphor? I guess there's more than one way to help God's creation bloom.

The Promised Land is very close

RICK JONES
RECTOR - ST. PAUL'S WESTDALE

A travelling Evangelist was known for the dramatic finale to his services. He would call down the Holy Spirit and a beautiful white dove would invariably fly down from the rafters to the joy and amazement of the congregation. At one rally the dramatic moment approached and the Evangelist called out, "Come Down Holy Spirit!" but nothing happened. Again he called out a little louder this time, "Come Down Holy Spirit!" again nothing happened. The congregation was getting anxious and the Evangelist shouted in his most dramatic and authoritative voice, "Come Down Holy Spirit!" At this a small boy's voice was heard to reply from the rafters, "I'm sorry Sir but the cat ate the Holy Spirit!" "Can I throw down the cat?"

It does seem at times that the cat has eaten the Holy Spirit. In our Diocese the number of congregations has been declining for the past three decades. As recently as 1999 we had 116 congregations and now with the recent closure of St. Philip's, Burlington we stand at 99 congregations in 86 parishes. This is a painful and dangerous trend. If it continues, it will have serious implications for the ability of our Diocese to continue its unique Mission. Could we imagine, for example, simply being merged

back into the Diocese of Toronto from which we once came? Or can we imagine a Diocese without the funding to offer any programmes or other resources from the Synod level.

Youth ministry, Stewardship support, Evangelism and Congregational Development, Financial and Human Resources support, all these could conceivably be gone. This is what, in our house, we call the "worst case scenario" that we talk about to motivate us to think about changes to the present that could affect the future. In thinking about our situation today, I find the story of the Exodus very helpful.

As a Diocese we were led out of Egypt in 1961 when the number of members in our Diocese peaked at 108,229, average Sunday attendance was 35,491 and identifiable givers were at 25,035. We then declined sharply until the mid 70's, rallied a bit through the 80's but have declined again and by 1996 membership was at 46,639 down 57%, attendance was at 12,082 down 66%, and givers were at 16,783 down 33% from our peak. We have been hovering at this level for the past decade.

It has now been about 46 years of wandering in the desert and if we are going to enter a new promised land we must be getting close. I purposely say we have been wandering

in the desert but want to be clear that this has been a very necessary and creative time for us and has not been the result of bad leadership or good intentions; we have had our Moses, Aarons and Miriams! Just like the Israelites should have been able to get across the desert more quickly God seems to have had a plan for the wandering. Some have suggested that it took 40 years to take the slave mentality out of the people of Israel.

The people needed to change their values and beliefs so they could trust God and themselves in new ways. Could it be that we have needed to change our Church Culture from the slavery of Christendom, to a more reflective Church Culture where we trust God and ourselves in new ways? A past where we just did what we always did and people showed up, has changed to dynamic questioning of how we proclaim the Gospel in a very different world.

There are very few congregations who would seriously argue that we can go back to Egypt or the 1950s, most have also realized that if we keep doing things "the way we always have" we will continue to decline. This is good news because it means that the Promised Land is very close.

Just as the Holy Spirit support-

ed and guided our ancestors until they saw a new land and were able to cross the Jordan, so too we have been supported and guided. Many of us are beginning to catch glimpses of the new land. God may have "died" in modernity but we see God very much "alive" in the consciousness of post modern people.

There is a renewed validation of spirituality and creativity in the

There is at least one school of thought that speculates that when our ancestors entered the promised land they organized the marginalized rural poor to join with them in claiming a new just society against the urban ruling classes. I foresee new partnerships with our communities. We will join with environmental and social justice organizations, such as the Steven Lewis Foundation and

The church in mission in the new land will look different than it ever has before, but will still be inspired by the Pentecost Power of the Holy Spirit.

youth of our culture, and the quest for community in an alienating society, is ongoing for people of all ages. Some congregations are taking risks and adapting creatively to the new cultural context. Like desert travellers, congregations are travelling lighter now. We may have let go of organizations, and structures and may need to let go of more, but we have held onto what has sustained us, Scripture, Eucharist, Community, and our Anglican Via Media.

We now carry these treasures into a new land and they will be shared, perhaps in radically new forms with the people we will meet.

other local organizations that will work with our congregations on the spirituality as well as the activities of social change.

The church in mission in the new land will look different than it ever has before, but will still be inspired by the Pentecost Power of the Holy Spirit. The Promised Land is by definition running with milk and honey, all that we need, and more than we can ask or imagine. I think our desert time is about finished and it is time to cross the Jordan. The best is yet to come because the Holy Spirit leads us into the Reign of God which is always before us.

Paws for reflection

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

dry kibble, but it was clear to me that he was not doing well. Eventually, our wonderful Veterinarian, Dr. Sarah Machell of the North Oakville Animal Hospital assisted us in what was a difficult decision to make. And so it was on Monday in Holy Week, that DC, our "test child" who coincidentally was acquired the same week that I became pregnant with our daughter, left our family.

His ashes will be spread near our front door, to mark one of his contributions to our family as our "door cat" and guardian.

It is lonely without DC's face at the door when we return home. I miss him at meals, too. (I confess that he regularly had "cat coffee" with us in the morning (really a teaspoon of milk in a green bowl). If his bowl didn't appear, there would be pleading and insistent eyes that would remind me of my failure as a cat servant. (Cats aren't "owned", the saying goes, they have "staff")

Perhaps it was the death of a dog, who was in the life of a member of the parish that I now serve as Interim, the Church of the Epiphany, which coincided with DC's that started me thinking about how are pets are markers of times in our life. DC "knew" three other cats in our household, and he had "known" Barkley the Wonder Spaniel, who had belonged to my parents. (Barkley was the last pet that my Father had, and in his last hospitalization, my Dad was very sad about the possibility that he would never see Barkley again. Barkley, for his part, responded to my Dad's absence by developing colitis. And the night before my Dad died, had howled at three in the morning, a behaviour that he hadn't exhibited during the four

weeks of my Dad's absence from our home while hospitalized.)

Pets are markers in time for us

One young boy on our street exhibited his independence by being the member of his family to walk their dog both before and after school. The dog came into their lives when Daniel was in about Grade 3, and I can remember how proud he was, not only of his puppy, but of his ability to walk the puppy around the block "all by himself".

Memories and stories

Pets are the authors of memories, and are the stars of stories. I can tell you things about both Barkley, and his canine predecessor, Tuffy, a Miniature Pinscher that would have you howling. The stories include Tuffy's biting the flapping end of toilet paper, then racing around the house with the toilet paper in his mouth, all the while it unraveled rapidly from its roll. There was such sadness in his eyes when the game ended. And there is a story about Barkley, who one New Years Eve managed to get up on the dining room table and consume all of the fancy rolled ham tea sandwiches, while depositing the olives in their centre all over the table.

There are stories of Ashley, who frequently jumped sideways, when she was a kitten, half prance, half pounce. And then there's Little One who is part of the virtual universe, living on my computer desk, and playing with the mouse—my computer mouse, which must, she reasons, be fascinating, as my hand is so frequently on the cordless mouse than where it should be, scratching her behind the ears.

Transition

Animals remind me of transition. They share

time with us, blithely unaware of their mortality, giving their all to their human companions. Days continue predictably, and as long as there is exercise, rest, a place to take care of one's essential functions, and sufficient adoration, they are happy. Until the days come when behaviour changes, when it becomes difficult to jump up on the kitchen counter (much less than on top of the 'fridge).

Creatureliness

The animals with whom I have shared my life remind me of my creatureliness. They remind me that I too, am a created being, springing, as do they from the hand of the Great Creator. The cats in my life remind me to stop and smell the roses, (well not roses per se), but to take time to remember the ecstasy available in simple things like stretching out in a patch sun.

Loyalty, play and structure

The dogs that I have known have taught me about loyalty, and play, and the importance of daily structure. (Both Barkley and Tuffy were wonderful at reminding us, by sitting at our feet and staring into our eyes that at 9:15, it was time for their evening walk.) The cats who are left in my home, Little One and Ashley are currently staring avidly out the kitchen door (with distance safely separating them) engaging in mutual fantasies about how fun it would be to chase the rabbit who has come to live in our back garden this spring.

They teach me, even as I write, about the importance of following my instincts, my "gut feelings" about a situation, instead of letting my anxieties rule in any given set of circumstances.

I thank God for the pet friends in my life. Especially, I am thankful for their wisdom.

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Let Your Voice be Heard

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

Fellowship of prayer Our cornerstone

ROGER HARRIS
ANGLICAN FELLOWSHIP OF PRAYER

So come to him, our Living stone—the Stone rejected by men but choice and precious in the sight of God. Come, and let yourselves be built, as living stones, into a Spiritual temple; become a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. For it stands written:

'I lay in Zion a choice cornerstone of great worth. The man who has faith in it will not be put to shame! The great worth of which it speaks is for you who have faith. For those who have no faith, the stone which the builders rejected has become not only the cornerstone, but also 'a stone to trip over, a rock to stumble against'. They fall when they disbelieve the Word. Such was their appointed lot! (1 Peter 2:4-8 N.E.B.)

'Christ the cornerstone'. Words of comfort, feelings of security, images of solidarity, all a vision of support. All of these and more apply to our Lord, and as we dwell on Scripture to absorb these words we can only see them from our human perspective. However, this Cornerstone has two purposes. One is to give to mankind the message of salvation and its acceptance, the other the cost of rejection. Acceptance is built on the love and salvation of Jesus, grounded on Jesus, the cornerstone of the church's foundation. Rejection is building on Satan, but without a Cornerstone, we only build on Satan's requirements of sin and division, which creates a fissure between God and ourselves.

'And I say this to you: You are Peter, the Rock; and on this rock I will build my church, and the powers of death shall never conquer it'. (Matthew 16:18 N.E.B.)

With the infinite wisdom that Jesus has and true to his own parable, Jesus had to build his church on a foundation of rock, and where did He see this rock residing—in no other than Simon Peter. Peter was the focal point of all the prophets and disciples past and present at that time, and it was he that Jesus decided to make the bedrock to place His church upon, a church that was to face many storms and struggles to assert itself in its infancy.

Once the cornerstone had been laid, there was no turning back. With a firm foundation provided by the prophets, stone by stone the disciples began to build the walls, and through the passage of time other 'stonemasons' have taken up a call to 'build', and the walls have grown and grown to where the building is nearly complete.

There are different kinds of stone as there are different types of nature in mankind. As the living stones, we want to be as Jesus, showing love and compassion. We do not want to be lifeless stones and manipulated with malice and contempt by Satan. As with stones which are formed by 'fire' deep inside the earth, we are transformed by the fire of the Holy Spirit. When a stone is created minerals are formed which contain an interlocking mechanism, and as with us we are transformed into an interlocked body by the Holy Spirit, a body in which Faith, Hope and Love is enveloped in the two great commandments—to love our God, and to love our neighbors.

Jesus is not only the cornerstone of our faith. He is the cornerstone of everything that is. When God created, all his works were built upon the sure foundation of Jesus himself. It is Jesus who supports everything that God has created and continues to create. He is a cornerstone not only of the material, but also of the spiritual, for there is nothing in the heavens or the earth, which is not under God's control. He is the point where the creation and structure of everything that is put in place. Jesus is the only link that we have to God, and the Holy Spirit is the only way in which we are able to reach Him. Where God is 'I am', Jesus 'is'.

Jesus is the Church, because we are the church, and we are in Jesus. Jesus is the nature of the church, for we in our human frailty are in the nature of Jesus. Jesus is the purpose of the church, because we have the same desire for the church as Jesus. He is the one that binds us together, who has overseen the creativity of the Father. Jesus is the Truth, the Way, and the Life. He is the cornerstone of the truth because he is the mortar itself and the way by which we the stones are held together for a life of serving God.

So once more we are told that we have free choice. We can become a stone that will form a wall on firm ground that will withstand all that is set against it, to the specifications of the master builder and under the guidance of the instructor. Or, we can become a stone that will form a wall on sand to the specifications of the one that seeks to destroy all that the master builder has created, and which in due time is going to collapse.

Prayer is part of the support that our Cornerstone provides. For Christians to be in regular touch with Jesus is to maintain the integrity of the structure of the church, for He is the Head and we are the body that needs to be constantly supported and guided by Him, each day, each week, each month and each year.

PEOPLE IN THE NEWS

Ordination to the Diaconate

Sunday, May 27, 4:00 pm - Christ's Church Cathedral, Hamilton
Ordaining Bishop: The Right Reverend D. Ralph Spence

Preacher: The Reverend Canon Terry DeForest, Interim Pastor, St. Paul's, Fort Erie
Candidates: Roderick Hugh McDowell (Vocational Deacon), Paul Sherren Maynard (Transitional Deacon), Aaron Thomas Orear (Transitional Deacon)

Ordination to the Priesthood

Thursday, June 14, 7:00 pm - St. Mark's Church, Orangeville

Ordaining Bishop: The Right Reverend D. Ralph Spence
Preacher: The Reverend Kate Merimman, Diocese of Toronto
Candidate: Bahman Kalantari

■ Congratulations to Liz Watson, parish administrator at St. Luke's, Burlington, who will retire from St. Luke's on May 31 after 19 years of ministry in this parish. We wish you all the best in this next chapter of life!

■ Sympathy to the Reverend Amy Cousineau, Rector of All Saints, Erin, and family, on the death of her mother, Barbara Geiger, on May 2, in Florida. A Memorial Service was held at St. Edward's Episcopal Church, Mount Dora, Florida, on May 7.

■ The Reverend Trevor Jones will retire from full time ministry effective June 30.

■ Catherine Rice, a long time and faithful member of Holy Trinity, Fonthill, died on March 11. A memorial service to celebrate her life will be held at a later date.

■ Congratulations to the Reverend Jane Rokeby, who will be recognized for her diaconal ministry by the North American Association for the Diaconate.

■ Congratulations to William and Marilyn Miller, faithful members of St. Stephen on the Mount, Hamilton, who celebrated their 50th Wedding Anniversary on April 27.

■ Ethel Harris, O.N., passed away on April 4. She was a faithful member of Grace Church, St. Catharines.

■ Mary Clunes, O.N., a faithful member of St. James, Fergus, died on May 4. She was the oldest recipient of the Order of Niagara. Funeral service was from her parish church on May 9.

■ Eleanor Gilbert, O.N., and Reg Witcher, O.N., from the Epiphany, Oakville, passed away recently. Reg Witcher died on January 26 and Eleanor Gilbert died on April 8.

■ Sympathy is expressed to the Brace Family on the death of Bruce Brace on April 21. Bruce was a long time and faithful member of St. John's, Ancaster. Service was held from his parish church on April 25.

■ John Riley and Adolfo Diiorio were given permission to administer the chalice at St. John the Evangelist, Thorold effective March 1.

■ Duncan Moffett was licensed as lay reader at St. John the Evangelist, Thorold, effective March 1; Maureen Clarke licensed as lay reader at Holy Trinity, Niagara Falls, effective March 1; Joan Urquhart, Dianne Boyko and Nicky Forsyth licensed as lay readers at St. Paul's, Dunnville, from February 1, to April 30.

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Episcopal Election Webcasts

Meet the Nominees

Thursday, May 24, 2007 at 7:00 pm

www.niagara.anglican.ca/webcast

All nominees will be present. Some parishes will be broadcasting on a large screen. Talk to your rector about which local churches are offering this. You will also be able to see the webcast on our website beginning the following day at any time you choose.

Election Day Webcast

Saturday, June 2, 2007 at 9:00 am

www.niagara.anglican.ca/webcast

The entire Electoral Synod will be broadcast until the election is completed. We will be limited to 500 viewers. If you are unable to get access, try a few minutes later, it should not be a problem.



Nearly one thousand people attended the Order of Niagara ceremony on Sunday, May 6, awarding recipients from Mohawk, Lincoln and Greater Wellington.

The church of non-attendance



SUSAN WESTALL
ALL SAINTS, HAMILTON

"They have gone nowhere. They live with us, and beside us; they work with us and play with us; they laugh with us and cry with us. Now it is up to us to listen and learn and invite them home to a place that they know" (Michael Patterson, "Where, oh where have they gone?", *Niagara Anglican*, February 2007).

What is that "place that they know"? Why is it that for years parish councils have been heard to cry that "we must get them to come to church", we must have "open doors"? Again and again we have taken the attitude that if services are interesting, if the sermon is good, people will come to church. But they don't.

Some years ago I attended a political meeting held in one of Hamilton's older churches (it was not Anglican!). I sat next to a young lady whom I knew as a member of our Friendship Centre at All Saints. She was showing distinct signs of discomfort and I tried to reassure her. She admitted to me that she was afraid, overwhelmed by the dark Gothic appearance of the church's interior. The presence of a friend made it possible for her to stay for the whole meeting, otherwise she would have left through discomfort.

The inside of traditional churches can be threatening to those who are unfamiliar with them. As a child we learn that "this is God's house" and we must behave ourselves when we are there. That immediately puts us under threat; God is all-powerful and the child's imagination can create all sorts of terrible consequences for misbehaviour, especially if there has ever been any mention of "hell". Gothic architecture is said to create the impression of being in a forest; remember what happened to the babes in the wood.

Judging the recalcitrant churchgoer
There is also the fact that many young people are actually turned off by being obliged to go to church or to Sunday School. A former rector used to complain that the choirboys were delivered to church on Sundays by a father who then left them while he went on to the golf course. Our Canadian Anglican Church seems to have learned that Confirmation has had its disadvantages: instead of being the required admission to Communion, it often deteriorated into a sort of graduation, marking the end of Sunday School and the need to return "next term". As often happens after a long summer holiday, the pupil is not exactly happy about going back to school. It's a case of "Tell me the old, old story". Church is over. At one time we had an active AYP (Anglican Young Peoples' Association), but it has faded to a mere shadow of former times.

Canon Patterson used the word "truncy" to describe the feelings of some of those who have

dropped away. Surely that is rather the sign of a guilty conscience? Going to church stirs up that sense of guilt, especially if we have had it drummed into us that we are all sinners. Why go to church if one is going to feel uncomfortable? Will I go to Hell if I don't go to church? Is God merciful? Unfortunately some self-righteous "regulars" consider that they have the right to judge and so drive the recalcitrant churchgoer away. It takes intestinal fortitude to continue to attend a church where one has been prejudged by so-called friends.

What are the criteria by which we who think we are "in the know" judge a "good" church service? Are they not generally the sermon, the music and, perhaps, the liturgy? If the sermon makes us uncomfortable, are we encouraged to return to that church? Do we feel that we would like to argue the point with a preacher, but have no opportunity because he or she is the authority? How many parishes do have dialogue sermons? How many who plan dialogue sermons encourage the congregation to take part—not by pre-arranged planning, but by impromptu interruptions? Would not such enquiries after truth cause consternation? Did St. Paul have it so smoothly in the Agora in Athens—or in Ephesus?

Listening but not praising

And the music—what of that? Is music supposed to be entertaining, inspirational, or just an opportunity to show off the choir? Are young people turned on by great Elisabethan motets or Bach cantatas? Would they not prefer to stay at

home and listen to the latest rock star? Our community symphony orchestras are aware of the problem of concert attendance; they are taking their music to where the young people are, not expecting them to turn up, willy-nilly, at concerts. Are our congregations educated to understand traditional church music, or do they accept it as being the "right" thing, even if they cannot understand the words because of poor enunciation and failure to print them in the bulletin? How many churchgoers stop to think about the meaning of the hymns they sing?

Do they sing the hymns—or songs as they are being called in some places? How should congregations participate? What is "liturgy"? Most would reply that it is the service itself, the form set out in the Book of Common Prayer (BCP) or the Book of Alternative Services (BAS). Who "does" the liturgy? Who is doing all the work? The parish priest, or celebrant, or president, of course! Some would think differently: the Liturgy is the "work of the people". The service of the Church is to praise God; it is the congregation's work. The officiant (usually the parish priest) is only the leader, but with special qualifications in the Eucharist. But does the congregation work, or is it a passive observer? Speaking personally, I have attended a service at Westminster Abbey where I actually sang the hymns and people around me in the congregation looked at me as if they had come to the service to listen to the choir. It is certainly true that visitors to England go to Evensong at

St. Paul's Cathedral to listen to the Choir, not to praise God. The liturgy becomes an entertainment.

A critical vacuum

As a child I remember going to Sung Mattins (Morning Prayer) at St. Jude's, Southsea and being completely mystified by canticles and psalms. Certainly I could not take part in them. Because we sat in the side gallery we turned to the east (altar) end during the Creed. Isn't that what North American Moslems do when they turn towards Mecca to pray? Whatever was it all about? One intention of the BAS was to give the congregation more chances to be involved in the liturgy; instead we no longer sing the canticles or psalms—the choir takes over and the congregation merely sings a response. What has happened to the glories of Anglican Chant? It has faded into the past because congregations were never instructed in the art of singing it. It remained a mystery to all except choir members and a few musically minded people. How many members of the average congregation know what "pointing" is? You can't sing the psalms without knowing it.

Because of all our shortcomings there is still a vast spiritual hole, a critical vacuum. Is it a wonder that Islam is on the march? They are taking advantage of the spiritual hole that Christians have allowed to exist.

Is the Church of Non-Attendance to continue to exist? Can the Church of Erehwon become the Church of Erewhomos? There must be more to come.