



# Niagara Anglican

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

## God next door



**MICHAEL PATTERSON**  
DIRECTOR OF EVANGELISM

I'm sitting in my home office this morning after having just completed the morning ritual; making lunches, waking kids!, walking dog, waking kids!, driving to re-



Churches must rediscover the neighbourhood not as an object of outreach programs or social service good deeds but as the real, flesh and bone place where God takes up residence and meets us all.

spective schools and just trying to get it all done in the allotted time. In the midst of the chaos, it struck me this morning how, in my neighbourhood at least, as we all run about jumping into our cars, giving the polite tepid wave and racing off in different directions, we do so in almost utter isolation; none of us really knowing each other. We all have the ritual, we all feel the same stress to get 'it' all done in time and yet we all do so as if we were the only ones experiencing this madness. Someone once said that, these days, unless you have a small child or you own a dog, you rarely have the opportunity to meet your neighbour.

I live in a lovely neighbourhood I think, and I do have a dog but I still do not really know my neighbours. I know the names of the people to the right of me but rarely see them because they have neither small kids nor a dog. The people to the left of me I almost never see; I don't know if they have kids or a dog and I have no idea when they actually cut their lawn! And the people across the street, I

wave to, we exchange pleasantries but the street might as well be the English Channel.

What got me thinking about my neighbourhood is the wonderful little book I just finished by Simon Carey Holt called *God Next Door; Spirituality and Mission in the Neighbourhood*. What Simon tells us is that in order to live out the Gospel of Jesus Christ, in order to do the work and mission of the Church, we have to get back into the neighbourhoods, hear the stories, listen to the needs and then be the Church. If people do not, for whatever reason, reach out to those they live beside, it cannot be expected that they will reach out the 'local' church just because! Simon takes seriously the Biblical imagination of the Incarnation—God moved in right next door and settled into these amazing places called neighbourhoods. It begs the question, "What if God lived next door?" Would you recognize him? Would you talk to him at the fence or avoid catching his eye? Would you love him as you love yourself?

Isn't it ironic when the single most recognized Christian responsibility to others—to love your neighbour as yourself—is generalized as a command to love everyone, with little reference to real neighbours in the same street who remain virtually anonymous? And what does it mean for our understanding of 'loving neighbour' when churches spend less time out in the communities and more time spent trying to get people 'in'. It seems as though, as the Church has played a less influencing role in society and as memberships decline, the Church itself has, more and more, cut itself off from the very people and neighbourhoods that they are called to serve.

A lot of questions are raised in this book about churches and our preoccupations with our buildings, about building memberships, creating evangelizing worship or running the right program so that seekers might find us attractive.

» CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

## OUTREACH » How beautiful the world is, when love shines in



## GREENING NIAGARA » The Undermount Initiative

**RUSSELL G. KELK**  
CHAIR - UNDERMOUNT

Where did it begin? For years Undermount Region had been meeting monthly to inform each other of the activities taking place in our home Parishes. Once a year we talked about various Outreach Projects we could do as a Region. Last year each parish provided The Mission to Seafarers with various articles to make up 100 gift parcels for visiting seamen to Hamilton at Christmas. At our next Regional meeting the question was put forward as to what our focus would be this year. This led to a lively dis-

ussion of things we could do. The thing most important to all of us was the environment. Our executive set the agenda for the next meeting and representatives from Mohawk Region and several environmental organizations such as True City, were invited to participate in the meeting. Following an opening worship service we broke into discussion groups to discuss ways in which our parishes could become more environmentally aware. Each group then presented their thoughts. The following items were put forward.

■ Energy conservation: Programmable thermostats, timers, lighting,

furnace filters, caulking and weather stripping windows and doors, ceiling fans, appliance efficiency, hot water conservation and reduce water consumption (bricks in toilet tanks or low water usage toilets).

■ Reduce, reuse, recycle: Green bins, recycling pop cans (St. Matthews House or as a source of income for your parish) and paper, use china/metal cutlery, NO PLASTIC or STYROFOAM, reduce paper usage. Example instead of printed bulletins or order of service use power point projection.

» CONTINUED ON PAGE 13

## Bishop Spence asks for an end to personal attacks

In recent weeks as the debates continue in our Church about same-sex blessing, the Bishop has asked that all clergy and laity continue the discussion while respecting the views of one another.

Dear Friends in Niagara:

As someone who has frequently been the target for personal attacks, I realize the personal price one pays in ministry only too well. It is my hope that as we continue the current

discussions over same sex blessings (or any other theological debate); it would be helpful to remember to express our own opinions in the discussion and not to personally attack those who disagree. Debate and dis-

ussion are healthy but personal attacks on each other must end. They do not help us in our mission to the world in spreading the Good News of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

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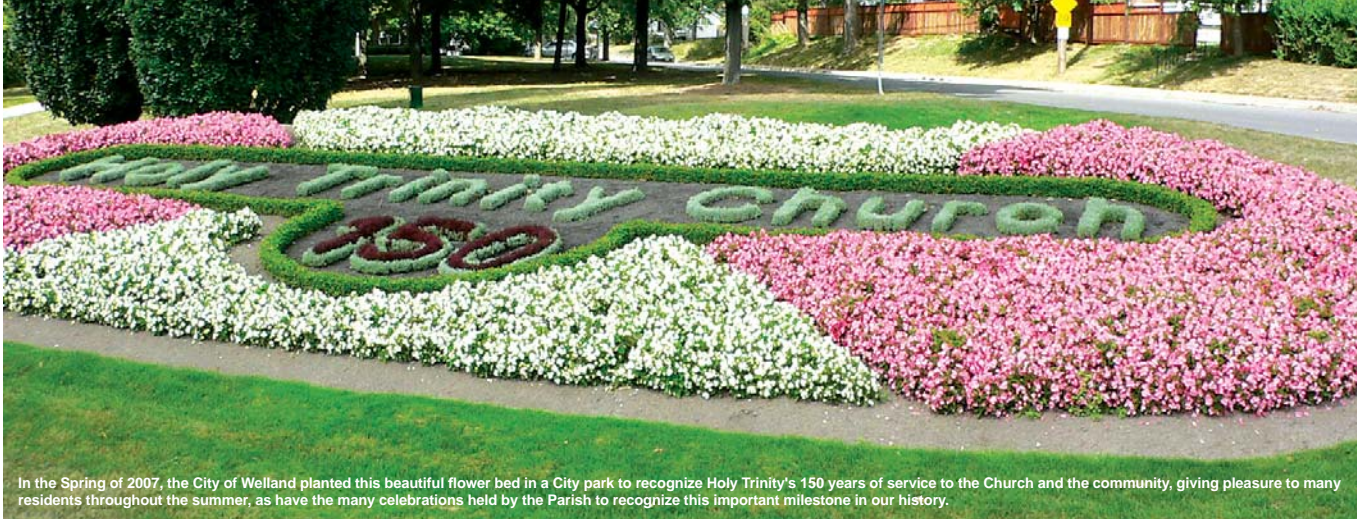
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## PARISH NEWS



In the Spring of 2007, the City of Welland planted this beautiful flower bed in a City park to recognize Holy Trinity's 150 years of service to the Church and the community, giving pleasure to many residents throughout the summer, as have the many celebrations held by the Parish to recognize this important milestone in our history.

## Why did St. Philip's close its doors?

Part two of our look at the disestablishment and deconsecration of St. Philip the Apostle



**SUSAN WELLS**  
PAST INTERIM RECTOR - ST. PHILIP THE APOSTLE

If you read the first article you will have realized that since its inception St. Philip's was a church that understood the meaning of outreach and evangelism. Even after the parish closed on April 29, through the dedication of the parishioners the ministry of the parish continued till all the programs were successfully relocated.

It is a simple question but the answer is complex. There is no singular reason that can be pointed to as the definitive factor which led to the closure. Indeed, as is the case with most parish closings, there were multiple factors occurring over a long period of time. Closure is not synonymous with unsuccessful. The parish was successful, God was served in this place for forty-four years; lives were transformed, the hungry were fed, the Gospel was preached, friendships were forged and above all people came to know and worship Christ.

In the end, the reason that the parish decided to close was fatigue. The people were tired. Tired of trying to sustain the mission and ministry with a decreasing number of parishioners and tired of trying in vain to address a growing debt. It was not a decision made lightly in fact at vestry on February 25, 2007; the parish struggled with trying to find a way forward and when none was obvious it was decided to recess vestry for two weeks in order to give people time to pray about the future of the parish. When the

vestry reconvened on March 11, 2007, it was obvious that the time had come, that God's answer was: "you need to rest, it is finished". These were hard words to hear. It was a hard vote to take. There was not a dry eye in the place and everyone hugged each other.

**The Church simply could not be found**  
Originally, when the parish was founded in the Sixties, the location appeared to be a good choice. It was in a new residential area, across from a public school and although at the end of a dead end street, it was expected the street would be extended. Initially the parish flourished; thanks to the brave people living north of the QEW who chose to leave St. Christopher's and begin a new parish. In the Sixties and Seventies the parish flourished and retired its mortgage. Things were looking so great it was decided to add an addition, in order to be Handicapped Accessible and to add additional office and program space. Perhaps in retrospect, this was not the right time to do this as the debt that was incurred was ultimately harmful to the parish. Yet, the addition allowed the parish to develop in ways that would not otherwise have been possible. It allowed St. Philip's to become home to many special needs parishioners and programs. Yet, even with the help of the Diocese, the mortgage negatively impacted the long term viability of the parish.

As the parish moved into the 80's and attendance began to slowly wane, as it did everywhere in North America, the subdivision in which the parish was located that seemed like such a good location now appeared to be anything but. In hope of becoming more visible and attracting new parishioners, Carol Skidmore, Barb Dickenson, Bill Swybrous and others circu-

lated a petition and attempted to have the city of Burlington extend Mountain Grove Ave. through to Upper Middle. Some have said that the fate of this parish was sealed when city council rejected this petition and decided not to extend Mountain Grove. St. Philip's was now permanently at the end of a dead end street. Not only did the general public not know where the church was, there were baptisms, weddings and funerals where some of the guests either arrived late or didn't make it at all simply because they could not find the church.

### Fatigue Level was high

The parish was fortunate to attract a long term tenant that shared the parish's commitment to the community. Burlington Family Resource Center was a public funded program for parents and children. This program flourished even in this location and by the mid nineties had taken over the entire church during the week. As their programs continued to expand they needed more space than St. Philip's was able to provide and ultimately decided to relocate. The rent that the parish received from BFRC was an important part of the parishes' operating budget and with the loss of this income the parish began to incur debt.

Over the next 12 years at least 4 different day cares set up at St. Philip's, but none of them were successful. The physical facilities were ideal but the location made it difficult to access. When the parish had a tenant it managed to meet its budget; when it didn't it fell into debt. It was an up and down journey with the parish never being certain whether or not it would survive.

There were also changes in clerical leadership over the years.

» CONTINUED ON PAGE 23

## Vacation Bible School a splashing success



Back row: Cole Greer, Andrew Dziuba, Jake Lintack, Matthew McDonald, Kayla Lemon, Kelsey Fedus, Brian Robson. Front row: Sarah Barr, Katie-Lynn Barr, Laura Robson, Sarah McDonald, Matthew Arsenault, Carrie Charters.

**SUE CRAWFORD**  
ST. MICHAEL'S, HAMILTON

This year's Vacation Bible School at St. Michael's was somewhat 'wet and wild' thanks to the thirteen youth staff who assisted with the 50 young and eager participants. The theme was "Wild Water Works" and it certainly helped cool us especially with the humidity we experienced during some of the days that we held the Bible School.

Our amazing youth (along with around 8 adults each day) never lost their enthusiasm (at least in front of the children) the entire week. Their favourite time was, no doubt, outside at the wild water works splash area where water games of every description were played. This station was definitely the 'wild' and 'wet' part.

Water balloons somehow even made their way into the kitchen where a keen group of adults prepared "water" theme snacks. Teddy Graham Moses tramped through

the blue jello "Red Sea" on a graham cracker. Orange boats with cheese slice sails, celery boats with nacho sails, rock sandwiches and the favourite—fish on the beach—peaches, pudding, cool whip, graham cracker crumbs in a cup and a gummy fish to top it all were enjoyed by most of the children.

Crafts under the expert guidance of Linda McDonald included a life-saver pillow, an anchor bulletin board, floating boats and ducks, a picture frame with photo taken at VBS, fish on the beach tic-tac-toe game, storm in a bottle, and many more!

Children had wonderful help from the youth as some crafts were quite involved.

Janine Charters spearheaded the "Lesson" part of the program which included the snack station. Youth staff helped serve, clear away and assisted some of the younger children with their tasks.

» CONTINUED ON PAGE 12

# Isabel Lebourdais, Canadian heroine



**FRANCEAN CAMPBELL-RICH**  
CHRIST'S CHURCH CATHEDRAL

She didn't live to see the day: Isabel Lebourdais, crusader for justice for Stephen Truscott. It had been

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Never did she lose her  
poise, even when provoked

my first thought, the morning of the great acquittal. I held my breath and waited, for the mention: Who would remember, who would celebrate, after all these years, the name of the woman who saved the life of a fourteen year old boy condemned to death by hanging?

I was wrong. CBC-TV had been ready for it all along. They had planned a Special; they had taken pictures of the house where she had lived; they had rounded up distinguished commentators and they had combed the best person in the world to talk about her, Isabel's son, Julien Lebourdais.

Anything more would be superfluous here. But only too often, alert to drama at the expense of facts, I recalled a minor role played by Julien himself when the case came

before the Supreme Court. Isabel's book *The Trial of Stephen Truscott*, had precipitated a unique hearing. John Diefenbacher, the prime minister and himself a lawyer, had brought the matter to the floor of the House. Truscott's sentence was commuted to life imprisonment. Huge headlines plastered the papers for days. The courtroom held only forty persons, most of them press. "NO ROOM FOR AUTHOR IN COURT" blared the Star. Those who couldn't make it swarmed the steps and halls of the building. Among them, a young photographer, Julien Lebourdais, unrecognized, assigned to cover for one of the papers. Julien had been and continued to be his mother's best friend and supporter. I for one hope he will write her biography; he knows more than enough to do so.

So where is the Anglican angle in the story? Twofold, in my view. There is the quantity, tone and often strong language in these pages on the justice issue of same gender blessings in recent years. It is worth noting that throughout Isabel Lebourdais' crusade her language and her demeanor is restrained, detached, polite, respectful. Moreover, no one, to my knowledge, has ever found an error in her carefully researched book – not that it would be easy to run a check on her sources; school and library copies have long ago disappeared, and publishers have overlooked the feasibility of a reprint. (Interesting to note: It took some seventy years

for publishers to reprint her sister Gwethalyn Graham's nearly equally sensational novel, *Earth and High Heaven*). The same civilized tone prevailed throughout the many interviews and public addresses that followed. Never did she lose her poise, even when provoked. The farthest she went in rebuff was the time the broadcaster and panelist, Gordon Sinclair demanded to know 'how much you are making'. "Not as much as you are making in this telecast, Mr. Sinclair," she replied.

Privately, Isabel was not always so restrained. Totally lacking in vanity she was curiously indifferent to her own good looks, but uninhibited, outspoken, compulsively original, eccentric in tastes, she was fiercely loyal, quick to take the part of the hidden, the vulnerable. She was an atheist by nature, by choice, by habit, and not at all discreet about it. I recall with amusement the image of Isabel in a Roman Catholic hospital, affectionately cared for by Catholic nurses, while behind her on the wall overhead, unbeknownst to her, a crucifix. If she ever did in her lifetime discern the ultimate being of truth and justice, she confronted and kept it to herself.

The second point is this: If there is a lesson in the Lebourdais story, it must be an Anglican one. The issues are universal, the human ones integral: the call to see and do what is right; the will to look at the truth, the courage to act, to persevere. This was Isabel's mission. Long may she be honoured and remembered.

# Sacred interdependence



**LINDA MOORE**  
CANADIAN CENTRE FOR LEADERSHIP & HUMAN VALUES

Each day the sun rises and sets, the tides ebb and flow, birds sing and fly, animals forage and rest and humans interact within the world as they experience it. Most of us take this daily process for granted without giving it too much conscious thought. And yet, we live in a profoundly sacred interdependence with all that is in and around us. Understanding this truth is at the core of our very existence.

I know we often believe that we can act independently without impact on "other". We have deluded ourselves into believing that even for a second we can stand alone and apart from our world. How silly of us! Everyone and everything on this earth and in these skies are interconnected. This interdependent flow of life is always seeking equilibrium, that movement towards balance and alignment. It is a continuous process.

Perhaps we need to pay attention and recall what we already know in our hearts.

We interact and impact our world individually and collectively literally with every breath we breathe in and out. We take in oxygen provided by plants and trees and exhale carbon dioxide which is then reused. Our very breath shifts molecules and in the cycle of life, breathing itself becomes a powerful metaphor for this amazing and humbling interdependence. Polluted air is simply a symptom of our lack of awareness and denial of this simple yet profound truth. Otherwise we would never allow it.

## Out of balance

This tender and perfect dance towards equilibrium continues whether we are awake and aware or not. There are infinite examples all around us. Deer become scarce when their predators the wolves, reduce their numbers. The wolf population grows until the shortage of deer reduces their numbers as well. And so it goes. Throughout the whole food chain there has always been an ebb and flow of plenty that keeps each species including ourselves in check. Even viruses, bacteria and fungi feed on others and thus assist in the breakdown of one form to support the evolution of another. Yet, at the present time there are more humans going hungry than are being effectively fed. This is in spite of the reality that there is more than enough food being produced in the world to feed us all. We are out of balance with the natural flow. We have the ability to change this.

Elephant, zebra, lion, hyena, giraffe and birds of many species will use a common watering hole, always alert to predator and prey, knowing the dangers this intrinsic movement towards balance brings. Once the water dries up their collective instinct drives them towards other sources of water they know is required for their very survival. Right now in many places throughout the world, women will walk several miles each day to

find a source of water. Sometimes the people and the animals walk together in their quest. Misuse of the land and deforestation reduces the availability of water where it is needed. Water is fundamental to life and we have the capacity to do our best to ensure it freely exists for all beings.

## Shifting to sustainability is within our reach

There is a knowing inside us that we are refreshed and rejuvenated when we can escape the confines of our suburban/urban existence and move out into the more natural country side and wilderness areas. We treasure gazing over a lake, sitting beside a river, looking out over a mountain top, sailing, canoeing, hiking, kayaking, climbing and boating. Being surrounded by land, water, rocks and trees enlivens us. We feel more expansive. We feel at home. Our aggression depletes and the intrinsic love for others reemerges. Why?

Whether we are conscious of it or not we yearn to reconnect in the most basic way with all that lies around us. We know this is where we will find the sacred in us and others. Each time we permit more of our natural landscape to be "developed", force crowding within inner cities and strip land to build more homes, we rob ourselves of the most fundamental element to a healthy and happy existence. We can shift to a more sustainable way.

Without a doubt most of us sense that something has been lost as we have "advanced" as a species. We know there is something "more" to life. We continue to search for this connection. Often we think that through acquiring material possessions we will find the elusive "something" that will bring us peace and happiness. That is, until we have more than we can ever need and still feel empty. Accumulating and hoarding "stuff" both figuratively and literally has become a sad reality for those desperate for filling the hole in their heart. Out of this pain and suffering, comes greed and a world filled with haves and have-nots in many dimensions of our existence. Knowing that we are absolutely connected to every other human being can move us to a different course of action.

## What matters is the journey

It is unlikely that we will ever truly understand how this intricate web of life works. It actually doesn't matter. What does matter is the journey towards the understanding of this inexplicable interconnection. What does matter is our ability to stand in humility and awe accepting we know little or nothing of this mystical interdependence and develop a curiosity to explore. What does matter is that we accept responsibility for our individual impact on each other and this world.

We are all whole, creative and resourceful. All things are possible.

You and I, every animal, bird, blade of grass, stream, tree, rock and breeze that brushes our brow are connected in an unfathomable dance of life. When we deeply know this as true and are willing to live and act on that understanding the healing of ourselves and our earth begins. In turning our attention to this sacred interdependence, all life is transformed.

# Religion in Ontario public schools



**JOHN BOTHWELL**  
RETIRED ANGLICAN ARCHBISHOP

The Conservative Party has announced that if it forms a government after the provincial election on October 10, it will provide funding for more religious schools, similar to Roman Catholic "Separate Schools". Some members of many faiths may welcome this proposal, but many others do not.

And no wonder, because for over two decades the mainline non-Roman churches in Ontario, (Anglican, United, Presbyterian, Lutheran etc.) have advocated "inter-faith education about religion" as the best method for religious education in our public schools. And its unique characteristics are as follows:

- Impartial, descriptive teaching about all major religions, strictly avoiding any intent to convert or influence students to any single Faith.
- History and facts which would enable people of all Faiths to understand each other better, and would promote understanding and respect for religion amongst secular-minded people.
- Clear demonstration that religious faith and commitment are

good, even though they can be misused; and that faith and reason are both important in all Faiths.

## A more viable alternative

During the 1980's, most of Ontario's main-line churches worked in a partnership with members of non-Christian faiths to educate the public about this method of religious education for our schools and to lobby the provincial government to implement some pilot projects to test its effectiveness. As a result, in January 1990, a "Provincial Ministerial Inquiry" chaired by Glen A. Watson issued a report recommending—"Education about religion should be compulsory in the curriculum of public elementary schools" (*The Report of the Ministerial Inquiry on Religious Education in Ontario Elementary Schools* Glen A. Watson, Chairperson, January 1990)—and the Honourable Sean Conway, Liberal Minister of Education, seemed ready to inaugurate pilot projects.

But an election was called, and by the time "Bob Rae's NDP government" was fully briefed, yet another election was due. And the "Mike Harris Conservative government" embarked on restructuring the education system, during which this proposal was forgotten. But the idea of "education about all major religions" is still more desirable, a more viable, economical, and better alternative than establishing more

"separate schools" for the following reasons:

- Religion in its many manifestations is a major area of human thought and experience, and together with science and the arts, is one of the major ways in which all humans perceive reality.
- "Respect for different cultures and religions" is a basic necessity in free democratic societies, and cannot be achieved in a knowledge vacuum.
- It is virtually impossible to understand world events to-day without some basic knowledge of religions that are active internationally. Islam, or Judaism, or Buddhism, as well as Christianity.
- It is virtually impossible to have even an intelligent perspective on the historical development of Canada and its distinctive provinces, and much of our art, music and literature as well, without reference to religion.
- In fact, living as we do, in a multi-faith, multi-cultural society, we can scarcely understand our own neighbours, and are bound to experience unnecessary tensions with them if we ignore their religious beliefs.

## Why are we so silent now?

Again, most main-line Christian denominations have officially supported "inter-faith teaching about religion" for many years. Why are they all so silent now, when the costly and potentially divisive operation of provincially-financed separate schools is being proposed?

# Authority: The work of the diocesan household

## Critical Time for Divided Anglicans

Christian Post - USA

Anglican leaders in the Global South are calling it a "critical time" for a divided Anglican Communion and one that will shape their future...

## NIXON, Charlie - Peacefully at Parkwood Hospital, London

Waterloo Record - Waterloo, Ontario, Canada

Donations in Charlie's memory may be made to the Christ Anglican Church, KW Food Bank or Amnesty International. Online condolences or donations may be...



**MICHAEL THOMPSON**  
RECTOR - ST. JUDE'S, OAKVILLE

At least once, and sometimes twice a day, I receive a "Google Alert" on my desktop, making me aware of news items about the Anglican Church. Last Friday, the two items above came one after another in a list of five. The first tells the story of a bitter and highly politicized dispute, ostensibly about human sexuality, but inevitably about power, post-colonial resentment and the authoritarian politics of expedience.

The second is not about power, but about authority. Authority is different from power. One way of thinking about the difference is to think of power as the ability to cause or prevent something, and authority as trusting someone to use power on our behalf. Authority comes in two forms—the authority of structures and roles, and the authority of persons. Charlie Nixon (in the second of the two

"Google Anglican" stories above), has personal authority. That is to say, he has somehow earned the right to ask his friends to support some things he believes in. Chief among those things, it seems, are groups of people gathering around three human needs—faith, food, and freedom.

Charlie Nixon was ninety-one years old when he died in London, Ontario, though he lived much of his life in nearby Ayr, where he was a member of the local Anglican congregation. He served overseas in the Second World War, and toward the end of his life he took up watercolour painting. All this you can learn from his obituary. No doubt Charlie shared with the rest of us some human foibles and frailties, and sometimes fell short of his human best. Nevertheless, he acquired authority—legitimate influence over the decisions and actions of others. At the time of his death, his survivors put that authority to work in service of faith, food and freedom—the local church, the Kitchener-Waterloo Food Bank, and Amnesty International.

There are other forms of authority. For example, the synod of this diocese (whose authority results from election of its members by

parish vestry meetings) recently recognized the personal authority of Michael Bird and in due course, he will assume the structural authority of diocesan bishop. At the General Synod (whose authority results from election of its members by diocesan synods), we recognized the personal authority of Fred Hiltz and his record of exercising structural authority as a diocesan bishop, and elected him as the Primate of the Anglican Church of Canada. Throw in the Metropolitans (one for each ecclesiastical province) and that's just about it for structural authority in the Anglican Church of Canada. Even the Archbishop of Canterbury has no structural authority in our diocese. Certainly, the Primate of Uganda, or Kenya, or the Southern Cone or Rwanda or Nigeria, while having been granted authority in their own Provinces, exercise no such authority here. Statements of the Lambeth Conference of bishops have no legal authority, and the same goes double for communiqués from meetings of the Primates—though the Primates have latterly made a fairly transparent power play by seeking seats *ex officio* on the Anglican Consultative Council.

This year marks the 150th anniversary of the election of Benjamin Cronin as Bishop of Huron by the synod of that diocese. It was the first time in the Anglican Communion that a synod exercised that authority, the first time that the choosing of a bishop was undertaken by those whom the bishop would lead and serve. It is still not the universal practice within the Anglican Communion—another of the significant divergences in practice that are one of the hallmarks of the Anglican Communion. But it is a perspec-

tion on structural authority that is woven tightly into our church's self-understanding.

There is, then, the authority of persons—men and women like Charlie Nixon—who live their lives in such a way as to bear witness to justice and generosity, and who have authority to call us to serve such human needs as faith, food, and freedom. And there is the authority of the church, refracted through the ministries of Bishops, Metropolitans, and Primate. Of those, the one whose authority carries the most weight in a diocese is the diocesan bishop. Bishop Ralph and Bishop-elect Michael have such authority because we know them, because we can take the measure of their leadership and, if needs be, challenge them—for example, through resolutions of the Synod. What mechanism, other than shared ideology, is there for us to take a similar measure of Henry Orombi (Uganda) or Greg Venables (Southern Cone), or Peter Akinola (Nigeria)? On the basis of a single issue, they presume to function as if they had structural authority in North America, challenging the authority of synods to elect bishops, consecrating bishops of their own, and recruiting the leaders of congregations to their cause.

All of that is not to minimize the gravity of the decisions that are before us, and of the need to take those decisions, here in our diocese, in the spirit of generosity and compassion for those with whom we find ourselves deeply at odds. Some of the rhetoric on both sides has been careless—that is to say, it hasn't 'taken care', and the suggestion that someone whose conscientious decision is different from our own is somehow lacking in faithful-

ness, love, regard for the authority of scripture or concern for justice, will not serve us well. The place of gay and lesbian persons in our life, our response to the gifts they bring, the question of our capacity to recognize their faithful intimacies as a vessel of God's blessing, our profound disagreement over the shape of holy living for gay and lesbian disciples of Jesus—these are all issues that are serious and for some people deeply disturbing. But it is not the work of those from afar to sort them out for us. It is our work as a diocesan household, and it is not easy. It is not made easier when collectives of bishops and primates assume a jurisdiction that they do not have, and try to exercise an authority that they have not been granted.

So I look to the authority of people like Charlie Nixon, authority earned over a lifetime of service and friendship that is turned to the purposes of faith, food, and freedom. And I look to the authority of Ralph Spence and Michael Bird, raised up in the life of this diocese from the beginning of their ministries. And I look to the authority of the baptized who serve the world and the clergy who serve and lead the baptized in congregations large and small throughout this diocese. We know the saints of our churches, and we know the bishops who serve and lead us. Sometimes among us there is much banging of pots in the kitchen and passionate argument in the living room. Being this household of Niagara is sometimes difficult and uncomfortable. But it is our household, and we belong to each other, have authority with each other, and see that authority genuinely refracted through the lives of those who serve and lead us.

## Are people of other faiths our brothers and sisters in Christ?



**MICHAEL BURSELM**  
ST. GEORGES, LOWVILLE

This is not just a provocative question, but is one that may be raised by reading *The Fingerprints of God, Tracking the Divine Suspect through a History of Images*, by Robert Farrar Capon (published by Eerdmans in 2000). His theme is that God has invaded history, not just in the Incarnation, but throughout the whole of history, through a succession of images, the chief one admittedly being his son, Jesus Christ. He, God the Father, made Jesus, God the Son, who knew no sin, to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. (2 Corinthians 5:21) This was while we were yet sinners (Romans 5:8); that is before we had cleaned up our act, not afterwards. What follows, according to Capon, has enormous consequences for the Western church, which, he claims,

has misunderstood what Paul and John were really saying. However, the early church did understand them, which he shows by quoting leaders such as Irenaeus and Athanasius. But gradually, with time, the church misunderstood the scriptures, and with Anselm, the 11th Century theologian, the idea of God's satisfaction crept in; that salvation depended on us, (atonement-by-self-help Capon calls it) and no longer entirely on Christ.

### Christians do not have a monopoly on soul-wellness

Reform became essential, but Capon points out that the reformers didn't bring the church back to the teaching of the apostles, but only part way. Even in the doctrine of Justification by Faith, our faith becomes a work by which we save ourselves. Capon has an imaginary round table conversation with Luther, Melancthon and Calvin, in which he points this out to them, and he introduces them to Lady Julian of Norwich, the 14th Century English mystic and Anchorite. She, Capon thought, really did understand the New Testament when she wrote, "I may make all thing well, I can make all thing

well, I will make all thing well, and I shall make all thing well; and thou shalt see thyself that all manner of thing shall be well." This assurance of wellness is what Capon says is lacking in the church today, when salvation depends on us, and not on God in Christ.

He claims a universal salvation that is not appropriated, but appreciated, by faith. Christians do not have a monopoly on soul-wellness. Everyone who lives, or has ever lived, on earth enjoys it, and that is where the question of the title of this essay comes in. This has implications both for evangelism and mission. Should we be asking people, are you saved? Or should we declare to them, you have been saved through Jesus Christ? The statement Jesus makes in his final discourse, "no one comes to the Father, but by me," (John 14:6) was not intended to divide those who come to the Father, and those who have not, but merely to say that all people come to the Father by him, just as all mammals need oxygen to breath. Hell, to Capon, is not appreciating by faith the gift of salvation which God has given to all. There is a separation be-

tween those who do have faith, and those who do not, those who 'perish', but both groups are in heaven, now and in eternity.

### The living Word trumps the written word

Capon distinguishes between the Incarnate Word, Jesus Christ, active in the world throughout history, and the written word, the scriptures. In recent times the two have become synonymous. However, he says that the scriptures were 'birthed' by the community. In other words (these are my words, not his) the scriptures were made for man, not man for the scriptures. He says that although both the Old and New Testaments disapprove of homosexual relationships, many Christians, including himself, find this untenable in the light of the delivered Word's drawing of all persons to himself. 'The living Word trumps the written word.'

But before we burn Capon as a heretic, I think we should listen to what he has to say. He does not say that homosexual relationships are holy; or that people are saved by being Jewish, Muslim, Hindu, or whatever, but merely that God acted

'while we were yet sinners'. All are saved by and through Jesus Christ.

I welcome these ideas because they have implications as to how we should live as Christians in a pluralistic society. Our present thinking would certainly demand a paradigm shift. For a start, if everyone was drawn to God through Jesus Christ, there would be no justification for anti-Semitism or Islamophobia: No one could say to another, "I have no need of you": War would be anathema. All would be serving one another in love. Every day would become Christmas. Is this too utopian, or what Jesus taught?

No review is complete without a note about the author. Robert Capon has been an Episcopalian priest on Long Island, New York, for 50 plus years. He's a student of classical languages and history, and he writes more for lay people than for academics. The book isn't too long, just 163 pages, but it isn't indexed, which is a drawback. It's obvious that he has enjoyed writing it; as much as I have enjoyed reading it. He may be controversial, but I think that his ideas shouldn't be dismissed, because I believe he's bringing us back to our roots.



PHOTO: JIM DEAN

## His name is Theo



**MARNI NANCEKEVIL**  
DIRECTOR OF TRANSITIONAL MINISTRY

A certain retired Archdeacon of this Diocese was well known for reminding people that under God, we live not in a "democracy", but in a "theocracy", with God as our centre. (He went on to say that he wanted the people of his parish to know that his name was "Theo") Well, at our house we have a "theocracy" of a different kind. Temporarily at least,



The hard work of change is daunting, but equally great are the rewards.

all of our actions are ruled by the needs of a newly acquired puppy named: "Theo".

Theo came to live at our house less than two weeks ago. Since then, I have become reacquainted with the life of a puppy owner. (The last time I had a puppy, I was nine years old. That was decades ago.) So now, if I awaken in the middle of the night, as I did last night, along with my own trip to the bathroom, I make the trek down to the kitchen, to let little Theo out. Every walk turns into a training session, as Theo learns to walk on a leash. Last night in addition to improving his leash manners, he began to make some real progress on "sitting", too. He knows his name, and will now come running when called, but all too frequently, he is called because he has disappeared to our dining room, his current favourite "indoor bathroom" while we're awaiting the arrival of his crate. Those mistakes are not his, but are ours, as we learn his "cues". Our Theo is also at the nipping and biting stage, and is showing some progress this week on responding when he is told "No Biting". However, he still has an unusual taste for footwear of all kinds,

and his "footish" includes everything from running shoes to boots. The good news is that he is still too little to hop up on the furniture and has still to learn how to climb the stairs, so the second storey of our house is still safe, which gives us some time to accomplish the daunting task of "Theo proofing" the upper level of our house.

As you can tell, life with Theo is a challenge. Like many transitions in our lives, it came relatively suddenly. We had talked *theoretically* about getting a dog many times in the past years. We had agreed that we would refrain from acquiring another pet until our eldest cat, DC died. He had weathered relatively gracefully the introduction of several new cats into his life over the years, and we felt that it was only fair that he live out his last years in peace. Well, DC died in the spring, and several times over the summer, my daughter reminded me of the promise that we would get a dog. However, there was an advertisement in the classified section of the local paper on Wednesday two weeks ago and by Saturday night, we had a puppy in our lives.

I was silly enough to have the illusion of being in some control with this decision. Over the years, I had researched breeds and had decided on a "Schnoodle". A Schnoodle is a hybrid breed, a cross between a Miniature Schnauzer and a Miniature Poodle. In addition to being a hypoallergenic breed, they are known for being pleasing to their owners (except, apparently when it comes to eating foot wear). They are intelligent and devoted, and great companions. Well, I thought to myself, that, in addition to being small to mid-sized, sounds like the perfect dog! Although he is a wise choice for us, I certainly learned that while he is being trained, I am not necessarily "in control" now that Theo is in our lives. His needs come first during this time of training.

Theo in time may be the perfect dog for us. He is already a delightful companion. But, I confess that I had forgotten the chaos that puppies bring. In addition to training Theo, which is, as you can tell, I have to train my husband and daughter, nei-

ther of whom have ever before had a puppy in their lives. And before I "train" them, I have to, of course, re-train myself to remember what puppy love entails.

In addition to a bit of puppy chaos, adjusting to this transition in our lives is plain hard work. I am experiencing a need to readjust our patterns, and our expectations of what is "normal" in our home. We need to be open to doing new things in new ways. And, we have to learn, again and again! Our family is also finding new ways of communicating—with Theo, and with one another, picking up cues in new ways.

Those "puppy stories" are good reminders of what any kind of transition entails. Whether it is life in a parish with a new Incumbent or a different and more personal change in our lives, transition (or "change", to use the "c" word) is not easy. Yet, Theo's "puppy kisses" remind me how rewarding it is to venture into a new phase of life. The hard work of change is daunting, but equally great are the rewards.

This Diocese is entering into a period of transition as we welcome Bishop Michael Bird as our Co-adjutor Bishop, and as we prepare to say farewell to Bishop Spence when he retires early next year. Things will change with a new Bishop, and in addition to the intimidating task that Bishop Bird is undertaking, much will be demanded of the people of this Diocese during this time of transition and beyond. Life will be "different" for us in Niagara as we experience the new reality of his leadership. New patterns will be established, and indeed our expectations of what is normative will change.

Being the bearer of new leadership can be an intimidating task. I ask you to pray daily for Bishop Bird, and for his family, as they continue to realize the consequences of his election as Bishop in their daily life. Pray for courage and vision for him, and for responsive and faithful hearts for ourselves as we begin, in our life in Niagara, a new chapter in our Diocesan life. (And, while you're at it, could you also pray for us, as we expand our home to a loving little puppy, named Theo?)

## Gift planning and planned giving

**CARL SYNED**  
DIRECTOR OF STEWARDSHIP

These are two terms you may have heard around making your will or during capital campaigns. They are not necessarily interchangeable. They can be differentiated this way.

Gift Planning is the active development of an estate plan for distribution of your assets, with advice from a knowledgeable professional.

Planned Giving refers to gifts outlined in the estate plan that are made from assets accumulated during your life rather than writing a cheque from current income.

As we say in some of our publications, we know God puts it in our hearts to want to give. Certainly we want to know that our family members will be taken care of but we also may want to do more. Throughout our lives as members of the church we are regular supporters of its ministry and display consistent generosity over time. Almost always it is from our cash flow or family operational budgets. The Planned Gift is almost always a gift from accumulated assets.

All of this becomes possible as we move forward in our spiritual journeys from scarcity to abundance, to the life Jesus calls us each to and the inner peace and freedom it brings.

There are a number of "tools" or financial vehicles that allow an individual to maximize the benefits of gifts to the Church. Any decisions about a plan or the choice of methods of giving must always be discussed with a qualified financial planner.

The Anglican Church of Canada groups the various forms of giving into the areas of present, future and long-term continuing gifts.

### Gifts for the present

#### An outright gift of cash

The simplest and often the easiest way to give. A tax receipt is issued, and usually, the tax saving can reduce the cost of giving.

#### The gift of shares or other securities

This method of giving now provides greater tax relief as a result of changes in the May 2, 2006 Federal budget. Securities include stocks, bonds, bills, warrants, and futures traded on approved stock exchanges in Canada and certain other countries. They also include mutual funds. For a donation of securities, a tax receipt for the full share value on the day of transfer is issued, and, no capital gains tax is paid on the increase in value.

#### A gift of real estate

The transfer of ownership to the church provides an income tax receipt that can be applied to income. In some cases, arrangements can be made for the owner to continue to live on the property. The Niagara Diocesan Resource Centre has experience in dealing with gifts of both securities and real estate.

#### A gift of life insurance

A fully paid-up life insurance policy that can be cashed in by a parish or

other Anglican entity can provide a present gift.

### Gifts for the future

#### Bequests

Bequests following death are the most common form of future giving. A will is the recognized legal document that allows an individual to direct the distribution of assets and property after death and can help reduce taxes owing. Assets, including RRSP and RRIF accumulations, can be allocated to favourite ministries and organizations through the charitable bequests in a will. In form, bequests can be general, specific, residual or contingent.

#### A gift of life insurance

Life insurance can provide a future gift. There are a number of ways to give gifts of life insurance to the church. They include the transfer of ownership of a paid-up policy, transfer of ownership of an existing policy on which premiums are still owing, and the purchase of a new policy, initially naming the Anglican Church as the owner of the policy. There are many tax benefits to the donor and value to the Church.

### Gifts that continue to give

#### A gift annuity

The gift annuity can provide a defined income for life, support for the Church, and tax savings. Normally of most interest to an older person, when such a gift is made, the individual will receive annuity payments for life based upon age and status (that will be totally or partially tax-free), and a tax receipt for part of the contribution that can be used to reduce tax on other income. Charitable annuities are arranged through Church House of the Anglican Church of Canada.

#### A charitable remainder trust

This is an arrangement where cash, securities and/or real estate is transferred to a trust that continues to pay income to the donor for life or for a specified period. An income tax receipt is issued, and at the end of the period of time or upon death, the church will receive the trust.

#### A gift of residual interest with retained life use

This gift involves donating property such as a principal residence or other personal real estate such as a cottage or rental property or a valuable work of art to the Church. In making a gift of residual interest in property, the donor transfers the property irrevocably to the Anglican Church. However, the donor retains the use of the property for their lifetime, and, if desired, for as long as a spouse.

This is a very general summary of just some of the various ways to donate to the Church.

Any decisions about developing or changing a personal financial plan must always be discussed with a qualified financial planner.

For more information about gift planning and planned giving contact the Diocesan Resource Centre by calling 905-527-1316.

# I was there

SUE-ANNE WARD  
CHRIST CHURCH CATHEDRAL

"First they came for the Communists, but I was not a Communist so I did not speak out. Then they came for the Socialists and the Trade Unionists, but I was neither, so I did not speak out. Then they came for the Jews, but I was not a Jew so I did not speak out. And when they came for me, there was no one left to speak out for me" (Pastor Martin Niemöller).

Dietrich Bonhoeffer was a German Lutheran pastor and one of the most promising theologians of his generation. He opposed the Nazi regime from the very first and committed himself to resistance by non-violent means. After the outbreak of the Second World War, his sense of Christian responsibility in a situation of evil drew him into a plot to assassinate Adolf Hitler. The plot failed, and when his complicity came to light, Bonhoeffer was marked for extermination. He was shunted from one concentration camp to another until, early in the morning of April 9, 1945, he was hanged at Flossenbürg.

Bonhoeffer learned that right and wrong is not always black and white. In his early writings, Bonhoeffer emphasized the need for followers of Christ to be in some ways isolated from other people, fixing their eyes only on Jesus. His later works, his letters and papers from prison, point to a change in his thinking. He came to understand that people find Christ through their relationships with others, which necessitates living in the world and not withdrawing from it.

In 1933, Bonhoeffer was of the opinion that it was not the place of the church to speak out for or against government legislation. Over time he came to believe that it was a Christian's duty to actively work against tyrannical political leaders. Bonhoeffer provided this analogy as support for his revised stance, "It is not only my task to look after the victims of madmen who drive a motorcar in a crowded street, but to do all in my power to stop their driving at all."

Bonhoeffer described three ways in which the Church can behave towards the state:

- It can ask the state whether its ac-

tions are legitimate and in accordance with its character as state.

- It can aid victims of unjust or harmful state actions
- It cannot just bandage the victims under the wheel, but put a spoke in the wheel itself.

In Bonhoeffer's book, *The Cost of Discipleship*, he wrote, "The brother's life is a divine ordinance, and God alone has power over life and death. There is no place for the murderer among the people of God." These words are consistent with Bonhoeffer's aiding Jews to flee to safety but they seem at odds with the role that Bonhoeffer played in the attempts on Adolf Hitler's life. Eberhard Bethge, Bonhoeffer's closest friend and colleague, explained how Bonhoeffer came to involve himself in the resistance movement's assassination plans:

It was only when all the ways of legal opposition were barred and the people who were called on to bear responsibility in the various branches of public life had grown dumb that the moment for conspiracy came. And it was only when the worst came to the worst, and Bonhoeffer the theologian had tried other ways to escape from his dilemma, that he took his stand and no longer ruled out that kind of resistance.

It was essential to Bonhoeffer's involvement in the conspiracy that only the minimum amount of force required to overturn the Nazi government should be employed. He saw no place for excessive violence or vengeance. He believed that under very specific conditions it may be a person's *duty* to use some measure of violence to resist a tyrant, but that there are no principles that give a person the right to do so.

Sibylle Niemoeller von Sell, wife of Lutheran Pastor Martin Niemöller, worked with Dietrich Bonhoeffer as part of the Nazi resistance during WWII. Sibylle will speak at Christ's Church Cathedral about her family's experiences in the German resistance and what it was like to oppose the Nazi regime at a time when so few Germans did. She will discuss the importance of speaking out against injustice and why indifference to tyranny and human suffering is not a viable option.

# A religious education



PETER WALL  
RECTOR - CHRIST'S CHURCH CATHEDRAL

Boy, what a summer! Another great series of books read at the cottage (more about those in another column, perhaps...), lots of consternation and confusion over just what was meant by various votes at General Synod and where we go from here, particularly in Niagara. Some unfortunate accusations, too. A growing sense in many of the places where we live and work that being environmentally responsible, being as 'green' as possible is not only popular and trendy, but absolutely necessary. It is something to which we all had better pay attention and do our part—there's simply no alternative.

But I'm afraid the thing that got me riled up a little this summer was the ludicrous suggestion by John Tory that, if elected, his Tories would introduce legislation in this province to extend funding to faith-based private schools. I believe that this is a wrong-headed and ill-advised step. I earnestly hope that it does not come to pass.

## The Church must provide religious instruction

Let me explain. Obviously, I am strongly interested in and committed to sound and comprehensive teaching of and about our faith. One of the hallmarks of Sunday morning worship, I hope, is sound teaching, through preaching and proclamation, through prayer, and through the liturgy itself. The role of the Church is to provide religious instruction and training, fo-

cusSED on a specific set of beliefs and practices.

I am equally committed to the urgent necessity in our world today for religious education for all—i.e. education about the *idea* of religion—the theories of deism, of religious knowledge, of religious awareness. Nothing is more important in our education system than a grounding in the world's religions, just as we insist upon and expect our schools to provide education about literature, history, mathematics, and science. One of the most important of the humanities is indeed religion—in all its aspects and shapes.

## Narrowness and intolerance

The problem for me with Mr. Tory's suggestion is that faith based schools are just that—faith based, so we have, rather than religious education, religious indoctrination—potentially narrow and exclusive curricula which promote one religion over another. To my way of thinking, it leads to narrowness, intolerance, a lack of breadth of knowledge and awareness, and a preponderance of religious myopia which has in the past and continues today to cause problems between peoples and groups.

We have, particularly in this province, an education system which has been one of the best in the world—free, accessible to all, inclusive of all, and committed to the best of education. It is a *public* system, funded from the common purse, for the common good. I know, I know—there are those who will argue vehemently that the full funding of a *separate* school system, such as we have in this province with the Catholic school system has *already* given support to the notion of funded, faith-based education, but I would want to delineate what we have from what Mr. Tory proposes.

## We should not make more mistakes

For many, many years we have had dual funded systems—so called *public* and so-called *catholic* or *separate*. In a famous end-of-office accommodation, William Davis ensured that full funding would extend through all of secondary school for the separate system. For many, that was the defining moment for *faith-based* education. There are those who say that the current system should allow for other faith-based systems since we already are somewhere down that road. Irrespective of the imperfections of the current system, the fully funded dual system is required, under the Education Act, to provide religious education, not indoctrination, to all. The fact that this is not necessarily happening as comprehensively as we might wish means that we should be holding all boards of education to a high degree of accountability.

The imperfections in our current system should *not* let us be lead to making more mistakes. The argument that there is a basic inequity in some parents paying taxes for a public/separate system while bearing all of the costs of sending their children, by *their* choice, to a faith-based school, is also unsustainable. In our country, all property owners pay education taxes—those retired and those childless—precisely because we believe in the common good, and the necessity to share our common wealth.

## No and yes

So I say no to funding faith-based schools, but yes to a system which teaches our children—all of our children—about religious thought and religious history. Let's keep religious instruction in our faith communities, and our religious education in our schools.

## CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1 » God next door

Simon shares a story in his book of a wonderful retired couple who were God's missionaries in their community as they took care of people and walked with the lonely. When Simon suggested that this was a ministry of God in the neighbourhood this couple had no capacity to understand what he meant. They were no longer doing 'ministry' because they now were too old to keep up with the church activities that had defined their lives.

It is tragic to think that there is a belief, built up over time, that ministry and somehow by extension, the activity of God is only legitimized when it is directly associated

with the life and work of the official neighbourhood church. It does not hurt to remind ourselves that Jesus Himself did not barricade Himself behind the impenetrable walls of the synagogue but spent His entire ministry traveling from town to town and neighbourhood to neighbourhood meeting, dining, and socializing with all those He encountered.

Churches must rediscover the neighbourhood not as an object of outreach programs or social service good deeds but as the real, flesh and bone place where God takes up residence and meets us all. This is a plea for the rediscovery of the local, the next-doorness of Christian

life in a culture that spins us apart in a thousand different directions so that we come home, close the gate and escape whatever might be happening on the street. Christians have the opportunity to reverse this thinking and to live the gospel within their local communities.

Choosing to engage with our neighbourhoods as places of community requires a level of creativity and purpose but the rewards are great—for both families and churches. Nurturing community in the local area is a challenging task but it ought to be seen as an intentional one for Christians—a vital part of the mission of the Church.



## I Was There...

Speaker: Sibylle Niemoeller von Sell

Wednesday, November 7, 2007  
7:30 PM - 9:30 PM

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# Leaving our comfort zone



**GRAHAME STAP**  
ST. ALBAN THE MARTYR, GLEN WILLIAMS

The other day I read a passage in a magazine which took a long time to sink in. When it finally did I went and sat in my favorite chair and thought of the implications—what it meant in an affluent society such as we live in.

In the same magazine was an article on Leona Helmsley, the so called Queen of mean, who had died and left \$12,000,000 to her dog. To be fair she did leave most of her billions to the family trust fund. But still \$12,000,000 to a dog!

I guess what got me was how a large part of our society, unfortunately, has missed the point. You see what was written in the passage was, 'Most of us who live in industrialized nations and are employed in jobs that pay above the poverty line and have health insurance, live in our comfort zone and no longer have a need for God.'

We can pay our bills, have our

family and friends around us, and take vacations. We can buy our toys what ever they may be and generally feel good about who and what we are. So God is put into a secondary role. Don't bother me, if I need you I'll call.

According to polls, 83% of Canadians believe in God. If this is true why is there such a small number that go to church regularly? Probably because most live in their comfort zone and unless a misfortune occurs God is indeed secondary. Very often when a misfortune does occur God is there to be blamed for allowing it to happen.

I wonder why so many do not seem to be able, not only, to thank God for all our blessings but also not able to give God at least some of the credit for our achievements.

We at St. Alban in Glen Williams have on the second Sunday in September our invitation Sunday. Each member of the congregation is asked to invite a friend, a neighbour, or colleague to worship with us. As you can imagine we get a lot of excuses as to why friends and neighbors cannot come. We have also welcomed some really wonderful additions to our congregation.

The point is, many of us, not just at St. Alban but also in numer-

ous churches, have left our comfort zone and reached out into the community. The result of this outreach is a steady increase in the number of people attending church. We took a risk; God is no longer secondary to a lot of people. God now fills a sometimes empty void in many people's lives but the work has just begun. How wonderful it would be if every Sunday was invitation Sunday. If we all asked one person to come with us to church on Sunday every Sunday and only once during the year had the invitation accepted, we would double the size of our congregations by the end of the year.

If we did it for two years most churches would have to double the number of services we now have on a Sunday. For this to happen we all need to leave our comfort zone and make the work of God to be the primary goal of our lives, giving thanks for our blessings and attending church every Sunday we possibly can.

Disturbing our comfort zone and putting God first is not easy. If we look to Jesus as an example the last thing Jesus thought of was his comfort zone; his only interest was in getting people to put God first. Can we who follow in his footsteps do any less?

# Sparrows Fall

**ELEANOR JOHNSTON**  
ST. THOMAS, ST. CATHARINES

For no thought is contented. The better sort,

As thoughts of things divine, are intermix'd

With scruples, and do set the word itself Against the word...

Shakespeare, *Richard II*

At the height of the panic during the late August forest fires in Greece, an Orthodox priest was shown on the TV news, robed and holding aloft his crucifix as he stood on a hilltop overlooking the terribly destructive fire. He seemed to be praying that God would stop the fire. It raged on. In the

enormy of the ecological crisis? Most of us can see the problem for a few minutes, but our brains can't handle the terrible thought that we as a species might be rushing towards our own extinction. Again we turn away and go about our daily business.

If we really understood the crisis, we would have not allowed it to happen. In the early 1970s when a few prophetic voices warned us, we would have, collectively, moved to limit the population explosion, nuclear technology and pollution. We didn't do this because our human brains have not evolved beyond the capacities of our ancestors of Old Testament times. We still think short-term, we

This is a frightening concept unless we have faith, not in a tribal magician priest with his god in the sky, but in God known and worshiped in new language.

Old Testament story, Elijah prayed successfully to his God to bring rain and ease the drought while the prophets of Baal failed in the same task. By this theological logic, the Greek God and/or his priest failed.

A major-league athlete prays for victory before a game. One wonders what he thinks will happen if a player on the other team prays for the opposite result. Amazingly, grown men seem to believe that God concerns himself with the outcome of games.

It's easy to mock the thoughtless and selfish prayers of others, but most of our prayers demonstrate a similar understanding of God. We pray earnestly for our family members and friends in times of illness, believing that God will intervene on their behalf. We pray to God our Creator and Sustainer, terms that suggest a belief in Creationism rather than Darwinism. We still think in the old way, seeing God as a loving but strict father who is on our side, the God in the sky who fights for us in time of war and who has given us the one true faith and the right to "have dominion over" other species.

To consider our image of and language for God involves our image of and language for nature. When we re-examine our age-old faith in the God of our forefathers, we do so with a sense of urgency because not only is our God's created world helplessly suffering but also our God's churches have been deserted by the secular majority of the people.

Some of us respond like ostriches, clinging ever more vigorously to old theological concepts and refusing to acknowledge that there is a crisis in our planet's well-being. Some of us insist that the crisis exists and that it is God's punishment for human sin.

Others look for new ways of naming and worshiping God and new ways of respecting creation. We have learned that Teilhard de Chardin's understanding of God as the "ground of our being" is the basis of one of the most credible modern theologians. This new metaphor for God, however, bewilders us. Few of us can understand modern theology and we turn away, calling it sacrilegious. We lack the intelligence, imagination and discipline to conceptualize our God in such modern terms.

Likewise, does any of us grasp

react with fight or flight instincts, and we cling to our families and possessions for our identities.

While listening to David Suzuki and his colleagues we might briefly focus on their prophetic warnings and feel enough guilt and concern to resolve to take action. But the next minute, as if we have Attention-Deficit Disorder, our minds wander and we slip back into old patterns. Like Jesus' disciples wanting to know who will be awarded the highest privileges in His kingdom, we are motivated by selfish needs. It seems that we just cannot do what we need to do.

Jesus gave us no specific guidance on ecology because there was no environmental crisis in his time. The population world-wide was so small that when one environment was farmed out, a tribe simply migrated to a fresh location. We need a new wisdom for our time, one that we can understand, focus on and follow. While we wait and pray for guidance and inspiration, we can look in the works of theologians, artists and scientists for beliefs and actions that celebrate life and love and that build community, compassion and goodness.

We can wonder, also, at the selflessness of the non-governmental organisations who work for ecojustice as well as justice for all peoples. We can support peacekeepers and ecological scientists. We can choose lifestyles and jobs that actively work for the environment. We can listen to the children who teach us to see and think in new ways. We can pressure our politicians to make the environment their top priority consistently. (They seem to be talking a good talk right now, but perhaps they are waiting for our interest to wane before returning to business as usual.)

Our old ways of acting, our old ways of worship, our old thoughts and emotions, all need to evolve. This is a frightening concept unless we have faith, not in a tribal magician priest with his god in the sky, but in God known and worshiped in new language. One image we might hold in our mind's eye is the picture of planet earth taken from a space ship, of earth a beautiful jewel, a single organism alive in the blackness of space. God is clearly not in the sky above us but incarnate in our very being. Meanwhile, not just sparrows fall.

# Seriously, they're just boots



**JOSHUA MORRISON**  
CHURCH OF THE ASCENSION, HAMILTON

Last December I bought a pair of boots during boxing week sales. I bought them simply because I wanted to splurge with my Christmas money on something really nice for myself after a hard semester. I wear them occasionally since they're pretty awesome. But I get lots of weird looks thrown my way when I do. Why? Because they're knee-high black leather boots with laces up the front, steel toes and five buckles up the sides.

My own family, friends and coworkers were among those who started to give me the strange looks. Some glances were curious, some unsure, some downright disgusted. At first I genuinely couldn't figure out why people would be looking at me like this just for a pair of boots, but soon I started to figure it out as people got up the courage to ask me questions or make comments on the boots. Comments like "Are you going horse riding?" or "They look really military" and the weirdest and most disturbing of all, "They look like a cross between neo-Nazi and gay America."

## Making assumptions

That's when it hit me. Footwear was causing people to make as-

sumptions about me, my personality, my sexual preferences and my political associations. A pair of boots was having that much of an effect. It boggled my mind. They're just boots!

All of this got me thinking though. What kind of assumptions do we all make based on something as trivial as appearance? People who know and love me were rethinking their opinions of me and wondering if I had been hiding something from them based on my boots; what could we all assume about complete strangers?

This made me want to experiment more. So, when I was appointed a Bishop's Delegate to Synod, I knew I had the perfect opportunity to test this out. I was only able to attend one of the "Candidate Meet and Greets" before the election of our new bishop, so I wore the boots to that session. This was a great test because I had interacted with most of the candidates before so I had a decent baseline on their attitudes. This was also true for some of the youth and lay delegates there. As I went through the evening talking to the clergy and laity, I was pleasantly surprised at the number of people who didn't change their behaviour based on my footwear. I was even happier to talk to people who were trying their best not to by not looking down and focusing on my face, because it told me that they were aware of their own assumptions and were trying to avoid them. That being said, some people definitely seemed more

cautious and reserved around me, and one clergy even seemed downright uncomfortable.

## Fighting our pre-conceptions

I'm not sure what the cause of all these assumptions is. Maybe it's the media. Maybe it's the conditioning we received as we were raised. Maybe it's something I haven't thought of or maybe it's a combination of all of it. But it's made me realize that we have to be constantly vigilant about how we see people. This is particularly true in the church where we are supposed to be going out into the world and helping those who are outcast, alone, in need and in pain. This is what Jesus taught us to do, and it's a very important cause. But how can we do that if we jump to the same conclusions about these people that likely made them outcasts in the first place?

Tattoos don't make a person hardened and tough. Strange piercings don't make a person a punk. Black makeup doesn't make someone a goth. Fishnet pantyhose don't make a person promiscuous. Big boots don't make me a neo-Nazi. I just like the boots. Some people just like tattoos, others piercings, others black make-up, others fishnets. In his time, Jesus ignored the things like leprosy that made people outcasts, and we have to fight to do the same with our modern pre-conceptions if we want to expand our outreach programs and spread the message of Jesus in a pure fashion. Because seriously, they're just boots.

## SOCIAL JUSTICE

**COLLEEN SYM**  
SOCIAL JUSTICE DIRECTOR

In this edition of the paper we are fortunate to have articles from two ecojustice leaders in the Anglican Church and an article about a group of dedicated parishioners from Undermount.

Deacon Maylanne Maybee and Dr. Chris Lind have both been very giving to me of their

time and expertise during the short time I have been the Diocesan Social Justice Coordinator and I thank them for that. Conversations with them have informed me on many aspects of faith based social justice advocacy. I hope that their articles will also inform the conversations and outreach activities that are taking place all over the Diocese.

Individual parishes and groups, like that in Undermount, are planning and undertaking outreach activities with an ecojustice focus. At the Diocesan level our Diocesan Synod will have an environmental justice focus. This focus on the environment is not confined to Niagara and is reflected in some of the Eco-Justice events that are taking place this fall.

# The road to partnership

**MAYLANNE MAYBEE**  
COORDINATOR FOR ECOJUSTICE NETWORKS

When I first became involved in urban ministry in the early 1980s—working in a Toronto neighbourhood of low-income people—a deep recession was affecting all of Canada. Food banks were a new phenomenon and downtown churches were opening shelters to accommodate those in "crisis".

The local legal clinic asked whether the neighbourhood churches could offer food for the anticipated wave of underfed welfare recipients resulting from the recession, and whether we could operate a shelter for the "temporarily homeless".

### Showing resentment to those they wish to help

I was just starting out in urban ministry, anxious to please, but with much to learn.

My first conversation was with the local Baptist pastor, who had opened the doors of his church to welfare recipients looking for a meal. He worked hard to show kindness to each person, to involve other volunteers in running the food bank, to make the system work. But in a few short months, the line up of people referred by the welfare office and expecting service became overwhelming. He and his volunteers started showing classic signs of burnout, including resentment towards the very people they wished to help.

My second conversation was with an Anglican priest who was getting lots of media coverage for his decision to close a temporary shelter that his church had opened. He felt that it was unsafe to shelter people in a facility not designed for the purpose

and with only untrained volunteers to staff it. He believed that the so-called "housing crisis" was a false construct, disguising the fact that homelessness was a complex, systemic problem requiring a political and social solution. He saw shelters as a band aid—a superficial and misguided solution—and did not hesitate to say why to the press and to the public.

My Anglican friend was part of a network of clergy and staff working in the downtown core of Toronto who met regularly for mutual support and information exchange. As they shared their experiences, they saw that food banks and shelters tended to create and reinforce dependency among those who used them, and failed to draw on people's innate strengths and resourcefulness.

### Seeking Long-term Solutions

I was convinced by the evidence—and with support from my peers, made a personal decision to stop putting energy into "charitable" responses to poverty and homelessness, and set about instead to seek systemic and long-term solutions that had a greater potential to make a difference in people's lives.

So began the journey of reflecting and cooperating with others who were committed to "solution based advocacy". For us, this meant taking the time for research, analysis, and consultation, then working in direct partnership with people on a solution they identified while advocating for the political will and policy changes needed to bring it about. Practically, it meant advocating for permanent, long-term housing designed and managed by those who would live

in it, and working together to make it happen. It meant taking the long view on what others saw as an "emergency" or "temporary" situation.

### Compassion did not sustain us

Food banks or social housing? Handouts or advocacy? Charity or justice? Many people argue that both are necessary responses to poverty and need in our cities. I don't see it as a "both/and" proposition, but rather as a continuum. The choice is how long we want to stay at a given point on the continuum.

Compassion is at one end of the continuum. I began my ministry because I was moved by what I had seen and heard of the suffering of the poor. But as fatigue and resentment crowded in, compassion did not sustain me, or them, for very long.

I began to see poverty as a structural problem—the direct result of political and economic structures that were designed for and by the strong and prosperous.

Anger was the next stage, not so much that the structures existed, but that so many people were determined to keep them in place.

Most poor people I met were not helpless, fragile creatures. In fact, many who came to the doors of the church looking for help were very skilled at presenting the "helpless" façade they thought I wanted to see, in order to get what they wanted and needed. A sense of respect for their resilience and strength, accompanied by a growing awareness of my own limited experience and perspective, was the next point on the continuum.

» CONTINUED ON PAGE 13

## Decimation and indifference threaten creation

**CHRISTOPHER LIND**  
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

Should we care that industrial production and globalized trade are doing to our marine life what it has done to our land and agricultural life? It is and I think we should.

Decimation was the practice and indifference was the attitude we used to eliminate the bison from the western Canadian prairie. Then we applied industrial principles to the cod fishery on the Grand Banks with the same attitudes and results.

The common Friday dinner of fish and chips used to be made with cod and halibut. Now it's mostly made of Pollock. More than 3

**"If we continue our practice of decimation and indifference, eventually we will do to ourselves what we have done to the rest of Creation."**

million tons of Alaska Pollock is caught annually in the North Pacific, mostly in the Bering Sea. Half of it is caught by the American fishing fleet using factory freezer trawlers. In addition to fish and chips you'll also find Pollock in fish sticks, imitation crab meat, Chinese fish balls and many other fish formulations. If you choose the fish option at Dairy Queen, Arby's, Burger King or McDonalds, you'll probably end up eating Pollock.

Since Pollock can grow to over 3 ft. in length and weigh over 20 kilos, you might wonder how it can be transformed in to so many different shapes and flavours. The reason is because most Pollock is made into Surimi, a Japanese-style fish slurry. The fish is cleaned, rinsed to remove the smell and then pulverized into a gelatinous paste. It is then mixed with additives like starch, egg white, salt, vegetable oil, sorbitol and soy protein. Different seasonings are added depending on where in the world it will be eaten.

In order to prevent it from spoiling in cold storage, sugar is added (up to 15%) which can make it a problem for diabetics. According to the US Department of Agriculture, fish surimi contains 15% protein, 6.85% carbohydrate, almost no fat and 76% water.

Some people think we are being clever by finding new uses for fish species we ignored previously. On the other hand, the need for new uses has been created by a callous disregard for the consequences of current fishing practice.

Our search for new species is called "fishing down the food web" because we are taking the food from the mouths of larger fish and mammals. This is causing all kinds of marine behaviour we have never seen before. Dolphins have been observed attacking seals for the first time. Killer whales have been feeding on otters.

Fishing down the food web means we are also taking the immature members of those same larger species, thus doubling the fatal consequences. Dr. David Pauly of the Fisheries Centre at UBC likens this practice to "eating our seed corn". He argues that if we continue with the logic of feeding farther and farther down the food web, eventually we will be forced to figure out how to take plankton and turn it into plankton surimi so we can make imitation varieties of all the fish species we used to have, but have no longer.

We are all part of the web of life—you, me, the salmon, cod, whales and kelp. We are all dependent on each other for oxygen, nutrients, food and life. If we continue our practice of decimation and indifference, eventually we will do to ourselves what we have done to the rest of Creation.

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Christopher Lind has written extensively on ethics and economics. He currently serves as Senior Fellow of Massey College, University of Toronto. Other Moral Economy columns can be found on the internet at [www.christopherlind.blogspot.com](http://www.christopherlind.blogspot.com).

**Caralei Peters** MSc, ND  
DOCTOR OF NATUROPATHIC MEDICINE

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# The mess and loveliness of our being



**MARTHA TATARNIC**  
PRIEST - ST. JUDE'S OAKVILLE

It's one of those moments that everyone enjoys when you have a baby around. Parents, Grandparents, Great-grandparents. The very young and the very old. Those who love babies, and even those who wonder just what's so great about babies anyway. Whatever else is happening around the baby—whether serious or lighthearted or something in between—stops, and there is a pause. A pause. Exchanged looks of surprise. Mouths open in gasps of astonishment. And then laughter. Free, unencumbered, high-spirited laughter.

It is a baby's fart. A loud, no-holds-barred, juicy, satisfied and satisfying fart that always seems far too big, far too adult, for such a little creature.

If it were an adult making such a noise, there would be shame, disgust, perhaps a muffled giggle making fun of the perpetrator, each glad that it's someone else at the centre of the faux-pas. But it is a baby's fart, and it opens, for all of us lucky

enough to hear it, a moment of absolute delight and joy in the incredible miracle of being alive, of sharing in this bodily existence.

**Grateful to encounter these experiences**

As brand new parents, my baby's tooting is just one of the countless moments of delight, wonder, astonishment and surprise, that arise in the adventure of parenthood for my husband and me. And like any of the most life-changing adventures that I have experienced, I am profoundly grateful to be encountering these experiences within the framework of the community of Christian faith.

There is a lot of white noise in parenthood. Messages buzzing around in the background, messages aggressively swooping in to slap you in the face, messages that appear to be helpful and that you would hardly dare ignore.

And yet, taken in totality, there is only one message, told over and over and over again: 'you are not competent' 'you do not know how to raise your own child.' We are bombarded with advice books, internet sites, support groups, and endless gadgetry (most of which you feel you need a PhD to understand and operate) in order to be able to care for our babies. We are victims of so much information about all of

the things that we could possibly do wrong, that could 'endanger' 'limit' or, heaven forbid, 'impede the progress' of our children, that we, as new parents, could easily become either ruled by a frenzied paranoia or paralyzed from doing anything at all simply because the stakes seem so impossibly high, no matter what we choose to do.

The well-known verse from Psalm 127 is one that I find myself frequently repeating in the face of this white noise: "Why do you haste to rise up early and so late take your rest and eat the bread of anxiety? For those beloved of God are given gifts, even while they sleep."

Not only does it make a much-hoped-for claim to the sleep-deprived parent, that the sleep we do get will be adequate and refreshing, it also provides a counterbalance to the messages of panic that can create such a din in our heads.

**Why do we eat the bread of anxiety?**

It's for good reason, actually. We eat the bread of anxiety because being a parent is scary. I have never loved someone so much, and at the same time, born so much responsibility for that someone's well-being. This combination of love and responsibility makes for an alarmingly potent mixture.

And yet, our faith does make a promise to us. It is not a promise

that nothing bad will happen, that if you just believe, you'll be protected from all of the things we can fear so much.

But our faith does promise us that our salvation does not lie in having all of the right gadgetry, reading all of the right books, spending enough money on enough bells and whistles so that our children will grow up to be the smart, capable, well-adjusted, fit and healthy citizens we want them to be. Our faith promises us some perspective. Our faith reminds us that we have seen what our salvation looks like in the person of Jesus. And our salvation doesn't look like a well-stocked nursery, it looks like a relationship. It looks like love. It looks like love that is risky beyond belief and that will cost us. And having the courage to enter into that risk and that costliness, to intentionally seek the living God in acts of love, this is what saves us.

Knowing this, reminding myself of this, allows me to take a deep breath, to exhale slowly, and to let go of that giggling feeling that I'm not qualified to be a parent, that maybe my child didn't get the right balance of exercise, rest, noise, quiet, stimulation and peace in her day today and I've ruined her, and to know once again the reality of parenthood, that I have been given the gift of

every day growing in my capacity for love.

**Being a Christian helps me to be a parent**

And it works the other way too. Being a parent also has something to say to me about how to be a Christian. Being a parent brings a fresh, tangible experience of some of the deeply held tenets of our faith. Particularly Incarnation.

Thinking back to my opening story, to be a parent is to know something once again about the mess and the loveliness of our beings. Something about how God has blessed and made sacred this earthly and earthy life. Something about how this flesh can, against all odds, make known, can reveal, God's presence, God's Spirit. Something about living in the moment, being present to, and grateful for, the details, the fine inner-workings, the silliness and the weirdness and the beauty of life.

When my baby lets one rip without the slightest trace of hesitation, modesty or self-consciousness, when everyone who happens to witness the event stops what they're doing and guffaws with delight, what better response than to say a prayer of thanks to the God who made us for these noises and for this laughter and who invites us to participate in sharing life's goodness with one another?

# Pondering the creator of Heaven and Earth

**JERRY SALLOUM**  
RETIRED VICAR - ST. GEORGE'S, LOWVILLE

As both a minister of the Gospel and a geographer, I am fascinated by the statement in John's gospel: "All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made". According to Genesis 1, things came into being, not by chance or accident, but by direct commands from God. "And God said, let there be light, and there was light." Genesis does not debate the point. Rather, it declares the point. Elsewhere in scripture, the same point is declared. "By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, and all their host by the breath of His mouth..." "For He spoke, and it came to be; He commanded, and it stood forth" (Psalm 33). And again, "For by Him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by Him and for Him" (Colossians 1). The whole of scripture affirms the truth of Genesis 1. Thus, it is thoroughly appropriate for the Apostles' Creed to begin with the words, "I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth..."

While the focus of the story is on the creative acts of God, it is hardly a clear scientific statement on the methods by which these creative acts were accomplished. With conspicuous gaps, the story is shrouded in mystery. We are told WHAT is done and WHO does it, but are told nothing about HOW it was done or WHEN it was done. As a result, the story leaves us, not

only with a sense of wonder, but also with a multitude of legitimate questions which we, born with inquisitiveness, ought to be asking.

**Something out of Nothing**

The story begins with God making something out of nothing. This boggles our minds because anything we make requires ingredients. In the beginning, no ingredients existed for the fashioning of the universe—no wood, no plastics, no metals, no earth, no anything. God alone, with the Son and the Holy Spirit, were there in the beginning. Hebrews 11 says, "things which are seen were not made of things which do appear". This means that while God is eternal, matter isn't. Matter had a beginning. God didn't. And scripture makes it abundantly clear that the creation is distinct from the Creator and cautions us not to blur this distinction or to assign worship where it doesn't belong.

The story also makes clear that while God fashioned first things out of nothing, first things made became the stuff from which God fashioned subsequent stuff. Thus, Adam was not created out of nothing, but rather out of stuff from the ground. Eve was created from stuff from Adam. In like manner, beasts of the field and fowls of the air were formed out of already created materials.

**Like a child in a sand box**

This story is indeed glorious and should thrill you. I am fascinated with a God who creates stuff out of nothing, who creates stuff out

of stuff, a God who is not satisfied creating a single shape or a single size or a single colour, but rather prefers creating stuff of infinite variety. I am fascinated with a God who is like a child in a sand box, delighting in fashioning various things for sheer pleasure by His "breath" and by His "fingers", then sitting back with his two Companions and exulting in it all. And I am fascinated with a God who hides most of His stuff, making it necessary for us to assemble a somewhat disassembled puzzle and sometimes to await inventions like the microscope in order to discover the smaller stuff or the telescope in order to see His more distant stuff.

Do you believe that this story is true? If it doesn't contain the whole truth, do you accept that it contains nothing but the truth? Does one take the Genesis account of creation literally? Does GOD want us to take the Genesis account of creation literally? I believe such questions are legitimate since God delights in conversations with his children whether questions arise out of sheer inquisitiveness or out of skepticism. But those who ask such questions must approach God in humility and not with a spirit of arrogance. Like the way the virgin Mary inquired of the Angel before she conceived: "How will this be?" Questioning God for purposes of clarification is not dishonoring to God. What dishonors God is our neglect to mull over and wonder about His mighty acts. Failure to wonder renders God's acts commonplace and is all the

more serious because wonder is the essence of worship.

**Why did God take so long?**

So, here's a question: "HOW LONG did God take to complete His acts of creation?". From scripture, we read that God did it in 6 days, then rested on the 7th! Could He have done it that fast? Certainly! In fact, faster! As Christians, we have no argument with the belief that an omnipotent God is capable of doing anything He wants to do (like constructing an entire universe) as quickly as he chooses to do it.

That being the case, my question is, "Why did a God who is able to call into existence anything he wishes, why did He take SO LONG? Why did He take almost a week to do something He could have completed in a twinkling of an eye? Does the Genesis reference to "day" mean something different than a 24-hour period of time? Could it be that by calling all things into being through detailed and meticulous processes, over periods of time far longer than a day, God was demonstrating an immense pleasure and experiencing much joy and delight in His various acts of creation?"

**Too important to be rushed**

With each act we sense an unmistakable air of celebration. These creative acts were not to be rushed. Each was considered far too important to be rushed. Celebrations can never be rushed. It seems to me thoroughly consistent with Holy Scripture's image of God to think

this way. Listen to scripture and draw your own conclusions:

*Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, or with the breadth of His hand marked off the heavens? Who has held the dust of the earth in a basket, or weighed the mountains on the scales and the hills in a balance? (Isaiah 40:12)*

*Lift your eyes and look to the heavens; who created all these? He who brings out the starry host one by one, and calls them each by name. Because of His great power and mighty strength, not one of them is missing. (Isaiah 40:26)*

*He who made the Pleiades and Orion, and turns darkness into dawn and darkens day into night, who calls for the waters of the sea and pours them out over the face of the land the Lord is His name... (Amos 5:8)*

Does this sound like someone who wanted to rush the job and get it over with? No! Was God's delight and joy as much in the PROCESSES of Creation as in the finished product? I believe scripture's answer is, "Without Question!"

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Jerry Salloom is presently on the part-time faculty of Wilfrid Laurier University.

# A Church for the future



SUSAN C. HUXFORD-WESTALL  
ALL SAINTS, HAMILTON

As we observed last month, members of the congregation do now lead the Prayers of the People and read the Old and New Testament lessons, but what experience do they bring to these responsibilities? In my own parish there are few volunteers to lead the Prayers of the People, but a very bevy of persons who want to read the Bible in public. What does this mean?

In an article in March of last year I remarked that *"the BAS of the Prayers of the People which are often offered by a lay person, but it is obvious that many of them do not know what they are doing"*. This comment had been occasioned by an intercessor who had given the congregation a Geography lesson on the equinox. I was surprised that there were no letters to the Editor afterwards complaining that I did faithful lay people a disservice. Perhaps the lack of volunteers to lead the Prayers of the People in my own parish is a result of my remark, but it is notable that those who lead intercessions seldom wander from the true purpose and that we now have some young members who do know what they are doing.

**Understanding the Readings**  
Would that I could say the same of

Bible reading! Too many readers seem to think that Bible reading is just one of those activities that must be done by someone during the service, so they volunteer to read and consider that they need no training in public reading and that no previous preparation is necessary. In all probability the incumbent does not wish to criticize the result because the parishioner may take umbrage at any comments. The result is a waste of the congregation's time because, if the reader does not understand what he or she is reading about, how can the congregation be expected to get any benefit from it?

Even some of the lessons themselves need reconsideration. On the last Sunday in July (9th after Pentecost) I read the Second Lesson. I had volunteered the previous Sunday without having read the passage prescribed. When I studied it, I realised that the congregation was going to have trouble with it. Imagine my shock when the First Lesson turned out to be just as obscure although it was well read by a person who knew perfectly well what he was reading about.

There is an old joke about the sailor who went to church and was asked afterwards what it was all about. He replied that it was "meanie, meanie, tickle the parson". He was referring to the Old Testament lesson from Daniel about Belshazzar's Feast (Daniel 5); the handwriting on the wall was *mene, mene, tekel, uparsin*. (Dan 5:25). What was our congregation to with *Jezreel, Lo-Ruhamah* and *Lo-Ammi* when Hosea

1:2-10 was read, and what about St. Paul on circumcision when Colossians 2:6-15 followed? The sermon was on the Gospel, Luke 11:1-13, which was something the congregation could understand: it was on the Lord's Prayer and perseverance in praying.

What is the use of reading obscure passages from the Bible without telling the congregation what it is all about? Wherever can they get instruction if not in church? Why bother to read obscure passages if they are either not understood or misunderstood?

#### Untying the knots

Occasionally one encounters a parish in which a reader does make a brief introductory comment before commencing a scripture reading. Are some clergy afraid that this pre-empts their own sermon or might show superior knowledge? The days when the cleric was one of very few educated persons in the parish are long gone, but I have a feeling that there is sometimes a sense of insecurity that there may be someone in the congregation who can challenge the parish priest who has heretofore been regarded as "the expert". Retired clergy have been encouraged not to attend services in their former parish when the new incumbent is getting on his/her feet.

Hosea and Colossians required a simple explanation that could easily have been done. Writing in *The Original Story* (Eerdman's, 2004), John Barton and Julia Bowden explain that some prophets acted parables (p.196-7). Hosea

believed that God had told him to demonstrate to the Kingdom of Israel how far they had wandered from their God. He therefore demonstrated it by marrying a prostitute and naming his children Jezreel (the site of the massacre of a former royal family, see 2 Kings 10:6-11), Lo-Ruhamah (which means "not loved"—what a terrible name for a girl-child to have to carry through life!) and Lo-Ammi (which means "not my people"). The parable was to show that the people of the Kingdom of Israel had prostituted their Covenant agreement with God (they were worshipping Baal) and were no longer loved by God as they could no longer call themselves God's Chosen People.

In the case of the lesson from Colossians, of what concern is circumcision in the 21st. Century? The sense of St. Paul's lecture is lost today unless it is recognized that he was speaking to an audience including Gentiles who were uncircumcised and that he had to justify his preaching to the Gentiles in view of the argument that he was having with James the Just and the church in Jerusalem.

St. Paul's lectures were often convoluted; the reader has to untie the knots. I suspect that he sometimes left his audience gasping for breath; is that why Eutychus fell out the window when Paul went on and on? (See Acts 20:7-12)

#### Putting ourselves in the shoes of the writer

My appeal is that we put a human face on the Bible. Let us put ourselves in the shoes of the people

who experienced the episodes that are recorded in the Bible. Peter and Paul did not stand up in a pulpit and lecture to a congregation. They often met in somebody's home with a group of interested people and talked to them about the Good News that they carried. That Good News required certain behaviour in accordance with the example of the Master, Jesus the Messiah. This was the message they carried.

The reader of scriptures today needs to put him/herself in the shoes of the author of the particular reading that is being presented. If I read St. Paul, I am in Paul's shoes and conveying the same message that he himself gave so long ago. If I wish to carry on the tradition, I must make that message relevant to my audience in the 21st. Century. Instead of a sermon, I need to teach a lesson. My audience will not be going to Sunday School to find out what I have been talking about.

It may be noted that St. Paul does not mention "preachers" among those appointed by God (1 Corinth 12:28-30). He places "teachers" as of third importance after apostles and prophets. My Oxford Dictionary tells me that preaching is connected with sermons, with giving moral advice in an obtrusive way, *i.e.*, it has an unpleasant sense of obligation. A teacher educates, enables a person to learn by instruction; the sense of obligation is not implied. Perhaps politicians and others should learn something of why students drop out of school. God gave us freewill. People are not forced willingly to do anything.

## Sing-along sound of music Goodbye George

Are you Maria or Captain von Trapp? The Reverend Mother or the lonely goatherd? You can dress as these characters or any others at Christ's Church Cathedral on October 26th when families are invited to sing along with the Sound of Music.

The Sound of Music, released in 1965, starred Julie Andrews and Canadian, Christopher Plummer in the title roles. The Rodgers and Hammerstein music has stayed in the public consciousness ever since. Eighteen thousand people sang along to the movie in a stadium in Los Angeles some years ago.

Set in Salzburg, Austria the story is told of Maria who is sent from the abbey where she is preparing for the sisterhood to be governess to widower Captain von Trapp's seven children. Following plot twists, Maria and the Captain marry. They later escape to Switzerland to avoid the Nazi invasion. The family eventually settled in Vermont at the Trapp Family Lodge. The Trapp Family Singers toured until 1955.

The Cathedral will transform itself into a movie space for one night in October with popcorn machines and ice cream stands. During the

intermission in the two and a half hour film more adult refreshments will be available.

During this Hallowe'en season attendees are being encouraged to present themselves as film characters or even events. What about your favourite of the "Favourite Things"?

The Cathedral community welcomes its friends to the fun on October 26 at 7:00 pm at Christ's Church Cathedral. Tickets at \$10.00 each (under 12 free) are available through the church office at 252 James St. N. Hamilton 905-527-1316 (ext. 240).

#### FRANCEAN CAMPBELL-RICH CHRIST'S CHURCH CATHEDRAL

There were big events going on in Christ's Church Cathedral last June, but among them there was one that was very small. In the chancel, on a sunny afternoon, a few of us gathered to say goodbye to George Daneluk and his dog, Queenie.

George had been a passerby who dropped in to the Cathedral from time to time for coffee and a chat. He was looked upon generally as a neighborhood character, always welcomed, never pressured.

Roddie Gould-Perks took a special interest in Queenie. When Queenie was found to be in urgent need of medical attention, Roddie posted a large sign in the corridor summoning the congregation to help. Funds were raised towards the cost of major surgery for Queenie. Roddie followed through with daily changes of Queenie's bandage—and George's old companion was spared for another year.

Roddie came to know George and his ways: a loner, of undetermined European origin, no apparent relatives, living in a rented

room a stone's throw from the Cathedral, fixed in his ways and particular in his habits. Every day at five o'clock George took food to a colony of cats in a nearby alleyway. The cats all had names.

Then, first, Queenie died. George appeared to take this in stride. But not long afterward George died too. Roddie had arrived at his bedside just in time. He was barely able to kiss her hand.

The Very Reverend Peter Wall, fully vested, conducted the funeral liturgy of the Anglican Church, in the Cathedral. He read the passages of scripture, we few shared in the recitation of a psalm and we responded to the prayers. Roddie had written a eulogy. She elaborated freely on what little she knew of George's life, including a couple of his more endearing eccentricities. Not one of us succeeded in hiding our tears.

Then, in Myler Hall, flowers and candles set forth wine and cheese. We drank to George, and laughed at last. Peter Wall had said George was welcome here, and given understanding. Perhaps we are all a little better for that. Thanks be to God.

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# CATHEDRAL EMBARKS ON CAMPAIGN PRESERVE TO SERVE



## Christ's Church Cathedral, Our Cathedral

**JEAN ROUND**  
ST. LUKE'S, BURLINGTON

Christ's Church Cathedral has since 1875 been the heart, soul and head of the Church in Niagara—the Bishop's seat is here and it is the venue for many important services in the life of the Diocese. The majority of Niagara clergy were ordained here and it is here that we gather to elect and install our Bishops.

The faithful congregation of the Cathedral Parish have worshipped here and maintained this very special place for all of the Diocese for well over a century. Thanks to them it is a magnificent structure offering a calm and quiet beauty with solemnity and dignity. It is indeed a wondrous place in which to worship.

Cathedrals came into my life in my late teens when visiting London for the first time—the Abbey and St. Paul's were amazing! I was awestruck by the majesty, beauty

and faith found there. When confirmed, some years earlier, my home diocesan Cathedral was still recovering from the effect of the Second World War.

Coventry was rebuilt with such love and devotion—but how much more wonderful were and are the ruins of the old Cathedral! This is a holy place much loved by parishioners and the community for hundreds of years. Our Cathedral in Hamilton has been so maintained and today offers to all the Diocese a warm, welcoming holy invitation.

Christ's Church Cathedral's outreach has taken many forms over the years reaching out and involving so many from the community. It is the heart of the city, and a driving force in the rejuvenation of Jamesville.

One of my passions, the AIDS movement, was realized over ten years ago with the installa-

tion of the AIDS Memorial Altar, modeled on an AIDS chapel in the Cathedral in New York City. It is perhaps the only such altar in Canada.

A 1989 production of "Murder in the Cathedral" allowed me much time and involvement in Christ's Church Cathedral. For Archbishop Thomas Becket's Christmas Eve sermon in 1170, author T.S.Eliot chose his text from the 14th verse of the 2nd chapter of St. Luke's Gospel: "Glory to God in the Highest..."

Let us all continue to offer Glory to God here in Christ's Church Cathedral by supporting this very important and vital Preserve to Serve campaign.

.....  
Jean Round, a long time parishioner of St. Luke's, Burlington sits as a diocesan representative on the Cathedral Corporation and by day is Executive Director of The Miriam Group.

## Hallmarks of a cathedral

**J. C. FRICKER**  
RETIRED SUFFRAGEN BISHOP, TORONTO

I was privileged to be Dean of Niagara's Cathedral from 1972 to 1985. That's 22 years ago, long enough to belong to past history. But before you dismiss what I have to say about today's cathedrals, as a voice from the past, I have one other claim for your attention. Shortly after I "retired" as one of Toronto's bishops in 1993, (the quotes suggest that retirement for clergy can mean something different than for others) I took on the Cathedral in Buffalo as interim Dean, twice, for a total of 3 years. Though my accumulated cathedral experience does not make me an expert on these venerable institutions, it does attest to my considerable interest in what cathedrals are for.

I was invited by Bishop Spence to become a member of the Cathedral Cabinet, a fancy title given to a small group of lay people and clergy who are to have an advisory role in the current PRESERVE to SERVE campaign for Christ's Church Cathedral. However, I accepted this role not primarily because Cathedral Place needs the guarantee of financial security to properly maintain itself, however necessary that is to the preservation of this beautiful and historic building. If the sole purpose of a campaign is to raise money for the preservation of a church building it is, in my view, as uninspiring a goal as trimming the hedges around a tomb stone. The words PRESERVE to SERVE are too weighty and converting to be used to designate a campaign to raise funds for routine maintenance. What is important is that the life and ministry of this particular cathedral, as of all cathedrals, be preserved not only to serve, but to exemplify the mission of the church inherent in the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Much is said and written about the role of cathedrals as the mother church of the diocese, the bishop's church, and the gathering place for special diocesan functions. All these suggest the preservation of

an institution for its own purposes. However important they may or may not be, they all seem to be so self serving. But the church does not exist to serve itself. I want to focus attention not on preserving a building only to provide a place for diocesan functions, but on what are or should be the hallmarks of a cathedral that seeks to be preserved so it may serve.

In my view, the most important hallmark of a cathedral, in distinction from a parish church, or a monastery, or a hospital or prison chaplaincy, is to embody the cutting edge of religion in a city and in the wider culture. This means that a cathedral must have freedom to experiment. It also means that for the person in the street or in the high school or in the factory or in the night club, when people say "what after all is religion all about? Isn't religion irrelevant today?" it means we should be able to answer, "There is a place where such really tough questions are being asked; that place is this cathedral."

Other hallmarks of a cathedral are backups to this cutting edge. One is that preaching in a cathedral must be prophetic. It may say things that will disturb people. Prophets always run the risk of being unpopular at home. But being the cutting edge means making theology cut into real life, real-time decisions of the union hall, the board room, the class room or the psychiatrists couch. Another hallmark is the other side of the coin. A cathedral is the religious cutting edge through its prophetic theology because its band of prophets, the bishop, the dean, the wardens, the members, are prophetic in the context of warmth, of caring, of community, of pastoral healing, and binding up one another's wounds.

Perhaps the most obvious hallmark of a cathedral is its dedication to exemplary worship—to liturgy, to art, to music—to the beauty of holiness.

## The inspiration of Christ's Church Cathedral



**SHARYN HALL**  
ST. LUKE'S, BURLINGTON

My time at Christ's Church Cathedral was a time of spiritual discovery and a turning point in my life. Although I attended church regularly from childhood, my participation was either as a member of the choir or the congregation. When I arrived at the Cathedral in 1974 it was a place of new ideas in liturgy, ministry and the arts. Gradually I became involved in parish life, particularly with educational events and discussions about liturgical renewal.

At the Cathedral, lay people were given new opportunities to participate in Sunday worship as readers and chalice bearers. I was asked to become a subdeacon to assist the clergy in various ways during the liturgy. My role as subdeacon deepened my faith and my reverence for the mystery of the sacraments. Eventually I was encouraged to consider ordination by the clergy of the Cathedral and by members of the congregation. My decision to be ordained was a slow process of discernment which began in the Cathedral community.

The Cathedral is more than a building to me because it is the place where I discovered my spiritual vocation. However, as a past warden of the Cathedral, I am fully aware that the parish struggles to

maintain the fabric of the building and the ministry of the community. The Cathedral represents generations of Anglicans who have valued traditions, and yet have responded to the challenges of the changing times. Faithful parishioners and loyal friends have supported the ministry of the Cathedral to the diocese and to the community of Hamilton. With God's grace, a vision for the future, and renewed resources, Christ's Church Cathedral can continue to be a place of inspiration and creative ministry for years to come.

.....  
Sharyn is one of a number of Cathedral parishioners who entered the priesthood, including Bishop David Hamid, Cheryl Palmer, Stephen Berlyman, Gordon Maitland, Holly Ratcliffe, and Ann MacDonald.

## OUTREACH



# How beautiful the world is, when love shines in

## An opportunity to make a difference

**CAROLYN VANDERLIP**  
REFUGEE SPONSORSHIP COORDINATOR

The official tourism website for Thailand boasts of beautiful mountains and forests, vast rice fields, idyllic tropical islands, archaeological treasures, and unspoiled sandy beaches. Most people who have had the chance to vacation in this exotic locale will confirm that Thailand is indeed a wonderful place to visit.

But for 140,000 ethnic Karen refugees from Myanmar (Burma), Thailand has become a prison, and their visit to this beautiful country has stretched, in some cases, into 20 years or more of life in a refugee camp. In their home country of Myanmar, the Karen are a hunted and persecuted people, where many have been raped, their villages burned, and both young and old forced into labour, building roads and acting as porters for army troops. Those who fled, and now live in the overcrowded refugee camps in Thailand, are remote and isolated. They are not permitted to leave the camps, and must live on meager rations, in bamboo huts with no electricity or running water. There has been no possibility of returning to Myanmar, and no hope for any kind of future beyond their current bleak reality.

### An opportunity for Parishes

Until now. Last year, some 800 Karen refugees were identified by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees for resettlement to Canada, and began arriving in the fall. This year, an additional 2000 refugees have been selected for resettlement to Canada. Of these, the Government is appealing for private sponsors for approximately 400 refugees.

This allows parishes an exciting opportunity to reach across thousands of miles to help a refugee family begin a new life in Canada. It's an opportunity to work one-on-one with a family, and to share their journey as they learn about life in their new country, with all the joys they will experience, and the challenges they will face. Sponsoring a refugee family allows both the sponsor and the sponsored family to learn and grow - from helping a newcomer learn about using electricity and seeing the awe in the faces of children riding an elevator for the first time, to seeing your own community and culture through the eyes of someone else, and sharing in their first taste of freedom.

### Freedom

Freedom is something that many of the refugees in the camps have never experienced. Those who have, even

for a short time, find life without it again almost unbearable. Several young Karen refugees describe, in an online blog, an opportunity they recently had to leave their camp to work on a 10-day Hydro project:

"I lived in the camp for many years but I've never got outside the camp like this. I felt very good and free like I was living in our village while I was a child. I enjoyed there very much I don't want to come back to the camp anymore but I can do nothing. I was very very sad to (go) back to the camp, is like to back in the cage, we can't fly at the branches of the trees and find the fruits that we would like to eat and to land on the river side with full of grasses and butterflies anymore."

"I would like to thank Chris for thoughtfully make things possible for us to see how beautiful the world is when love shines in."

"After temporarily releasing for about two weeks in the fresh and stressed-out free paradise, the want-to-be-free birds are now back to their cage and the enjoyment of freedom starts depositing to the very bottom of their heart unhappily again. We are sorry, we do not have the role for life to play, because our

fate is like a candle flickering in the wind with no stability."

### Parishes can help

Please consider whether your parish, or a group of parishes working together, can show these refugees "how beautiful the world is when love shines in", by offering a welcoming and supportive environment for a refugee family to begin their lives anew in Canada. The Canadian government is offering a special cost-sharing arrangement, which includes:

The first four months of income support will be provided by the Government, so that the sponsor will provide only 8, rather than the usual 12, months of income support.

In addition, start up costs including an allowance for furniture, clothing, household needs, grocery staples, etc. will be paid by the Government.

Temporary accommodation, orientation, and assistance with searching for permanent accommodation will be provided by a local settlement agency.

To access additional funding, parishes who have not sponsored refugees in the past may apply for a grant through the Survive and

Thrive Outreach Endowment Fund, to help support their refugee sponsorship ministry. There are also some funds available from donations that have been made for refugee ministry.

For parishes who would find providing any financial support impossible, there are a limited number of Joint Assisted Sponsorships available. These refugees have higher needs, and sponsors are asked to provide practical assistance for up to two years, but in return the Government will provide all of their financial support for the duration of the sponsorship.

Parishes in the Hamilton/Burlington area are particularly well situated to sponsor Karen refugees, as Government Sponsored Karen refugees will also be destined to this area. Parishes in other areas are encouraged to contact the Refugee Sponsorship Coordinator to determine whether your community would be suitable to sponsor a Karen refugee, or perhaps a refugee from another country.

To sponsor a refugee family, or for more information, please contact Carolyn Vanderlip by calling 905-648-5656 or sending an email to cvanderlip@gmail.com.

## CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2 » Vacation Bible School a splashing success

But it was the youth, who I think deserve a great deal of the accolades. The morning always began with a hearty singsong lead by the youth staff and enthusiastically accompanied by Anne Young on the guitar. Follow the singing warm-up, the youth acted out a skit or play to present the theme of the day. Their creativity really shone here especially when Carrie Charters had to be a "rock". They may not make it to the main stage at Theatre Aquarius, but they came pretty close. Following the presentation, the children were divided into groups with two or three youth in charge and then taken to one of three stations.

Each day, the kids could earn "Water Credits" for bringing coins for the Well of Hope. (our new youth fund raising project) With our water theme, we felt that it was the perfect time to kick off a new youth service project at St. Michael's. We began raising funds to provide a well for a community in a developing country. This will be a long term project, but VBS week we introduced our "Well of Hope". The children were invited to contribute their coins and watch them splash into the well. Last year we raised money for Sleeping Children around the World. We raised enough money to purchase

nine bedkits. Water credits were earned by learning memory verses and completing R.A.F.T.s (Rewarding and fun tasks). The R.A.F.T.s were: Monday was to research a way to conserve water. It was to be written down on a water drop note and returned on the Tuesday. Tuesday was to complete a friendly greeting card, which was to be delivered to a resident at Macassa Lodge. Wednesday's was to bring a non-perishable food item on Thursday for St. Matthew's House. On Thursday, the kids were to bring home a "helping hand" to complete a chore for family at home... and on

Friday, the kids would go home and share what they have learned with their family and friends!

Friday, after the hot dog lunch and entertainment by Jim Davies' magical show, the kids received the water credit tickets they had earned—and then used them to play various water games to win gold coins—the coins were then spent on prizes. Each game was tended by one or more of the youth volunteers. Parents were invited to attend the lunch and stay for the fun.

Many, many thanks again to our Youth KIDZ coordinator—Janine Charters and Carrie Char-

ters for their patience, creativity and for encouraging the youth of our parish and the adults to become involved in such an excellent outreach project. (There were many non-parish children from neighbouring houses and apartments who joined us for the week,) and of course Cole Greer, Andrew Dziuba, Jake Lintack, Matthew McDonald, Kayla Lemon, Kelsey Fedus, Brian Robson, Sarah Barr, Katie-Lynn Barr, Laura Robson, Sarah McDonald, Matthew Arsenault, and Carrie Charters.

I know that I enjoyed being a part of the VBS and look forward to next year's theme.

# GREENING NIAGARA



## CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1 » The Undermount Initiative

- Also use E-mail to send out seasonal reports to those who have email. Use recycled paper wherever we can.
- Ground care and maintenance: Plant trees/shrubs (not annuals) conserve frequency of watering, use electrical tools wherever possible, use non chemical products.
- Transportation: Car pool if possible, hold fewer face to face meetings, plan ahead to save small trips.
- Church communication: Telephone tree, hand deliver mail when possible.
- Religious education: Talk with our children/youth, KAIROS-PWRDF—other environment groups, use materials found on environmental web sites. Invite Reverend Laura Marie Piotrowicz (Church of the Ascension).
- Worship and liturgy: Hold Earth Day liturgies, use Native community resources, Celtic based worship,

a minimum of once a year service. Involve the youth as they are into the environment.

- Environmental Justice: Are we prepared to take a stand and make a difference.
- Encouragement: Encourage energy audits of homes and church buildings. Involve parishioners and neighboring community in ways to green our environment.

Following the meeting a CD containing information on what the Dioceses of New Westminster and Nova Scotia are actively doing on the environment with their parishes, was given to the parishes and groups who were present at our meeting.

The next meeting Reverend Laura Marie Piotrowicz gave a Power Point presentation on 125 ways that the Greening of the Diocese of Niagara could proceed. Again a lively discussion took place and it was recommended that

a smaller group be formed to work on a motion that would be presented to Synod in November this year. Chris Lynd, an Environmental speaker will be giving a talk at the Synod in November. We hope to have a table display on available resources etc at Synod. Two parishes, Church of St. John the Evangelist and St. Alban the Martyr volunteered to have an energy audit done of their buildings using Eco House Hamilton as a resource. Unfortunately Eco House does not have the funding available to do energy audits for churches. We were however given a web site to approach regarding this. It is called Welcome to Greening Sacred Spaces. This group has funding available to churches but only in the Waterloo Region. We are now in the process of seeking information from other Government Regions of our Diocese of Niagara.

## CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8 » The road to partnership

I won't soon forget the words of a colleague who said that homeless people know well how to survive, and that we should trust that. We should be directing our efforts, he said, not to them but to decision makers, to people who had the power and resources to bring about real change.

### Embody the justice of Christ

At the far end of the continuum is solidarity or partnership—choosing to work alongside with those in struggle rather than on behalf of or above them. Recently I read a stirring article by David Fitch, "How Not to Make Justice into another Program at Your Local Church" ([www.allelon.org/articles](http://www.allelon.org/articles)). He makes the point that no outreach program—neither a soup kitchen nor advocacy at a national government level—should become a substitute for doing Christ's justice within our own community. The challenge, he says, is for communities to actually embody

the justice of Christ, "so that the poor take up residence among us.... the abandoned elderly become part of our fellowship.... and the abused become healed walking with us..."

I offer the following check list to help parishes think about how to get started on a road that will lead away from the charity rut and toward the road to solidarity and partnership:

- Begin with worship—people cannot do justice if they are not nurtured by community and God's spirit.
- Invite others whose ministry you admire—locally or further afield—to come and share their story. Then start telling your own story widely.
- Concentrate on building partnerships with other organizations, and as you are ready, with people who receive your services. If your outreach ministries are strictly "charitable", start an advocacy/political action committee to identify root causes.
- For every donation of food, in-

clude an action to go with it—a letter, petition, appointment with your local political representative, community event.

Bring a policy resolution to your parish's next annual meeting committing them to not take on any new projects or financial causes that are strictly "charitable".

Start a charity-to-justice working group in your church to assess outreach efforts and make recommendations for change.

.....

Maylanne Maybee is Coordinator for Ecojustice Networks for the Anglican Church of Canada. She has served as a community minister in Toronto, staff to the Urban Core Support Network, and founder of the Canadian Non-Profit Housing Foundation (now Raising the Roof). She started the diaconal program for the diocese of Toronto and is deacon in the parish of St. Mary Magdalene, Toronto."

# Going green? Whose world is it anyway?

GEOFFREY PURDELL-LEWIS  
ST. JOHN'S, HAMILTON

I sing the mighty power of God, that made the mountains rise, That spread the flowing seas abroad, and built the lofty skies. I sing the wisdom that ordained the sun to rule the day; The moon shines full at His command, and all the stars obey (*Isaac Watts, 1674-1748*).

Way back when, in the first days of creation, God affirmed the goodness of what He had made. In Genesis we read in chapter 1 that God said five times 'And God saw that it was good' and finally, when creation was complete 'God saw all that he had made, and it was very good' (NIV). But was that all there is? The world and all that is in it created—and then God just sat back? A sort of stagnant view of creation. For much of Western Christianity, the 'doctrine of creation', a biblical term, has been eaten alive by the 'doctrine of the fall', not a biblical term. In other words, creation's downfall resulting from human sin has eclipsed its original glow as God's handiwork, radiant with God's glory. But creation has now been redeemed and revalued and made sacred again as God's handiwork. To help us understand this more Paul wrote in his letter to the Colossians 'God was pleased ...through him (Jesus) to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross' (Chapter 1, Vv. 19-20, NIV).

### Understanding our relationship to creation

Creation is incredibly complex, beautiful, and incredibly precise (like a complex watch where all the parts work together). When we look at the genetic, molecular, or macro pictures of microbes, plants, animals, forests, swamps and the country side, man, and the universe we can only but marvel how well it all works together. God's world is not chaos.

I used to think that St. Francis of Assisi was a simplistic monk and not very relevant today. I think that we need to look again and see that he revered and respected and took joy in the world around him—God's creation. When we begin to understand creation more we need to ask what is our relationship to creation. G.K. Chesterton wisely noted how a Franciscan view of creation avoids both the profaning of creation so common in the West today and the divinization of creation so common in the East. He wrote:

"The essence of all pantheism, evolutionism, and modern cosmic religion is really in this proposition: that Nature is our mother...

The main point of Christianity was this: that Nature is not our mother: Nature is our sister. We can be proud of her beauty, since we have the same father, but she has no authority over us; we have to admire, but not to imitate. This gives to the typically Christian pleasure in this earth a strange touch that is almost frivolity... Nature is not solemn to Francis of Assisi or George Herbert. To St. Francis, Nature is a sister and even a younger sister: a little, dancing sister, to be laughed at as well as loved" (*Orthodoxy, 120*).

To follow St. Francis and Chesterton will prevent us from selling out our little sister; we will seek to enjoy her, cherish her, protect her, and encourage her to be all that she can be. But we cannot deify nature—it is created just as us humans. We have been given the job to return nature to God not as a destroyed, polluted and defunct earth, but more as a developed Garden of Eden which God intended in the first place.

### Seeing everything as God's

Some people feel that our present concern about creation and the environment is a bit overdone as they look forward to the apocalypse and the new heavenly creation and the discarding of the present creation into a sort of 'nothingness'. This eschatology has been popularized in such books as 'The late Great Planet Earth'. A closer reading of the Old Testament Prophets and Jesus' teaching belies this. In the Old Testament there are prophetic visions of reconciliation *within* history (metaphorically conveyed via lambs and lions, children and serpents, swords and ploughshares, spears and pruning hooks), not *outside* of history. Jesus talked about the kingdom of God coming on earth, being among us now, and being accessible today. Jesus said that sparrows and the lilies of the field matter and that people matter even more. It's not a matter of either/or but a matter of degree in a realm where everything that is good matters—where everything made matters.

We should see everything as God's. For us, whatever we 'own' is really entrusted to us by God, borrowed and to be reverently used by us for a time. We have to let go sometime—either by giving away or sharing, or releasing our former possessions to others when we die. We are but life tenants on this earth—God is the ultimate owner.

*I am indebted to Brian McLaren and his book 'A Generous Orthodoxy' for stimulating my thoughts and giving me ideas for this article. It is my wish that this article will give the reader good food for thought as we think about Creation and our part and purpose in it.*

» For the latest information on Greening Niagara, visit [www.niagara.anglican.ca/green/](http://www.niagara.anglican.ca/green/)

## 2007 NIAGARA YOUTH CONFERENCE

# Finding a theme for your life



**JOYCE WILTON & FRIENDS**  
NIAGARA YOUTH CONFERENCE

Well it is always very difficult to wrap up the Niagara Youth Conference (NYC) in a few tidy words... to explain to the *Niagara Anglican* readers just what these amazing 6 days at Canterbury means to the over 100 delegates and staff who attend the annual event. So we asked a number of folks to answer some questions, to sum up their experience, and this is what they had to say!

## Why do I come to NYC?

NYC is this unbelievable place where you have the support and guidance you need to make these fantastic bonds with people that outside of NYC would take a lifetime to form. The instantaneous trust that you receive from people is amazing and the laughter and good times never end, and "Variety Night" is a pretty big factor too. NYC is great because it is! (Kyle McCooney - 16 years old, St. Paul's, Fort Erie)

When asked why I come to NYC, it's easy for me to just respond with the usual answer, "Because it's fun!". But after spending six days with some of the most amazing people I have met in my lifetime, it's even easier for me to give a more thoughtful answer. There are always many different activities going on during the week. From the tunes we sing to the activities we do, they are all well planned and nothing like anything I have experienced outside NYC. I know the effort put into organizing the conference is extraordinary and that in itself makes me appreciate it even more. However, it's not the things we do there that make me come back year after year, nor is it the songs we sing. It's the people who I find there every year that make me return. While attending NYC I am always introduced to such a wide variety of people that I know I wouldn't have been exposed to in a regular school or work setting. Every year I'm astonished to see how so many people from so many different families and life

backgrounds are drawn together for a week. By the end they are able to open up about feelings and events in their lives that some haven't even shared with their own friends and family. The level of trust created by everyone at the conference is something of a miracle and I truly believe there is no other place in this world as eye-opening, accepting and trustworthy as the Niagara Youth Conference. I come to NYC for the staff and delegates who make it. (Deirdre Henry - 18 years old, St. Matthias, Guelph)

I come to NYC for many reasons: meeting new friends, reconnecting with old ones, and for spiritual enrichment. NYC also helps me step outside my comfort zone, and take risks that I normally wouldn't. Each year has a lasting impact on my life, and it keeps me wanting to come back. (Maggie Armstrong - 16 years old, St. John the Divine, Cayuga)

## Tell us one thing you have learned

NYC 2007 taught me a lot about myself. The one thing that stands above the rest is that I learned that I can be there for people when they need me. Through the week many things came up in which I received the chance to support my friends and be there for them. I learned that it feels good when I can make my friends feel better about themselves and that I can do it with ease. NYC taught me this because it provided the opportunity and let me choose whether or not to take it. The theme of the week was "A theme for your life" and I found that my theme is supporting people. (Alicia Archbell - 17 years old, St. Elizabeth's, Burlington)

## Describe your favourite moment

My favourite moment at NYC was being in a base group just talking about stuff. I liked the base group because I felt like I was in a safe environment in which I could express myself. (Christopher Stewart - 14 years old, new delegate, St. Christopher's Burlington)

My favourite NYC experience of 2007 was the Wednesday night complye service. It was a mov-

ing experience and really affected the delegates in a positive way. (Chris Saayman - Staff member, St. Mark's, Orangeville)

It was my first year at NYC and I must say that I was very, VERY nervous to go because there were so many new people there that I would not know. But once I got there, I found out I actually knew a lot of people from other Youth Ministry events. My favourite moment was the formal social. We all got to dress up and it almost felt like a grad. Girls doing hair and makeup, boys trying to find ties, and trying to find girls to tie their ties! Everyone crowded in for pictures. Our group leaders served us dinner and so we got to 'order' them around, but in a fun way. During the dinner Bishop Ralph joined us and he started what I was told was his annual tinfoil ball fight. After the dinner we had a dance and everyone was up dancing and enjoying themselves. No one sat out; you were always up chatting or dancing. I must say that I love NYC. And I'd like to thank the staff and group leaders for making my first NYC such an amazing experience. You guys are all awesome! And to Phil, Laura and Mac's base group WHOOPA!! (Pam Dudych - 15 years old, St. Paul's, Caledonia)

My favourite moment of NYC 2007 has to have been the delegates' theme song exercise. Each delegate was asked to bring a CD with a piece of music that was particularly meaningful for them. The ten delegates that I met with regularly through the week had obviously given it a lot of thought and I was awed by some of their reflections. From the loss of a brother who died too young, to a call for an examination of social values, to fond memories of father and daughter, these delegates showed insight and depth where it would have been easy to be lighthearted and frivolous. I was delighted to discover that many (not all) of the songs were familiar to me and I felt touched and moved in a way that I had not expected. (Reverend Dan Bennett - Staff member, All Saints Welland)



## How has NYC affected my Spiritual Journey?

"I just want to testify what NYC has done for me." These slightly altered lyrics of the song *Testify* by Parliament meant a lot to me this year. This last week of the Niagara Youth Conference has been the continuation of a journey that began for me four years ago. A journey from what I used to be to what I am capable of being, a big part of which I owe to the irreplaceable experience of NYC.

When I first came to NYC, I was shy and withdrawn—not one to speak out in a crowd or even in base group. I was not the kind of person who would write an article to be read by more than my Eng-

limits of their "comfort level". NYC has provided the atmosphere that made me able to show the world—and myself—that I can shine.

At the beginning of my NYC experience I was doubting. I was in a tough place and it was hard to believe that, through those difficult times, God was with me. God *was* with me—in NYC. God's power working in those wonderful people, in that beautiful place, restored me to my full self. On the last night of every NYC, Variety Night is held. This is a chance for anyone and everyone to share something with the other delegates. My first year, I remember shaking with nerves for all those who would be participating even though I was not among their number. People



lish teacher or my parents. I would certainly never get up on stage in front of my peers. Those days are no more.

Every year of NYC is distinctive, full of new experiences. Every session has a personality and gives a unique perspective. But one thing that has remained a constant for me is the acceptance and encouragement of the staff and delegates. It is easy to "know" you won't be judged but it is entirely another thing to truly believe it. This is made clear from day one and emanates from everybody. It's impossible to ignore the sense of instant familiarity among people who met just last Sunday night. Everyone is encouraged to accept new challenges and push the

had some amazing talents: making music, singing, dancing, joking. My second year I probably wanted to be a part of it. Of course, I would never have let that thought come to my consciousness because then I might have actually *considered* doing it! And that just wasn't happening. Uh-uh. No way. Never. Well, not for another couple of years, anyway. This year my friend and I performed a lip-synching routine to a Buffy the Vampire Slayer song. You may be asking yourself what good it would do my spirituality to dance to a Buffy song at NYC. Part of being a Christian is expressing one's self and one's faith with words and actions.

» CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

**CONTINUED »** Niagara Youth Conference: Finding a theme for your life



Now that I'm out of shell, I am more likely to speak up for my beliefs and to act on my values.

I'm done NYC but I know that the journey that began there will continue. I can't wait to see where it will take me. (Clair Macaulay-Newcombe - 17 years old, St. James, Dundas)

Each year, I am amazed and inspired by the level of respect and thoughtfulness of the NYC delegates. Their willingness to question their own faith and desire to make a difference in the world provides me with the energy to see past my often pessimistic view of the world. They embody exactly what church and faith are about—creating a community that is founded on believing and trusting in the human spirit. They are my proof of God's power working in each of us. (Phil Jones - Staff member, Incarnation, Oakville)

**What about NYC would you especially recommend to other youth and why?**

Well, it definitely wouldn't be the food!! (Jokes to the camp staff, it's great stuff!!!) But in all seriousness, NYC in itself is an amazing experience. To me, the best part would be the base group times. Having a group of people that you can completely open up to felt so amazing to me. Because this was my first NYC, I felt a little apprehensive about opening up fully. But later on, around the second or third

day, I realized that these people weren't there to judge. They weren't there to impose. They were there to listen, to care, and most importantly to support. Knowing that, it helped me open up about some things that maybe I wasn't so open about with other people. I think that being able to open up like that was the most riveting experience I had in my entire week. (Stu Armstrong - 16 years old, St. John's, York)

**How I feel about NYC overall, and how it has changed me.**

Although I knew several months before NYC that there was to be about discovering yourself, I was surprised by the power of faith I saw during my first year.

Before I had even decided to go to NYC my brother (he's on staff) had told me of the theme for NYC 2007, but I thought nothing of it. When I registered, I did so because I was searching for something; searching for some fulfillment and sense of belongingness and meaningfulness, all of which seemed lacking for part of my school year at University and all through the summer.

When I arrived at NYC, I was shy and nervous—I was still struggling to find myself. But I quickly realized in those around me, that I am not alone in my trials. There is a unique path for everyone. By the end of the week I was ready to go back into the world with confidence in myself, more faith in God, and

ready to take on the world.

I don't know if I found what I was looking for at NYC. What I do know is that NYC sent me in the right direction; down a path which I am ready to follow. (Matt Saayman - 18 years old, new delegate, St. Mark's, Orangeville)

We have now wrapped the Niagara Youth Conference for the 62nd year and this diocese has much to be proud of. We need to be proud that for decades, we have continued to offer a place for youth to find peers who have faith not unlike theirs—that they cannot find in most other parts of their lives. We need to be proud that we create a safe space for our youth and staff to ask questions about life and where their God "fits in" so that they go out into the world better equipped to face the everyday joys and trials. We need to be proud that we have over 20 volunteers that give countless hours in planning this event over a 10 month period and then give up a week of their lives, with little sleep, to offer this experience to our youth. Lastly, we need to be thankful for our diocese that has continued to see this amazing event as a priority in our life as a church in this world. I have been part of the NYC experience for over 22 years and it is always spiritually life giving and a learning experience for all who are touched. It is always simply "more than we can ask or imagine".

# Moving your youth ministry vision to reality



**CHRISTYN PERKONS**  
CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILY MINISTRIES

So, your parish has now created a shared vision around youth ministry. You consulted all the interested parties, got together with the relevant constituents to draft a vision statement, and now you have a pithy, dynamic vision statement that captures the essence of youth ministry for your parish. (If you missed how to do this, check out the May issue of the Niagara Anglican)

The next step is a biggie; it's about turning that vision statement into a reality; how you make that statement come alive in your community. You'll start by developing some general directions in which the parish would like to move and then you'll break each of those down into manageable tasks. The completion of those tasks will take you a long way towards fulfilling your vision statement. Successful completion of these first tasks will build a strong sense of vibrancy and dynamism—success in small things creates a sense of power and energy which will move the parish to success in bigger tasks!

**Recruiting new volunteers**  
You'll begin by inviting members of the Youth Ministry Planning Team

to continue with their work. It's important that people who are ready to move on, feel permission to do so and feel appreciated for the work they have done. On a Sunday morning, introduce the new Youth Ministry vision statement to the congregation, and thank those members who are retiring for their valuable contributions. If some of the planning team have stepped down or you find holes in the representation on the committee, now is the time to recruit new volunteers. Someone who expresses a great passion for or an appreciation of the vision statement would be ideal.

The group's first task is to look back at the collected data to identify where the energy currently is focused; perhaps you're doing really great work in social justice areas or you might offer a lot of community building/social activities. Perhaps you've done a good job of involving youth in the worship or you might have developed an effective peer mentoring program. Give yourselves a pat on the back for the areas where the parish's youth ministry is effective.

**Aligning current program with vision**  
Next, using your vision statement as a guide, consider where your current situation does not mirror where you're hoping to be. Perhaps your religious education component doesn't measure up. Maybe you observe that there aren't enough opportunities for your youth to develop their faith. You may notice that your youth are not involved in the community's worship and prayer life or it may be

that your youth are not connected to adults in the parish other than their parents. What areas of your vision statement are not well addressed by your current program?

Once you've established some broad areas that need to be addressed, it's time to get more specific. For each area, keeping in mind the circumstances of your parish, establish a couple of goals; one long term and one short term. Make sure the goals are measurable and tangible. A big youth group is not measurable—how many is big, what's the timeline for achieving this unidentified number, how often do those increased numbers of people need to participate, are you concerned about retention or is it fine if your increased numbers depend on having new youth every time the group meets—and... how does the size of the group reflect your vision statement? Think about what skills are needed to bring each goal to fruition and consider who might be involved and what kind of time each goal would involve. Here's an example:

**Long term goal**  
To have faith-based relationships between youth and adults other than their parents in the faith community.

**Short term goals**  
■ Create (or find) a mentoring program that works with the confirmation program which begins in October and runs until confirmation in April.  
■ Recruit a volunteer to be responsible for training the adult mentors,

supporting the relationships, handling the assessments, and managing challenges with support from the rector or other staff member.

■ Recruit sufficient interested adults such that every potential confirmation will have an adult mentor by November 1.

■ Provide a short training program for adult mentors by November 1.

■ Use a feedback tool in early January to flag challenges

■ Use an evaluation tool in mid-May to assess the success of the program—success to be measured by the satisfaction of the participants with the program, the interest expressed in continuing the relationships outside the confirmation program, the perception on the part of the youth that the adults in the community are interested in and connected to them, and other areas of your vision statement that are relevant.

Once you have a set of long term and short term goals, consider your resources. How many volunteers can you realistically call upon? How much time do those volunteers have to give? Don't forget that the youth are perfectly capable of providing leadership and volunteer-power to make these goals a reality. What are the financial resources the church can apply to these goals? It's unlikely that you can achieve all your goals this year. Pick as many as you think the parish has the capacity to accomplish—this may only be one or two. Don't worry about all the areas you won't be covering. You have your vision statement and your set of goals, and as you accomplish one goal, it's

easy and rewarding to return to your list and choose another area in which to focus whether that's three months down the road or in the next program year. Keep in mind, too, that success in one area will create energy that may lead right into another goal!

**Being realistic**

If all of your goals seem unattainable, you're not being realistic about who you are. Remind yourselves that every size and composition of parish has gifts and a call to the work of the Kingdom. Go back to your vision statement and create goals that reflect who your parish is and what its gifts are in God's work. If there are still important goals that you don't have the capacity to accomplish on your own, consider partnering with a church that has the gifts you need for that particular goal. And remember that the Program Consultants, Christyn Perkons (ext. 460) and Joyce Wilton (ext. 430) can be contacted by calling 905-527-1316.

What comes after this? Create action plans for your short term goals—again with specific dates, measurements of success, and an indication of who's responsible for doing each item. Let me reiterate: don't forget to involve your youth in this—it will be more meaningful to them and more valuable to the community if your young people are intimately involved in moving the vision to reality. Now, you're on your way to fulfilling your long term goals—living the youth ministry vision you dreamed!

**MARK YOUR CALENDAR NOW!**

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**DISCOUNTS OF \$500/PERSON AVAILABLE****Church Musician Wanted**

St. Alban the Martyr located in the beautiful village of Glen Williams is in need of an enthusiastic director of music. We are not looking for perfection. We are looking for a person to bring lively, upbeat, passionate music that lifts our worship and enlightens our souls.

We are a small congregation of about 110 families dedicated to the glory of God and to reaching out into the community. We like a mixture of traditional and modern music with an anthem once a month. Our choir is small (about 12 members) and we are short on tenors but what we lack in numbers we make up in dedication and determination to be the best we can be. We are fortunate to have some members of the local Bach choral among our members. If you feel called and would like to become a member of our parish with a small monthly stipend please call the rector at 905-877-8323.

# Getting to know you more

A continuation of Fran Darlington's interview with Michael Bird



**FRAN DARLINGTON**  
HONORARY - ST. JAMES, GUELPH

Niagara's newest Bishop calls his new position "an enormous privilege. I don't take it lightly. I'm thinking about how I'll go about my first year as Bishop. I'm someone who takes my time, says my prayers, listens, and then finds ways to move in the direction I believe God is calling us to move."

Let anyone think that "sounds like someone who is going to diddle for a long time," Bishop Michael emphasizes. "I am also keenly aware that time is of the essence... those same challenges are being faced by families and people generally, and the results can be isolating, and create a real sense of deprivation in all kinds of different ways."

"In order to discern that, I want to engage people at all levels, to interact with young people of the Diocese, to hear more about their ideas and concerns. I want to have opportunity to visit parishes and clericuses and other forums that we can create to enter into dialogue together."

"I'll be building on foundations that Bishop Ralph and many others in the Diocese have worked so hard to put in place. I see this as a critical moment in the life of the Diocese... We need to put all our energy and the many resources... at our disposal in Niagara to see our congregations... thrive and grow."

**Our focus as a Diocese**

Understanding the great responsibility accompanying the privilege; Bishop Michael asks our support: "First of all, I hope people continue to remember me and my family in their prayers. I hope they'll have some patience as I learn to fulfill this new role, and willingness to work together. I used the word 'partnership' a lot (in preparing for the election); no doubt we're going to be called upon in the next few years to face different challenges. I think if people could focus not just on what they want from the church—that's part of it, we need to have our own needs met—but also focus on what God is calling us to be as the Church together."

"I believe one of the key components in allowing our churches to experience new growth is the work of outreach, so this is an area I want to encourage, explore and expand, at both the Diocesan and parish level, reaching out to struggling families. If we are true followers of Jesus Christ, then reaching out to people in all kinds of life situations, without any strings attached, has to be a critical piece of what we do. Strictly because we have been richly blessed with the presence of God in our lives, then we are compelled to bless others in response."

Bishop Michael refers to the Book of Daniel, and the story of King Belshazzar, whose focus is on acquiring great wealth. At a great feast, a mysterious hand writes on the wall. Daniel is summoned to interpret, and tells the king it means "You have been

found wanting." Bishop Michael says, "I think that's something that characterizes our society, and we're seeing the devastating results." In two other stories in the Book of Daniel, the three young men in the fiery furnace and Daniel in the lions' den, Michael finds the presence and work of God brings about a miraculous resolution. He smiles, "It's a helpful read right now. It says a lot about what I hope will happen... in my new job."

**Who belongs?**

Aware that the Church is the only place where people of all ages and backgrounds come together as equals, he comments, "Today people derive a sense of identity more and more from the things they try to possess, the jobs they do, the things they produce. The Church offers us an identity that rises above all that, an identity and a place to belong... When the Church functions as I think God intends it to, it should be a place for all people."

He continues: "One of the gifts the Church has to give to this generation is life enrichment. There is a real deprivation in people's lives in all kinds of ways. In the midst of that, the Church's mission has never been so important, to do ministry in the context of a society and world that is changing faster than it has in any other point in human history. So I come to my work as Bishop knowing that... we are all struggling with the same challenges that the Church is facing..."

Michael has also considered his pastoral responsibility to his clergy: "In this day and age, clergy have to work hard," attending to many things. "If we don't have ideas, creativity, we have to go out and find them somewhere. We have to attend to our well-being of spirit, physical (health), families—whatever (wellness) means."

**Restoration**

In his office is a prayer desk and chair from the Oakville home of the Community of the Sisters of the Church (CSC), with whom Michael has enjoyed a long association. One sister was "always assigned to St. Aidan's." As Rector of St. Cuthbert's, Michael was regularly invited to celebrate the Eucharist in the CSC chapel; "I've done that for twelve or thirteen years, and I don't have any plans to discontinue." He continues firmly, "I've gotten far more out of that than they have. Having that kind of contact with people for whom prayer is part of daily life has been an essential gift for me in my life."

Michael intends to take Monday as his day off, to continue his participation in the ecumenical clergy curling. "I had heard about the clergy curling, and always wanted to join." Aware of the need for recreational activity, Michael did join nine years ago, and was president for three years. "I find, when I get on the ice, I can completely shut out any cares or concerns I have about the Church, and focus on the game. It's been a wonderful fellowship (with) the people I've encountered."

Our new Bishop's favourite place for renewal and refreshment is his cottage near Algonquin Park. For him, his wife and their three children, "that area has been a big part of our lives. I've never lived or min-

istered there, but it's been a consistent part of family life since I was a one year old. When we gather there, we feel our roots going deep."

**Family will always count!**

Bishop Michael emphasises the importance of family life. "It's the one thing I'm hoping and counting on. I want to be part of my children's lives—some days anyway! Right now, they're very supportive, (though) I don't think they're completely aware of what it's going to entail." He grins, "We're all in blissful ignorance at this point!"

His wife, Susan, a gerontologist, manages Life Enrichment and Volunteer Management in a large facility in Bronte. "It takes a very special person to do that day in and day out... to bring a sense of enrichment to another... I have great admiration... Lately I've come to a sense that we're both doing the same thing, with similar challenges."

The children are exploring adult opportunities. Son Michael is 23, a recent McMaster graduate in history and English, and will be returning to McMaster as a full-time Resident Life Manager, building on experience as a residence Don. Matthew, 21, graduated in Computer Studies from Mohawk College this year, and works full time with IBM. Sarah, 19, a highland dancer, will be starting Global Studies at Laurier University.

Bishop Michael also plays the bagpipes: "They've been neglected, but I plan to get back to them. There'll be Celtic music at the Consecration!" Like most clergy, he enjoys reading, though "lately it's been material for General Synod." His current novel is Nigel Tranter's "Columba," another important Celtic saint.

**Gentle, faithful, committed and courageous**

In his letters to Timothy and Titus, Paul presents very clear guidelines for the office and life of a bishop: "Now a bishop must be above reproach... gentle, not quarrelsome, and not a lover of money. He must manage his own household well... for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how can he take care of God's church?" (Tit.3:2-5)

"For a bishop, as God's steward, must be blameless; he must not be arrogant or quick-tempered or addicted to wine or violent or greedy for gain; but he must be hospitable, a lover of goodness, prudent, upright, devout and self-controlled. He must have a firm grasp of the word that is trustworthy in accordance with the teaching, so that he may be able to both preach with sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict it." (Tit.7-9) Quite an undertaking, isn't it?

Paul also writes, "Whoever aspires to the office of bishop desires a noble task."—a noble task, indeed, but one with great demands, expectations and potential for many challenges. As we give thanks for Bishop Ralph's ministry in recent years, and for all bishops in Niagara's history, let us also hold our new Bishop and his family in our prayers, prepare to work with him to continue the good work already done in this Diocese, and to adventure with him into the future. May God bless and strengthen us all!



# Christopher Lind coming to Niagara



**RICK JONES**  
SECRETARY TO SYNOD

Dr. Christopher Lind, a prominent lay Anglican educator and environmentalist is returning to Niagara to be the keynote presenter at the November Diocesan Synod.

Dr. Christopher Lind is a Senior Fellow of Massey College at the University of Toronto. From 2003 to 2006 he served as Director of the Toronto School of Theology. Dr. Lind holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from York University in Philosophy and Political Science, a Master of Divinity degree from Trinity College and a PhD in Theology from the University of St. Michael's College specializing in Ethics and Economics. He has authored or co-edited five books in the areas of Ecumenical Social Ethics, Globalization and Agriculture,

Mission and Theology. He was a member of the Primates Theological Commission and the National Church's Ecojustice Committee.

Dr. Lind is looking forward to being back in Niagara, where he grew up, and where he once sang in St. Jude's Junior Choir. He will be working with Synod delegates on issues of Ethics, Theology, Scripture and the Environment. I recently had the opportunity to ask him about his motivation for environmental activism and reprint that conversation:

*Hi Christopher we in Niagara are very excited to have you coming to our November Synod this year. The Youth of the Diocese have asked that the theme of this year's diocesan synod be "Global Warming".*

*Your academic background is in Theology, Ethics and Economics. How do these disciplines inform your thinking about issues such as global warming, the issues of agriculture and fishing which I know you have written about?*

*In 1985 I went to Saskatchewan to teach theology. My students were going off to serve in small rural par-*

*ishes throughout the prairie. Their parishioners were mostly farmers and farm families and they were having an increasingly hard time. I was teaching my students about the relationship between Christian Ethics and economics and they were teaching me about agriculture. I have always believed that Christian ethics was about all of life not just part of it. I learned this growing up in St. Jude's Oakville where we would recite Jesus' Summary of the Law most Sunday's "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength, and love your neighbour as yourself".*

*In Saskatchewan, farmers were my neighbours and they were suffering so I was using my education to help them and me understand what forces were causing them to feel disempowered. Those forces were related to economic globalization. I then came to understand that economic globalization was also accelerating the production of greenhouse gases that was at the root of global climate change.*

*I noticed in reading your blogs*

*that you wrote you were "convicted in Montreal" in response to the Kyoto Protocol discussions held under the U.N. sponsored Convention on Climate Change. You used the provocative image of the earth "running a fever". Could you tell us more about this experience and how you have been thinking about environmental issues and your faith?*

*I have travelled a lot in the course of my career and so I have seen and heard how people around the world have been affected by chaotic weather patterns. Islands in the Pacific are being flooded, the monsoons in India are becoming irregular, the ice caps are disappearing from the Swiss mountains and Halifax now has a hurricane season. We know from the biblical witness that God created, God is present in Creation, and God saw what had been created and called it good. So, the peoples of the world are my neighbours but so are the birds of the air and the fish in the sea. God has put all of us in the Garden and called us to "till it and keep it". Right now the Garden is sick and we can't just pretend*

*we don't know this. We can't turn our backs and walk away. All of us have to change for the communities of the Earth to have a chance.*

*How did you begin to do workshops on theology and the environmental issues and what would you like the Niagara Synod to take away from their experience of your presentations?*

*I have done workshops on ethics, economics and agriculture all across the country, from cities to hamlets. As my interest in environmental issues grew, it was natural to start including this aspect as well. The workshops for the Niagara Diocese will focus on Ecojustice and the Bible. My hope is that delegates will take away two things. The first is that concern for Creation is central to Christian faith, and always has been, even if we haven't always understood it that way. The second is that the Bible can be an important resource for us in responding to that concern as long as we're willing to think about it and respond to it in new ways. I am hoping for a fun event and a robust exchange of views by all delegates!*

# Niagara churches reveal themselves in identity statements



**ALAN L. HAYES**  
THE ITINERANT CHURCHGOER

Most of our churches introduce themselves to the world with short identity statements. They typically publish them on their diocesan web pages, on their own websites, on their stationery, in their Sunday bulletins, or on their external signage, or on some combination of these.

The idea of such statements is probably an inspiration from secular organizational theory, but on the whole it makes sense for churches to pick it up.

Recently I compiled the statements found on the parish pages of our diocesan website, www.niagara.anglican.ca. The statements are all distinctly Christian, but they are all different. Together they give a nice sense of how diversely God calls us, and of the number of ways we have to respond to the gospel.

The statements readily divide into six categories: broadly descriptive statements, specific practical statements, vision statements, mission statements, theological statements, and exclamations. There are many overlaps, of course, but I'm not going to get too complicated here.

## Descriptive statements

Descriptive statements tell people what they'll find if they come to your church.

St. Luke's, Hamilton, says, "As an Anglo-Catholic parish of 125 years Saint Luke's mainly uses the Book of Common Prayer and the complementary hymnals in our 'traditional

services and if you find that interesting please read the rest."

In Grimsby, St. Philip-by-the-Lake says that it "has ministered to the east end of Grimsby for over fifty years. It is essentially a family church, with many young families, and an informal style of worship." Here's another: "The historical church of St. John's has been in the Stewarttown community since 1834. It is a small and welcoming church in the midst of much urban development at the west side of Georgetown."

Such statements are informative and pretty unthreatening. Visitors aren't made to feel that they have to buy into an ethos before they drop in. The idea is: this is probably what you'll find if you come; come see for yourself.

## Practical statements

Practical statements assume that most people will have a general sense of what Anglican churches are for, so they just give information that might be useful to someone considering a visit. St. Columba, St. Catharines, says, "The Church is contemporary in style. There are no stairs as all Church facilities are on ground level." Believe me, if you're an older person, or physically challenged, the question of stairs can be pretty important.

St. Paul's, Westdale, says, "Our 10:30 Sunday service is a BAS Eucharist with modern music. It is child friendly..." and then talks about nursery care and other worship services. For many prospective visitors, this is the information they'll want right up front.

## Vision statements

Vision statements tell people what your church is aiming to become. The emphasis is on the future, not the present or the past.

St. Paul's, Fort Erie, says that it wants "to become an evangelized and evangelizing parish which lives in the baptismal dimension in communion with Christ and all people in order to establish the reign of God." St. John's, Thorold, says, "God is calling us to be a nurturing, Spirit-filled community actively celebrating our love of Jesus Christ through worship, fellowship and outreach."

What's appealing about these is that the churches have a vision of where God is calling them but the modesty to recognize that they haven't yet become all that God intends. It implicitly cautions visitors that if they come, they shouldn't judge the place according to standards of perfection. They should see the community as a work in progress, and, indeed, they can join in what God is doing to help it along. I like vision statements.

## Mission statements

Mission statements tell people what you're trying to accomplish now. This is probably the most common kind of identity statement I've found among our parish churches. Such statements are supposed to determine strategic planning and operational decisions, and they help organizations evaluate whether they're achieving their goals.

Quite a number of our mission statements focus on being a community where spiritual growth happens. For instance, "The purpose of the Church of St. Alban the Martyr, Acton, is to seek spiritual growth in a vibrant and visible community, bringing people into a deeper relationship with God through Jesus Christ our Lord."

St. Matthew-on-the-Plain, Burlington, says, "We are called to be a Christ-centred community, inviting all

to worship and grow in discipleship." St. Alban's, Glen Williams, says, "We are a warm and friendly family parish where people can get to know each other and support one another on our mutual Journey of Faith."

Some sociologists of religion think that the church in the industrialized world has become a place where people leading fragmented lives with many superficial and transitory relationships can satisfy their need for community. These mission statements appeal to that need.

Other folks may not care so very much about being part of a community. (I'm told that C.S. Lewis went to church late and left early so that he wouldn't have to talk to people.) But they may want to make a difference in the world.

Outreach isn't as conspicuous in many of our churches as it was a couple of generations ago, but it's still there. St. Cuthbert's, Oakville, says that it's "reaching out to others with God's transforming love," and St. John's, Cayuga, says that it "declares the power of Christ to our neighbourhood." St. George's, St. Catharines, speaks of its "strong tradition of outreach ministry to the community," and Incarnation, Oakville, speaks of "looking beyond ourselves to fulfil needs in the wider community." Holy Trinity, Fonthill, says that it "strives to bring the love and joy of Jesus to our community."

## Theological statements

Still other churches identify a specific theological commitment. St. Paul's, Dunnville, says, "We believe that we have all fallen short of the glory of God, yet through the sacrifice and invitation of His Son, we have the opportunity to return." A visitor will likely therefore expect St. Paul's to be more theologically traditional than, say, St.

Paul's, Mount Hope, which says, "We are a liberal... congregation," or Transfiguration, St. Catharines, which says, "Progressive Christianity Starts Here!"

Some research says that churches with clear theological identities are more likely to grow than ones which try to please everyone. I'm not sure my own itinerant church-going confirms that. Still, the odds are good (though not 100%) that liberals won't be happy in conservative churches or conservatives in liberal churches, so being up front in telling people what's what can be a good idea.

## Exclamations

Exclamations catch the attention, invite, interest, and provoke. They're more clearly inspired by marketing models than the other categories, but the church's sense of its identity is implicit in them.

Here are a few. "Open to God, open to grow" (Christ Church, Flamborough). "Come and join us!" (Holy Trinity, Hamilton). "A place to refresh your spirit!" (St. Aidan's, Oakville). "Meet God, make friends, make a difference" (St. James', St. Catharines). "You are one of the family" (St. Alban's, Beamsville). "The shelter of God's love" (Ascension, Hamilton).

If you buy conventional management theory, it would be a good idea for congregations to review all their statements periodically. And in fact it could be a good thing for our churches to have all these categories of statements: a mission statement to help define community priorities, a vision statement to animate people towards a common goal, a theological statement to clarify common beliefs, descriptive and practical statements to ease the way for prospective visitors, and an exclamation to catch the world's attention.



Shoot, Ready, Aim

## One tower never changes

**HOLLIS HISCOCK**  
RETIRED PRIEST - BURLINGTON

### SHOOT - The photograph

The CN Tower in Toronto, Canada, is perhaps the most photographed of all tourist attractions in the country. I honored this icon by taking its photograph while enjoying an autumn cruise around Toronto Island and the harbour.

For more than three decades, it has been the tallest free standing structure in the world. Physically, it dominates its surrounding land, air and water scapes, and figuratively it eclipses the imaginations and expectations of the millions of earth wide visitors who view it annually.

As I contemplated my photograph, I thought about two other towers from the Bible, one named Babel and the other Jesus Christ.

### READY - Words behind the photo

The story of the Tower Of Babel (Genesis 11:1-9) is a marvellous parable explaining the world's diversity of languages.

God's people were of 'one language and the same words' all over the earth. Then they encountered people who spoke differently. They decided to keep the language pure, and built the 'highest free standing tower' of the era to symbolize the one true language of God.

God, however, had other ideas. God did not subscribe to the 'one language for all people' theory, so God paid a visit to the site and introduced two major innovations.

Firstly, God confused the 'mother tongue' monopoly by introducing other languages so that they would not understand one another.

Secondly, God scattered God's people around the world so that they would not be tied to a brick tower or a geographical location.

We should note that the CN Tower stands today in the centre of the most language diverse city in existence. The area could be called a modern Babel, since the very word means

to confuse or mix. For us it means that we have to find God and interact with God's people in a multiplicity of words, some we understand and others incomprehensible.

In the photograph, a white swan is almost lost in the midst of the tall buildings, wide waters and limitless skies, and yet she stands out as a symbol of humanity. Sometimes we may seem lost in the wide expanses of our surroundings, yet we are secure within the confines of our own beings and environments.

Our second tower is not made from bricks or mortar, but is the God/human being tower of Jesus Christ.

Luke (21:7-28) describes the world to which people had scattered over the centuries since Babel, and uniquely described the circumstances and situations we are encountering in our universe today.

Earthquakes, famine, wars, plagues, strange weather phenomena, strife, misunderstandings, etc swirled around every past era, as they do here and now.

Such occurrences cause pessimistic outlooks, fear, despair, nihilism, etc.

Luke suggested that in the midst of such happenings, when everything looked hopeless and total annihilation seemed inevitable, that is the moment for God's people to stand up and look up to see God at the centre of life.

Sometimes in the midst of adversities we may not see or even feel God's presence, yet God/Jesus promised, 'I am with you always'.

A favourite joke of mine illustrates the point Luke was making: Cape Spear, Newfoundland, the most easterly land point in North America, attracts thousands of tourists annually.

*Dense fog often shrouds the magnificent view. Sam, a Newfoundlander, takes his Ontario buddy Ralph to Cape Spear. The fog is so thick they can hear the waves, but*

*not see the water.*

*Ralph: I guess on a clear day, you can see the ocean'*

*Sam: On a clear day, you can see farther than that'.*

*Ralph: I guess on a clear day, you can see ships on the horizon'.*

*Sam: On a clear day, you can see farther than that.*

*Ralph: I guess on a clear day, you can see Ireland.*

*Sam: On a clear day, you can see farther than that.*

*Sarcastically Ralph blurts out: OK wise guy, how far can you see on a clear day?*

*Sam: On a clear day you can see the sun.*

Even though our days may be clear, foggy, sunny or stormy, and our personal or external conditions may appear overwhelming, yet, as Christians, we are called to remember that the 'son', Jesus Christ our God, is always there, whether visible or invisible.

It may not be easy; God never promised us smooth journeys, but did promise a strength and spirit to guide and empower us.

### AIM - Questions and actions for you

■ Read slowly Genesis 11:1-9 and Luke 21:7-28, and then reread the article, jotting down your own thoughts, especially in light of your own situation.

■ Identify the people who were and are the towers in your life.

■ Apply the tower of Jesus/God to circumstances facing yourself, your church, your relationships and your world, and ask what you can do to be a tower yourself.

■ Hollis would appreciate your feedback on this series. Contact him at [hollism@hotmail.com](mailto:hollism@hotmail.com)

.....  
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.

## Fellowship of Prayer: Strength



**ANNETTE HARRIS**  
ANGLICAN FELLOWSHIP OF PRAYER

'Seek the Lord and His strength' (Psalm 105:4)

Early in the day we come before you Lord. We daily need your guidance and strength, we need reassurance that you will provide for all our needs and you are our constant in a changing world. We need daily to bring our thoughts and needs, our prayers to you.

You gave your Son as our guide, your great and Holy Spirit as our counselor and companion. Jesus tells us 'to enter by the narrow gate', this road leads to righteousness. The other way is broad, and the road that leads to it is easy, and there are many who travel it. The gate to life is narrow, and the way that leads to it is hard, and there are few who find it. (Matthew 7:13-14)

The decisions we make on our road to life have eternal consequences. We should study the map given to us—our Holy Book, laid out by a Holy God, carefully constructed for our benefit and to aid our travel through our earthly journey, reading and study (alone or with others) is necessary and a vital part of life's pattern, we would indeed be lost if it should be left on a shelf somewhere, or

set down to study 'later'.

We really have to consider on a most serious level Jesus' words to us, 'There's one path only that leads to life', I believe that we have to take these words of caution as intended, using 'wisdom' given to us, and accepting Jesus' advice, freely given on how to proceed.

There is no 'short cut' to heaven, no easy route. We must follow our Lord to the utmost, expecting difficulty and hard choices as He did, with sublime trust in the Holy Father and obedience, no matter what it could lead to. Even Peter who denied him three times, and loved Jesus as a brother, later was forgiven and reinstated as 'Rock' to build a church on. Judas, who betrayed Him for worldly considerations, sadly did not wait for forgiveness, but took 'the easy way out', did not believe or trust his Lord enough to remember the miracles he had seen, His awesome power or His love of all.

We all are given choices in this road to life. Look expectantly for them, to wait, to abide, to trust, to listen, to step confidently on the 'Road', directed by Father, by Son, by Holy Spirit. This road leads to heaven, to eternal life.

Pray daily that you will have all the help and guidance you need, always being thankful and faithful as St. Paul constantly reminds us.

I will instruct and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go' (Psalm 32:8)

### New members needed for Bishop's Decennial Inspection Committee

The Anglican Diocese of Niagara has a program to carry out periodic inspections of all church properties within the Diocese. This work is managed by the Bishop's Decennial Inspection Committee, which is mandated to develop the Policy and Terms of Reference, schedule and monitor the inspection and reporting of the physical structure, fabric, systems, grounds and cemeteries of all Anglican Church properties within the Diocese of Niagara on a rotating 10 year cycle. The Diocese extends from Mount Forest and Shelburne in the North to Fort Erie and Nanticoke in the South and Oakville in the East. The actual inspections are carried out by qualified Inspectors under direction of the Committee and are awarded by tender and paid for by the individual Parish.

The Committee is looking for one or two additional Volunteers to join the Committee to fulfill this mandate. In particular, Committee Members evaluate the Inspectors reports to Parishes and, as needed, assist and advise on the preparation, development and implementation of the resulting Plan of Action and the need for additional specialist investigation or study.

The selected Committee Member is likely to have a background as an architect, engineer, general contractor, project manager, maintenance supervisor or building inspector with an interest in and knowledge of older buildings. A knowledge of structural, mechanical and electrical systems would also be an advantage.

Individuals wishing to be considered for this role should initially submit a letter of interest and a resume to the Bishop's Decennial Inspection Committee:

c/o The Bishop's Office  
252 James Street North  
Hamilton, Ontario L8R 2L3  
Fax: 905-527-1281

Email: [karen.nowicki@niagara.anglican.ca](mailto:karen.nowicki@niagara.anglican.ca)

Further information, including the Terms of Reference for the Inspection of Church Properties will then be provided and selected candidates will be invited to an interview with the Committee.

# In praise of graceful imperfections



**NISSA BASBAUM**  
RECTOR - TRANSFIGURATION, ST. CATHARINES

As the month of October approaches, once again I am reminded that I am not, nor have I ever been, a "fun" person. Rather than representing the beauty of the onset of autumn splendour and the genuine love which I have for the Thanksgiving season, October evokes too many bad memories of Hallowe'en

his angelic sister, most people at the door assumed his black and red attire depicted the devil. "Isn't that clever?" the neighbours probably thought. "The clergy kids dressed up as the angel and the devil!"

Each year as Hallowe'en approached, outside of high anxiety, I would feel only one emotion—an intense envy of the creativity and skill which people like our daughter's godmother so obviously possessed. Inevitably, I withered before this kind of talent, which most often seemed to be exhibited by the mothers of our children's friends. It was with great relief that as our kids got older, they began to realize

myself for not having been able to sew those costumes or, for that matter, for not being able to do a whole whack of other things that belie my competence? Let me see... what is that gospel quote again: "Be ye perfect even as your Father in heaven is perfect?"

Years ago, as a theological student, I did my clinical training at Queen Street Mental Health Centre in Toronto. How clearly I remember my supervisor—the senior chaplain at the hospital—telling us that this one line from scripture was pretty much singularly responsible for the onset of a good many of the mental health issues of several of the clients in the hospital. Too many people trying to be perfect, he said, yet always coming up short and, therefore, believing themselves to be of little value to anyone.

Might it be that many of us in the church advertise with the *Niagara Anglican*.

Contact Ted Manning at advertising@niagara.anglican.caperhaps priests, in particular—also suffer from a misunderstanding that if we are to follow and emulate Jesus we are to aim for perfection in all that we are and all that we do? The picture we have of him is of someone who was able to do anything if he wanted to do it and, let's not forget, at the same time, to do this perfectly. Because we have been led to believe that Jesus had no imperfections and shortcomings (he was human was he not?), many of us are unable to admit to our own imperfections and shortcomings. The result: we neglect to live out the gospel as it is meant to be lived out; sharing the work of the world with the rest of the community. Instead, each of us tries to accomplish this work independently of others, unfortunately competing with everyone else as we do this. Maybe I was never meant to sew that Hallowe'en costume. Maybe, it just isn't my gift and that's okay. Maybe my job was to find someone blessed with this talent instead of running away from all the people who I felt were likely to upstage me as a seamstress and consequently, I thought, as a mother, too.

There is a line in Eucharistic Prayer One in the Book of Alternative Services that I always change when our congregation uses this prayer for communion. As it stands in the prayer book,

the line reads: "Through Moses, you led your people from bondage into freedom." I alter this to read, "Through Miriam, Aaron and Moses, you led your people from bondage into freedom." In the years since I have been ordained and presiding at the Eucharist, only one person has ever asked me why I fiddle with the language in this part of the Eucharistic prayer. There are probably two reasons for this. On the one hand, it's entirely possible that people don't even notice and don't particularly care. On the other hand, if they do notice, many probably assume the change is related to my need for gender balance and the question, therefore, is already asked and answered. Yet, this is not at all the reason for the alternative choice of words. If it were, I would not add Aaron's name.

I have always read this line as Miriam, Aaron and Moses because I strongly believe that individuals do not carry communities; rather, communities carry communities. No one person possesses all the necessary gifts to guide a motley group of people towards the Promised Land. If Moses had the guts and the nerve—or what might better be called the *chutzpah*—to lead the ancient Hebrews out of Egypt, no amount of such *chutzpah* would have been sufficient if he hadn't also had Aaron's organizational and administrative skills and Miriam's *joie de vivre*. In fact, there probably were many others in the ancient Hebrew community who helped out in the triumph of that sojourn across the desert. The use of only these three names is merely symbolic of the numerous people who likely carried the journey to its successful destination.

As Christians, we tell our story as we seem to have inherited this from scripture, as if it is only one person—yes, usually a man—who moves the community from one place to another; only one person who is responsible for growth and change. And why not? This rendition of the stories fits naturally with our western nature and culture. Our society loves heroes and really, what decent and respectable heroes require the assistance of others to accomplish their mission?

It is likely that most of us know we are not perfect. Most of us understand the theology behind Paul's Body of Christ imagery. We are not whole and complete

by ourselves; within God's world, each one of us has been given something to contribute to the design of the larger picture. Yet, if what my supervisor at Queen Street Mental Health Centre said is true, most of us act on what we *feel* rather than what we know. And what we feel is a sense of inadequacy because of this imperfection. Aiming to be perfect like Jesus—because how else can we hope to emulate him?—we always come up wanting. Instead of acknowledging and relishing our need for the rest of the community, we are left to feel that this need is something to be disdained, something that does nothing but point out our flawed nature.

The story that has been handed down to us assumes and cashes in on our inevitable failure because of the reality of human imperfection and, more to the point, because of the description of Jesus' own perfection. How fair is it to be asked to emulate something that we already know we will never be able to achieve? Each of us has been set up for a fall, a fall that we know by its theological name: original sin. Theologian Matthew Fox expressed this years ago when he began to question the value of the traditional Christian concept of original sin and described instead, a theology of Original Blessing which he thought would be better to take its place. I guess I'm just a slow learner!

Some might think we need an entirely new story, and perhaps there is a modicum of value in this. At the very least, I think we desperately need a retelling of the old one, a retelling that might teach us, among other things, that Jesus needed the community as much as the community needed him; that not only did he never *intend* to accomplish his mission by himself but that he simply wasn't *able* to do this; and that Jesus accepts his followers as we are, neither expecting or wanting us to be perfect as God is perfect, but to have compassion for others as God has compassion for us.

Proclaiming a gospel which applauds our finite nature rather than diminishes this, which names our relationship with others and with the divine as mutual rather than subservient, may be the key to a recognition that our imperfections are the most graceful traits we have to offer the world.

Because we have been led to believe that Jesus had no imperfections and shortcomings (he was human was he not?), many of us are unable to admit to our own imperfections and shortcomings.

and, particularly, my ineptitude at making "fun" costumes. When our children were young, I found myself caught between my own frugal upbringing, which taught me that Hallowe'en attire was never to be purchased ready-made, and my—at best—limited imagination and even more limited sewing skills. Increasingly, I would experience the sweats, if not an all-out anxiety attack, as to what the particular costume request would be in any given year.

Admittedly, sometimes it all worked out—like the year I actually sewed, with some success, a dinosaur outfit for our son. Then, of course, there was the year when our daughter's godmother came through with a home-made Beauty and the Beast "Belle" dress which her own daughter had worn the previous year. I was delighted that at least for that year, half the battle would be won. Oh, and of course, I can't forget the year that the request was so obviously heaven sent. Our daughter wanted to be an angel. With two clergy parents, it wasn't difficult to borrow this costume from the church! That same year our son decided to be a character from Star Wars, someone named Darth Maul.

Overcoming my personal ban on purchased costumes, we actually bought that one. Sadly, for him, however, as he stood next to

that they were considerably more gifted at creating their own costumes than I ever would be. It was not long before I happily was relegated to the simple task of doling out treats at the door!

As each October now rolls around, thankfully, my inadequacies are only a painful memory rather than a present and living reality. No question about it... As holidays go, I would happily excise this one from the calendar. Hallowe'en has never been good for my ego!


I guess if he wanted to, Jesus probably could have sewn a Hallowe'en costume. After all, he could do anything, right? I daresay you're wondering on what planet I am living as I even bother to ponder such an apparently ridiculous notion. At the very least, you're likely thinking I have way too much time on my hands... but I'm not so sure. The way we've received the story is that there wasn't a thing Jesus couldn't do if he chose to do it. Yet, this leaves me wondering if we have been given only a portion of that story—the bit that the original community wanted to hand on to those who came after them—the part that kept Jesus' perfection and, therefore also, his independence intact.


Is it possible that, because of the way the story has been told, I never will be able to ease up on

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## EDITORIAL

# Where, oh where are we going?



**CHRIS GRABIEC**  
EDITOR

Over the past two months we have been very busy listening to what people have to say about the recent directions of the Anglican Church, and of our Newspaper, the *Niagara Anglican*. The comments have been all over the map! You will see from some of the letters to the editor that there are some folks that aren't very happy with us! One of the frequent comments from many is that they are sick and tired of hearing about the same-sex blessing issue. They want to move on. It's a very valid comment in some ways, as it is so important that we move on and tackle other issues of importance. Our hope is that we will not drag our feet with issues in the future, in the same way as we have with this issue.

We all recognize (people who sit on both sides of the argument) that the General Synod left us with a mess that is very difficult to handle on the local level. The fact is that it must be handled and we must make appropriate Spirit-driven decisions in order to move onto anything else. This cannot hang around our necks.

There are those in the church that want this issue to go away and that no changes should happen. Well, that's not going to hap-

pen. There are those who want local options and those who say that if we have local option they will depart from the Church. There are those who want to "delay" the decision until more of us are of one mind. If we take a step back, and try to be reasonable the one thing we know we cannot do is delay the decision. We will suffer as a result and our church will simply stagnate to the point of becoming immobile. We need to face the issue head on. Without a doubt the Niagara Synod this November will want to take some time to make decisions.

The result of indecision has been hurt. The conservatives in the church are feeling that they are being beaten up by the large numbers of people who want to move forward and allow the option for blessings of same sex unions. The folks who favour moving ahead feel treated unjustly by the conservative members of the church. They feel that they are asking for something that they believe in the depths of their very beings is something that God is calling them to. They also feel that they are not asking to impose this on anyone in the church who cannot live with it (hence local option). They simply want to be able to live God's call as they feel

they are hearing it. A decision must be made.

Perhaps what needs to be looked at here is the systemic disorder that our faith community and many others need to confront. For generations the church has forgotten its call to be an inclusive community that calls together sinners and saints alike and gathers them at one redeeming table of Christ our Saviour. Instead our history has been to exclude women, divorced, gay and ethnic outsiders. Oh yes, we have truly been the "English" church of Canada. What's even more astounding is that we were proud of that designation. No wonder our pews are so empty. Canada is so far from "English", that we are only to be outdone by the city of London England!

The other day I had the opportunity to meet with a new rector in our diocese, Marcus Germaine from the Church of the Nativity in Hamilton. We sat around drinking espressos and trading our Italian culture stories. It struck me that this was one of the few times I had ever met with one of our priests and felt like we were being mildly multicultural. It was so refreshing.

We have Italians, Portugese, Vietnamese, Chinese, Poles, and so many other nationalities in our society that could well benefit from our ministry and our heritage. No, it will not be by imposing our "English" ways upon them—or even our "English" music. For some of us, these ways and this expression will always be comforting and it cannot be excluded from who we are. But, much more importantly, we must be willing to open our hearts and our doors to other religious/cultural forms of expression. More of our pastoral staffs need training in other languages and cultures. We still seem to want to build massive pipe organs in our churches, but yet are unwilling to adapt our musical expression to the young and to those of other cultures. How many young families do we really think we'll attract to our communities because we have built a new and huge pipe organ? (Thankfully places like Resurrection play Steel Drums—otherwise where would our Caribbean brothers and sisters go?)

Whether it's gay marriage or ignoring the multicultural needs of

our society, we need to ask what is at the root is our exclusionary views of church and our comfortable pew mentality? What prohibits a true reaching out to society around us?

No one is foolish enough to think that the church as we know it will survive. It will not. We're too white-haired in most places to even dream of survival into the next 25 years. So isn't it time for us to begin to dream about a new church? Isn't it time for us to refrain from looking down our noses at that part of society that does not conform to our standards? Is it not time for us to understand that just maybe the Spirit of God is working in society around us, in spite of our inactivity, our inhospitality and our closed doors.

I have yet to meet an Anglican that is not a heart a "good" and "wonderful" person. The problem is that we have such preconceptions about who we are and how we should act that we have failed to hear the call of God's Spirit that is so alive in the world today. The day for pointing our fingers at "sinners" is over. We are all sinners—every single one of us. The conservative heterosexually married member of our church is just as much a sinner as the liberal gay person who is journeying with another gay person. Does anyone really believe that God thinks one sinner is more welcome at the table of God's blessing than another? The street people, the ethnic and poverty stricken population has every right to be at our table and to be treated with the utmost respect and dignity. Does anyone think that God wants our buildings filled with pleasant smelling, wealthy Caucasian people while the rest of society wanders around outside our doors?

It is time to make a decision that we will bring an end to exclusivity and that we will open our doors to absolutely anyone who wants to accept Christ as Saviour. That acceptance cannot be passive, it must be active. We must change our way of being so that those who are now on the outside can truly feel welcome and accepted in our midst, and so that they can feel ownership with our Anglican community. There is but one redeemer and his arms embrace all of creation equally. It's time for us to rejoice in that truth and to proclaim it from doorways of every church building in our diocese of Niagara.

## The Niagara Anglican

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Editor: Christopher Grabiec

Phone: 905-312-8444 (ext. 101)

Email: chrisg@thedunhamgroup.com

Advertising: Ted Manning

Phone: 905-680-0615

Email: advertising@niagara.anglican.ca

Publishers Advisory Board

Pam Claridge

Phone: 519-941-6804

Email: pclaridge@rogers.com

John Janisse

Phone: 905-312-8444 (ext. 102)

Email: johnj@thedunhamgroup.com

Geoffrey Purdell-Lewis

Phone: 905-628-4176

Email: purdell-lewis@sympatico.ca

Charles Stirling

Phone: 905-383-1088

Email: cstirling@sympatico.ca

Carol Summers

Phone: 905-772-5641

Email: summers@linetap.com

Staff

Design/layout: Kayn Leduc

Proofreading: Bryan Stopps

Submissions

We welcome letters from our readers. All submissions must include the full name and contact information of the author. The newspaper reserves the right to edit submissions. Submissions must be received one month prior to the newspapers publication.

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## The Diocese of Niagara

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

Bishop of Niagara: Ralph Spence

Phone: 905-527-1316

Email: bishop@niagara.anglican.ca

Administrative Assistant: Alison D'Atri

Phone: 905-527-1316 (ext. 310)

Email: alison.datri@niagara.anglican.ca

Executive Officer: Marion Vincett

Phone: 905-527-1316

Email: marion.vincett@niagara.anglican.ca

Director of Evangelism: Michael Patterson

Phone: 905-527-1316 (ext. 257)

Email: michael.patterson@niagara.anglican.ca

Children, Youth, Family Min.: Christyn Perkons

Phone: 905-527-1316 (ext. 460)

Email: christyn.perkons@niagara.anglican.ca

Youth Min./Adult Education: Joyce Wilton

Phone: 905-527-1316 (ext. 430)

Email: joyce.wilton@niagara.anglican.ca

Contact the Diocese

Cathedral Place

252 James St. North

Hamilton, ON L8R 2L3

Phone: 905-527-1316

Website: www.niagara.anglican.ca

## PEOPLE IN THE NEWS

■ Happy 60th wedding anniversary to Jack and Doris Cummings from St. John's, York, who celebrate this anniversary on October 11.

■ Happy 55th wedding anniversary to Ann and Ron Haywood from St. James and St. Brendan's, Port Colborne, who celebrated this anniversary on September 6.

■ Canon Mark Tiller was elected Regional Dean of Greater Wellington Region on September 4.

■ Bishop Spence has appointed Dr. Stephen Hopkins as Archdeacon of Trafalgar Region. The Service of Collation is scheduled for Sunday, September 16 at 4:00 PM at St. Christopher's Church, Burlington.

■ Mrs. Barbara Lennerton, wife of the Reverend David Lennerton, Honorary Assistant at St. Luke's, Hamilton, passed away on Monday, August 13, 2007. The funeral service was held at St. Luke's Church in Hamilton on August 22.

■ Canon Lynne Thackwray has been appointed Interim Pastor at St. Paul's Church, Caledonia, effective October 1.

■ Our sympathy is extended to Canon Mark Tiller and family on the death of Mark's father, Canon James Tiller, on August 8. A service of thanksgiving was held on August 15.

■ The Reverend Stephen Berryman was appointed Honorary Assis-

ant at St. Alban's, Acton, effective August 22.

■ Congratulations to Bishop and Mrs. Walter Asbil as they celebrated their 50th Wedding Anniversary in July.

■ A Memorial Service is planned for the Reverend Larry Reese (passed away July 29) on Saturday, November 24 at 2:00 PM at Christ's Church Cathedral, Hamilton. A reception will follow the service.

# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## Why the Anglican Church has already split

I am deeply saddened when I read in the *Niagara Anglican* about the divisive and controversial issues in the Anglican Church. In the celebration of the Eucharist, we are reminded "Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again". Instead of constantly analysing the issues that divide the Anglican Church, let us focus on this glorious summation of the Gospel message and be ready to share it with others in our church and community.  
**BEATRICE ROWLEY-DEADMAN**  
*St. John's Church, Ancaster*

John Bowen in his article accurately states the facts that the Anglican Church is already split and trying to avoid such a split is too late. As traditionalists we have also felt the abuse as the writer speaks of being thrown at us over the past several years resulting in us leaving one parish that overwhelmingly supports the blessing of same-sex unions for another that made us feel more at home. I have no doubt that the Diocese of Niagara at Synod in November will vote for the "local option" to allow parishes to decide for themselves whether to bless such unions.

Within the Diocese of Niagara traditionalists are a minority and the views of the majority are clearly printed each month in the *Niagara Anglican*, on the Diocesan website and other forms of communications. The writing is on the wall. The split has clearly already happened and the divorce as is usually the case will be a messy affair.

We will await the outcome of Synod before making any final decisions on our status within the Anglican Church of Canada. As traditionalists I feel the time has come for us and other like-minded individuals to start the divorce proceedings shortly or have the papers served to us later. We should follow the lead of several parishes in New Westminster and parts of the US who have left their respective national churches and put themselves under the leadership of African Primates.

**DEREK AND ANGELA KERR**  
*Dundas, Ontario*

The September issue of *Niagara Anglican* has just arrived and I immediately digested the first page. I cannot let another minute pass without replying to John Bowen's article which has anticipated some things that I had planned to say in the future. I have already developed a sequence of thoughts for my own future arti-

cles, but I feel that John's comments require an immediate response.

I agree with him that there is already a split in the Anglican Communion, but I do not agree that it has to be terminal. The Mother Church of our Communion is the Church of England; that is why we call ourselves "Anglican". Over a period of about four hundred years, since the time of the first Elizabeth, the Church of England has had representative clergy scattered around the world. Former colonial peoples have established their own independence in subsequent years, but the Church of England has survived the political splits and developed into our present Communion. That Communion inevitably includes a great spectrum of religious convictions at varying stages of development. It has happened before.

It seems not so long ago that I heard that the Anglican Church was a "bridge" church; some considered that it was the bridge between Rome and the Protestants. Our Communion has continued to discuss communion with denominations on both sides of the fence. Our communion with the Lutheran Church is a glowing example.

Divisions have occurred within the Anglican Church before. One example was the break with the Wesleys, due, I suggest, to the intransigence of self-opinionated bishops in England who could not, and would not, see the need for additional clergy in the American colonies. John Wesley therefore ordained his own although he was not a bishop and therefore broke the Apostolic succession. To the day of his death he still considered himself to be a member of the Church of England.

Another schism occurred in the nineteenth century with the formation of the Oxford Movement. Although the Anglican Church lost some fine theologians to Rome, the Church remained united although divided into High, Low and Broad Church opinions. Because of a failure in the adequate Christian education of the people in the pews during the twentieth century, the Anglican Church in the western world has steadily lost numbers while basic education in Christian fundamentals has prospered in Africa and the developing world.

We are now in the 21st Century, a century of inter-planetary travel. The concept of God and of Heaven "up there" makes no sense to modern youth. The dream of "pie in the sky when we die" is over; not only Christians, but Moslems too, must wake up to that. We have to accept St. Paul's concept of "the God in whom we live, and move, and have our being".

Our faith must be so great as to be able to accept so wide a range of beliefs—though not commit our indi-

vidual consciences to them all—that we can agree to the presence of a God of Love who is all in all. We may then gather under an umbrella of grace and love held by the Father of All.

**SUSAN C. HUXFORD-WESTALL**  
*All Saints, Hamilton*

## Flouting General Synod

Now that some time has passed, we can look back on General Synod somewhat dispassionately. General Synod is the body through which the governing rules for the Anglican Church of Canada are set. Regardless of our own views on any resolution, as members of the Anglican Church, we are expected to accept the results of these deliberations. If any diocese chooses to ignore or flout any particular decision, it follows that other dioceses may do the same. The result would be something akin to anarchy.

At General Synod 2007, there were two very controversial resolutions. One was approved and one was defeated. There have been many comments issued on these results. However we are expected to accept these decisions, and live within their requirements. If we don't, will our church be a viable institution? Will the rest of Canada and the world see us as a reasonable, rational expression of the Christian Faith we profess?

The newly elected Primate stated that he expected the dioceses to abide by the decisions of General Synod. Bishop Michael Ingham reported that he reluctantly accepts the decision of Synod. Two ministers have stated they will ignore this decision. Fortunately the bishops in both dioceses have stated that discipline would be imposed if action is taken in contravention of Synod's decision. There have been calls for the diocese of Niagara, at its Synod in November, to pass a resolution authorizing the blessing of same gender unions. This would flout the decision at General Synod. Are we a diocese that respects its National General Synod or not?

The Anglican Church in Canada is clearly a church divided. Many members on both sides of this divisive issue have been hurt and continue to grieve the results of General Synod. We need time to heal and focus on the work of the church; going into the world, preaching the gospel of repentance and forgiveness, living the gospel renewed in the Holy Spirit and making disciples for our Lord Jesus Christ. To continue this divisive debate will only bring more pain to everyone. The time has come for our Bishop Ralph Spence and Synod Council to affirm that our Niagara diocese

will abide by the decisions of General Synod and that a resolution in contradiction to the decisions of General Synod will not be permitted nor assent given. Please join me and many others, who are praying that God's will and work, will be done in our church.

**JOHN PENNYLEGION**  
*Chair of Essentials Niagara*

## Guilty of power imbalance?

That's it! In the July issue of the *Niagara Anglican* you have really gone over the line into personal attack and intimidation.

First of all, a St. Catharines' reactor in one of her two articles said that it is time to "stop being polite" to those opposed to same-sex blessings and perhaps engage in "some street-fighting" for which her father was renowned. Street fighting?? Has it really come to this? A call to violence? Is this the beginning of The Final Solution for conservatives in Niagara? In fairness the author was being facetious, but invocations to street fighting evoke unhappy memories of where this led in the twentieth century to Jews in Germany and for that matter is still happening to Christians in Pakistan.

Secondly, the *Niagara Anglican* in two articles, as well as the evangelism officer on the website, singled out for personal rebuke a long standing priest of this diocese, Canon Charlie Masters. We are no longer content to lambast evangelical/conservatives in general, now we are using the resources of the diocese to attack individuals by name. The first attack was of course on page one, and again the Traditionalists As Racists argument was used. The second attack by a retired bishop in the second of his two articles was a letter to Canon Masters which he decided to release publicly along with Canon Masters' private reply. Then the bishop was allowed in to have the last word. Don't you think this smacks of serious power imbalance? Please remember that Canon Masters' views were expressed in the Toronto Star in an interview, he was not using diocesan resources, but now the diocesan newspaper and website are used to attack him. The Evangelism Officer never directly replied to Canon Masters views, but contented himself by using the Traditionalists Support Slavery argument (in fact it was evangelicals like Wilberforce who worked to abolish it) and added that conservatives will dissolve marriages of divorced people. That's a new one!

As a parish priest, I have heard for

years lay people complain about giving money to the diocese, and some yearn for the old two-sided envelopes. I always argued against such a viewpoint, but now I am sympathetic. Why as traditionalists should we send money to the diocese when it uses the official channels of communication to attack, ridicule, and intimidate us? Why indeed!

I realize that this letter exceeds your requested 200 word limit, but not to print it or edit it is to be open to the charge of Power Imbalance of which I think you have been guilty.

**MARK McDERMOTT**  
*Grace Church, Milton*

## The role of Bishops

Joshua Morrison's article "Examining Anglican Governance" is especially provocative when it is held against Ian Dingwall's article "What Makes Orders Valid Anyway?" on the same issue. The one describes the lack of democracy in the Roman church while the other makes the same point about our own. What am I missing?

As Morrison points out, the spectacle of a small group of Bishops thwarting the will of the majority of General Synod 2007 delegates gives cause for some concern. It may be timely to re-examine the way in which men and women attain the Office of Bishop.

It appears to the casual observer that Bishops may have a mediaeval view of their role. Contrary to the "Father-in-God" notion of the episcopate, the ministry of a Bishop in 2007 is essentially a ministry of administration, the essential element of which is a clear vision of the organization's essential purpose. The method by which the "blessing" resolution was decided by General Synod 2007 appears to confirm that the mission of the Church in the community where it lives.

A modest proposal would be to require anyone seeking the Office of a Bishop to apply for the job. A professional approach to choosing Bishops would eliminate lobbying, politicking and/or manipulation of the process. Applications should include references from competent referees able to personally attest to the applicant's qualifications and competency, and be devoid of the God-talk that characterizes self-initiated profiles. Final selection would rest with a select committee of the Synod Council. The Church could then be assured that its leaders are qualified to do what they do.

**LLOYD GESNER**  
*Burlington, Ontario*



**Niagara Cursillo**  
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# Being saved from the wrath of God by Christ's atoning death



**COLIN C. M. CAMPBELL**  
ST. HILDAS, OAKVILLE

In the July 2007 issue of the *Niagara Anglican*, at the end of her article, "Scripture is About How to Live, Not About How to be Saved," the Reverend Nissa Basbaum makes the excellent observation that "we study the (Word of God) and incorporate its essence into our



Where Christianity is unique is its claim to be the only religion with a saving knowledge of God.

lives for no other reason than we believe that it teaches us the right way to live." In passing she theorizes about Essential people's motives, referring to "being saved" or, more explicitly, to being saved from the "Wrath of God." This view of the Gospel is no longer widely held in the Canadian Church. A normative scorn for the substitution theory of the Atonement, may be added. Those who hold it believe that it is the only way to save anyone from the Wrath of God. By interpreting this doctrine in a certain way, it is possible to caricature God as a Cosmic Sadist. Bad preaching notwithstanding, this is not the interpretation of responsible theologians who have held this opinion. The purpose of this article is to try to correct some of these, all too common, misunderstandings and distortions. It will begin with a forthright declaration of a conservative interpretation of the Atonement, followed by reasons to justify it.

One conservative view of the Atonement is, "In the Cross of Christ, God's uncompromising love for us combines his uncompromising anger against sin with his uncompromising mercy towards sinners." Whereas human reason has led to a natural knowledge of God, it has never led to a saving knowledge of God. How pure anger could be reconciled with pure mercy was a paradox, which, we know from history, no reasoning ever discovered. God revealed it to us directly. If no accommodation of these standards is possible for a doctrine of complete—not partial—reconciliation, then it becomes a simple declaration of historical fact that no one is able fully to come to God except by Jesus. In today's climate of liberal, political correctness, it is easy to caricature this statement as bigoted and arrogant. Certainly, the Reverend Basbaum is quite correct in requiring the scrutiny of its premises and the validation of its doctrine. It is no longer acceptable merely to assert that we believe these non-self-evident truths because the Church says so. However, although reason never discovered them, once revealed, they are reasonable, as will now be shown.

Our common experience of life is that, not only do we appear to be created for happiness in a world in which we are unable to be happy, but that our morality prohibits us from committing sins which we cannot avoid. Although this is a Biblical belief, it does not need a revelation from God to know its truth. It is the experience of any thinking person. One example was Sigmund Freud. He was an atheist, yet it was a core doctrine of his that everyone had this experience. Theology expresses it slightly differently. How can we explain the behaviour of a God who commands us to do a good, which we do not have the power to do, and who prohibits us from committing sins which we cannot avoid? The view that people are fallen creatures seemed the best empirical explanation. By nature, we

are impure, unable to make ourselves happy, or to please God and our neighbour as we would wish.

Reason can lead men and women to some knowledge of God. Many cultures have combined a belief in God (or gods) with punishment for rebellion against him (or them). In this respect, Christianity is no different. Where Christianity is unique is its claim to be the only religion with a saving knowledge of God. It would simply be untrue to claim that all gods who punish rebellion are the same as the God and Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Paul was not distracted by political correctness for a millisecond, when he perceived that God's saving act runs counter to natural morality ("a scandal to the Jews") and human reason (foolishness to the Greeks). It is at least plausible to claim that every religion requires a cultic practice to deliver its followers from the anger of its god. No responsible Christian leader, however, could claim that these rituals are all the same, or that they are all of equal value. Christianity locates that deliverance in the Atonement offered by Jesus. God in Christ delivers us from his own Wrath.

In Judeo-Christian belief, the Wrath of God has a precise definition. It is his displeasure at unrighteousness. It is not a flaw in his character, as anger is so often in us. We are angry towards others when they harm us. God's anger is not like that. God is angry towards others when they harm themselves. If God's nature is to have an uncompromising love for our happiness, it follows that his attitude to our sin must be uncompromising anger for the sake of that same happiness. It would be a blemish in God, if that Wrath were absent. A loving God cannot overlook evil. He can forgive it but never condone it. The locus of Christian salvation lies in the consciousness of sin and the need for forgiveness.

In a world in which psychology

encourages us to feel good about ourselves, such a doctrine finds little appeal. The truth is that modern people have lost a sense of sin. They regard themselves as good people. Compared to the Emperor Caligula, they probably are. They are certainly no better or worse than the scribes and Pharisees of Jesus' day. However, Jesus reminds his followers that that is not the standard. Faced with a culture of such monolithic complacency, it would seem necessary for God, on occasion, to exercise his Wrath.

At the time, God's anger certainly seems terrible, but it is the saving anger in which his mercy is contained. When human culture goes its own way, God punishes it by allowing the consequences of that sin to reveal its tyrannical power. God punishes individuals by allowing their sin to wreck their lives. However, he does this in order to free them. God does not desire the death of a sinner but that he or she may turn from wickedness and live.

This interpretation of God's punishment of us explains Christ's "punishment" for us. The all too common sneering caricature of the traditionalist's God as a kind of Cosmic Sadist, who requires someone of equal dignity to be worthy of his punishment, reveals precisely the kind of lazy engagement with scripture which the Rev. Basbaum deplors. God's punishment for sin is to allow sinners to experience the crippling consequences of that sin. God's punishment is to permit them to be "lost." They are then unable to be reconciled to God, others, or their inner nature. God's uncompromising anger, worked out through our sin, has put us in need of uncompromising mercy. To water down God's anger with mercy, waters down a radical holiness. To water down God's mercy with anger, no matter how justified, waters down a radical reconciliation. An adequate doctrine of

reconciliation requires both absolute justice and absolute mercy. The Cross of Christ meets both of these requirements. God shows us in Christ that he shares with us the same consequences of sin. Since that is how God punishes our sin, in that sense, it is correct to affirm that Christ joins us in our punishment. However, since this a consequence of his love for us and not of his personal sin, he is not lost, as we are. Unlike us, he knows the way back to God. As we unite ourselves to his offer of reconciliation, we too are able to return to God. There is a catch, however. For us to be able to receive this offer, we must first know that we need forgiveness. This means that we must hate our sin and agree with God that we merit his righteous anger.

Those who have had this experience quite properly feel that God's mercy, displayed in Jesus' atoning death has saved them, not only from their sin, but also from God's Wrath against that sin. It is a common accusation that Evangelicals embarrass others with their language. This discomfort is quite natural. It arises in those who have never had this experience. We are, after all, Anglicans. We are all good chaps, are we not? We are not spiritual vulgarians, after all. Others are certainly entitled to tact and a sensitive use of language. However, courtesy is not a valid reason to dilute the need to be saved, to minimize the tyranny of sin, or to avoid the pain required for reconciliation.

.....  
Colin is a life-long Anglican and taught at McMaster University, in the physics and computer science departments for 15 years. He was President of the North American Board of Directors of the Order of St. Luke, a chapter-based Anglican healing organization, for 10 years and has spoken widely on this subject. Currently, he teaches high school science in Hamilton and attends St. Hilda's parish in Oakville.

## Soul Rhythms

A Nurturing, Networking and Nourishing Event!

**Sunday November 25, 2007**

3:00 PM - 7:00 PM

St. Christopher's Church, 662 Guelph Line, Burlington

### An Invitation to All!

Take some time for yourself, enjoy spirit-filled workshops, dinner, guest speaker and time to connect with folks from across the diocese.

**Pre-register before November 16 for \$20/person** (\$30 thereafter)  
Price includes dinner, two workshops, guest speaker and gift draws.

For information or to register contact:

Christyn Perkons or Jane Wyse at 905-527-1316  
jane.wyse@niagara.anglican.ca  
christyn.perkons@niagara.anglican.ca



**The Diocese of Niagara  
announces with great joy**

**The Episcopal Ordination  
(Consecration)  
of Michael A. Bird**

Sunday, September 30, 2007 at 7:30 pm

Christ's Church Cathedral, Hamilton Ontario

Due to limited seating - tickets will be required for admission

The Liturgy will be broadcasted live on the internet at  
[www.niagara.anglican.ca/webcast/](http://www.niagara.anglican.ca/webcast/)

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11 » **Hallmarks of a cathedral**

Worship at a cathedral is to be more splendid than anywhere else, awe-inspiring, transporting. A cathedral's worship is first and foremost that activity that literally takes you out of yourself. A cathedral must be a conscious center of artistic and intellectual vitality. A part of being the cutting edge is being "where it's at!"

Canadian and most US cathedrals are also parish churches. That is good, for the life of a cathedral is not incarnate unless it is tested and lived in community, unless these hallmarks I have listed are immersed in a very concrete community that prays together. The PRESERVE to SERVE

campaign invites your financial support because it is your cathedral. Supporting it will help it to serve not just the Anglican community of the Diocese of Niagara, but to be a vital presence in the city proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Do we need cathedrals? Dare we risk having a diocese without one?



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2 » **Why did St. Philip's close its doors?**

Each time a new rector is appointed to a parish (any parish), some people leave, some come back and new members come.

St. Philip followed this pattern except in some cases the normal exodus in parishioners was very pronounced. This was, in part due to differences in theology. In some cases the rector, appointed by the Diocese, was not a good fit with the theology of the parish. This caused tension between the clergy and some parishioners and added greatly to the fatigue level of the parish as well as in some cases having a profound effect on the number of parishioners choosing to leave the parish.

In the early Nineties, St. Philip's was clearly aware that its future was in jeopardy and attempted to hold discussion with other parishes about some kind of cooperative ministry. Yet, at that time, there was no strategic plan for Ministry in North Burlington nor is there a clearly defined plan for Ministry in North Burlington today. St. Philip's attempts at dialogue with other Burlington parishes concerning some model for joint ministry were ultimately unsuccessful. No parish seemed interested in an informal alliance, satellite facility or merger. St. Philip's felt discouraged and alone.

**Hopefully we can all learn**

In hopes of turning a corner in 2004 and being called to trust that the Spirit would provide, the parish passed a \$30,000 deficit budget and to their credit they came in right on target with an approximately \$30,000 deficit. When it was time to pass the 2005 budget the parish was faced with the same numbers. Some people spoke loudly against approving the budget but in the

end vestry passed another \$30,000 deficit budget with the same result. There are some questions that might be asked about this: Where was the leadership in the Diocese? Why was the parish allowed to do this? (These are some of the questions asked by the parish, yet the Diocese does not see the budget till after it is passed at vestry. The responsibility for the budget rested with the clergy and parishioners). Yet one would have hoped that the Diocese seeing the mounting debt would have intervened. It was when the wardens went to the Bishop in the fall of 2005 that the Diocese began to understand the severity of the parish's plight.

It hurts everyone involved when a parish closes. Hopefully, we can learn from the experience of St. Philip's so that we are better able to respond to other parishes who find themselves in similar situations.

In the end, the decision to close was made by the parish, and they alone are responsible for the ultimate decision to disestablish. However, others also bear some responsibility for the events that led up to that decision. The responsibility is shared by the Diocese who in hindsight chose the wrong location to plant this parish; the City of Burlington who decided not to continue Mountain Grove Ave. to Upper Middle Rd.; the clergy and people of St. Philip's who decided it was the right time to build an addition, the parishioners and clergy who supported subsequent large deficit budgets, the Diocese who did not recognize and therefore were not able to respond to the rapidly mounting debt of the parish, the Bishops who appointed clergy without due knowledge of the needs of the parish, the parishioners who

chose to leave rather than stay and work together for a better future; the other parishes from Burlington who did not become involved in some model of combined ministry, the Mission Strategy Group who has been slow in developing a strategic plan for ministry in North Burlington.

Where was God? Why wasn't this parish successful? Why didn't God intervene?

I know that everyone who attended the vestry felt the presence of God's Spirit supporting us as we supported each other in this traumatic decision. To choose to close in no way negates what was done to serve God in this place. It has been my privilege to walk these last days with this parish, to celebrate their ministry.

As we struggle to move forward we are reminded of the words God spoke to the prophet Jeremiah, that God calls us out of exile into new life:

*"For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the LORD, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope. Then when you call upon me and come and pray to me, I will hear you. When you search for me, you will find me; if you seek me with all your heart, I will let you find me, says the LORD, and I will restore your fortunes and gather you from all the nations and all the places where I have driven you, says the LORD, and I will bring you back to the place from which I sent you into exile."*

Next month will be Part 3, the final installment of the story of St. Philip the Apostle Burlington. It is entitled "The beginning of a journey to new life" and will focus on what has been happening since the closing.

# Which eye do you see with?



**BILL MOUS**  
DIVINITY STUDENT, TRINITY COLLEGE

It's hard to believe that I'm back at Trinity College for my final year! It seems like just yesterday that I wrote my first Niagara Anglican column about embarking on a new part of my journey by starting work on a Master of Divinity degree. The dawn of a new school year brings with it the end of the summer season. All around us the leaves are beginning to turn colours and one by one make their descent towards the earth. Cooler mornings and evenings greet us as we head outside while at the same time present us with wonderful opportunities to get outside one last time before winter in order to experience the majesty of creation.

Autumn is the perfect time to take part in one of my favourite spiritual practices: prayer walks. Walking to enter into a deeper relationship with God has deep roots within our faith tradition. Moses and the Israelites walked for forty years in the desert; Jesus spent forty days and forty nights in the wilderness; and countless saints of every age have gone on pilgrimages. These stories all had one common element: walking amidst creation while deepening one's spirituality.

**A deepened understanding of God**

Prayer walks are most often done in silence—listening to the sounds of the birds, the insects, and the trees and thus the voice of God which speaks through all creation. By focussing on one's breathing—inhaling and exhaling deeply—and on one's footsteps—one foot before the other—you become aware of your movements, yourself as part of the creation, and the presence of God which is in you and which surrounds you.

Walking amidst creation permits one to enter a sacred communion with God that is heightened by the wonder and awe of creation. It was a delight to recently lead several teenagers on a prayer walk through a conservation area. The group was fairly familiar with the area but given the opportunity to abstain from conversation and iPods and intentionally focus on their surroundings, new discoveries were made with each footstep: the ants which had laboriously chewed up a dead tree into a fine mound of sawdust; the clay on the riverbank which when warmed in the palm of the hand could be moulded into any shape; the sounds of the cicada's high pitched whines in the tree tops above and their exoskeleton shells on the tree trunks below. In all these things, the group saw the magnificence of creation and correspondingly deepened their understanding of God.

**Denial of relationship with God**

This is what theologian Sally McFague describes as seeing the world through the loving eye. To behold creation when one is fully immersed in it, interacting with it, and engaged with it: created being to created being.

Yet our world only rarely views the glory of creation around us through this eye. Many of us struggle to find time to get out of our urban milieus so that only rarely do we get a glimpse of the natural world—and even when we do, it is often hindered by the glass of a car window or limited by the constraints of a museum display. This is to live life looking through our arrogant eye—a view of creation that is detached, distant and disengaged.

Peter Hans Kolvenback, a Jesuit Priest, wrote: "the origins of the ecological crisis is denial—in deed even more than in word—of the relationship with God. To cut with God is to cut with the source of life, it is to cut with the fundamental love and respect for life. When we are so cut off, then we permit ourselves to destroy life, and ecologically speaking, the conditions for life."

**Will we survive?**

When we as created beings are cut off from God we can easily disconnect from the rest of God's creation and thereby lose a significant means of knowing God. Urbanization has long separated us from the once familiar family farm on the edge of town and replaced it with miles of concrete interspersed with various amount of planned or preserved green space. As we increasingly lose this way of knowing God, I think we also lose sight of our role as stewards of creation. Consider what it would be like for city-boy to head to the country to run a farm without any prior experience of farming. The results would likely be comical, but not particularly effective. Might this be a good analogy for our own situation—our understanding of creation being so limited that any attempt to restore it is in vain? As Kolvenback suggests, much of the ecological crisis may be attributed to humanity's ever growing disconnection to creation.

One of the questions I think we face today is how we go about cultivating a connection with creation in an ever increasing urban environment. It brings us back to the two world-views suggested by McFague. It asks us to choose as a society, as Christians and as individuals which eye we will choose to see the world through. Of course, I doubt the choice will matter much in the grand scheme of the universe. Either way the earth will survive for another billion or so years. The real question is whether the abundant biodiversity God created will thrive, and perhaps more significantly, will humanity survive? I don't know about you, but I'm heading out for a hike this Thanksgiving.

# EVENTS

**Bishop's Company Annual Dinner**  
Diocese of Niagara Synod Office, Hamilton  
This year's guest speaker is Archbishop Fred Hiltz. Join the Bishop's Company online today! To join online using Visa or MasterCard go to <http://www.niagara.anglican.ca/bc>.  
October 1, 6:15 PM

**Guest Speaker - Kim Phuc**  
St. George, Guelph  
Born and raised in Vietnam, Kim is the young girl who was photographed running down a road with her skin on fire with napalm during the war. Miraculously she survived, and eventually defected to Canada. She now leads the Kim Foundation which assists in funding programs to heal children in war torn areas of the world.  
Cost: \$10.00 per person  
October 3, 7:00 PM

**Blessing of Animals**  
St. Cuthbert's, Oakville  
Join us on St. Francis Day for a half hour service blessing and giving thanks for the animals in our lives. All living creatures welcome!  
Cost: Donation to Oakville Humane Society  
October 4, 7:00 PM

**St. Francis of Assis: Blessing of the animals**  
St. John, Elora  
All are welcome to join us at St. John's for the Blessing of the animals service.  
October 7, 4:00 PM

**National Thanksgiving**  
St. Cuthbert's, Oakville  
Prayers in gratitude for our nation with the singing of our Royal and National Anthems.  
October 7, 8:00 AM and 10:00 AM

**Baptismal Ethics in Action**  
St. Cuthbert's, Oakville  
Join us for a six evening video-discussion series exploring our Baptismal values. All are welcome!  
Cost: Donation for materials  
October 10, 7:30 PM

**Youth Dance**  
St. David's Parish, Welland  
Dances are held every other Friday for those in grades 5-8. Pizza & pop available.  
Cost: \$5.00 per person  
October 12, 7:00 PM - 10:00 PM

**Concert Series**  
St. Luke's, Hamilton  
Arcady singers will be on tap at this our last in the series of concerts to raise funds to restore our famous Spencer Tracker organ. Tickets are available now. We advise getting your tickets early to avoid disappointment.  
Cost: \$15.00 per person  
October 13, 7:00 PM

**T.W. Smyth Memorial Lecture**  
St. John, Elora  
The Reverend Dr. David Widdicombe, Rector of St. Margaret's in Winnipeg will be preaching at both the 9:00 AM and 11:00 AM services and delivering the Smyth Memorial Lecture at 4:00 PM.  
October 14, 4:00 PM

**Harvest Festival Ham Luncheon**  
Christ Church, Niagara Falls  
A wonderful meal of ham, with all the trimmings, including wine for adults. Proceeds for the Christ Church Renovations Fund.  
Cost: \$15.00 per adult, \$7.00 per child aged 5-12  
October 14, 12:00 PM

**The Pampered Chef**  
The Church of the Epiphany, Oakville  
A repeat of this popular evening and a good way to kick off your Christmas shopping!  
October 15, 7:00 PM

**Eucharist and Parish lunch**  
St. John, Elora  
St. John's would like to extend a warm welcome to all to join us for Eucharist and then a parish lunch!  
October 18, 11:30 AM

**Car Rally**  
St. Paul's, Jarvis  
Annual car rally with supper to follow (for those who don't get lost).  
Cost: \$15:00 per person  
October 20, 9:00 AM

**Harvest Ham Supper**  
St. John the Evangelist, Niagara Falls  
St. John the Evangelist will be hosting a full ham dinner with assorted desserts.  
Cost: \$12.00 per person  
October 20, 6:00 PM

**Social Night**  
St. Columba, St. Catharines  
Another night of fun, cards, laughter, snacks and prizes. Couples and singles both welcome.  
Cost: \$2.00 per person  
October 20, 7:00 PM

**Patronal**  
St. Luke's, Hamilton  
Saint Luke's is celebrating the end of the 125th anniversary with a Solemn High Mass with Bishop Spence celebrating and preaching at the 9:30 AM service. Then we are having a festival pot luck luncheon in the parish hall afterwards. We continue with an Evensong and Benediction of the Most Holy Sacrament. All are welcome.  
October 21, 7:00 PM

**Mark Tiller Dramatic Presentation**  
St. Columba, St. Catharines  
Come enjoy Father Mark Tiller's special interpretation of St. Paul's first letter to the Christians in Corinth. All proceeds will go to the Primate's World Relief and Development Fund. Refreshments to follow.  
Cost: To be announced  
October 21, 7:00 PM

**Fall Fashion Show**  
St. Paul's, Fort Erie  
An opportunity to preview and purchase fall fashions before they arrive in stores. Coffee, tea and sweets available.  
Cost: \$5.00 per person  
October 24, 5:00 PM - 9:00 PM

**Canon Rick Jones**  
Grace, Waterdown  
Parish Historical Review preceded by pot luck dessert and coffee.  
October 24, 7:00 PM

**Annual Spaghetti Dinner**  
St. Matthew on-the-Plains, Burlington  
Give Mom a break! Bring her and the family to St. Matthew's Spaghetti Dinner served with salad, roll and beverage.  
Cost: \$10.00 per adult, \$4.00 per child  
October 26, 5:00 PM - 7:30 PM

**Youth Dance**  
St. David's Parish, Welland  
Dances are held every other Friday for those in

grades 5-8. Pizza and pop will be available.  
Cost: \$5.00 per person  
October 26, 7:00 PM - 10:00 PM

**Chinese Auction and Dinner**  
All Saints, Hamilton  
Admission includes dinner and dessert. \$1.00 to bid on many, many items! Liquour Licence. Call 905-527-5673 to reserve your ticket. Seating limited.  
Cost: \$10.00 per person  
October 27

**Ladies Guild Sale**  
St. Luke's, Hamilton  
The Ladies Guild is having one of its Mountain Mall Charity Sales and promise to have all sorts of great baking and other treasures for your shopping. You can see them at the Mountain Plaza Mall.  
October 27, 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM

**Dinner and Salsa Dance**  
St. Luke's, Hamilton  
A Dinner and Salsa Dance are on the menu. There will be all the usual high-jinks as we party until midnight. No bar so the kids can come, no dress code so the teenagers can feel comfortable and the music just a dull roar so you can still talk. Proceeds go to Saint Luke's Neighbourhood Assistance Program. So come out and support our shenanigans!  
Cost: \$5.00 per person  
October 27, 6:00 PM - 12:00 AM

**Concert by the Nathaniel Dett Chorale**  
St. George, Guelph  
Canada's first professional choral group dedicated to Afrocentric music of all styles, including classical, spiritual, gospel, jazz, folk and blues.  
Cost: \$30 per person, \$20 per student  
October 27, 2007 - 7:30 PM

**Lecture Series**  
St. Mark, Niagara-on-the-Lake  
Presenting Alan Jones in a late harvest lecture series.  
Cost: To be announced  
October 27-28

**Rummage Sale**  
St. Paul's, Fort Erie  
Fall Rummage sale hosted by the A.C.W ladies of St. Paul's Anglican Church - Fort Erie. Coffee and muffins available.  
October 29, 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM

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## BISHOPS' CALENDAR OCTOBER 2007

[RS] Ralph Spence [MB] Michael Bird

Day	Time	Location	Event
1	6:15 PM	Burlington Convention Centre	Bishop's Company Annual Dinner Meeting [RS] [MB]
2	5:00 PM	Cathedral Place	Meeting of Synod Council [RS] [MB]
7	9:00 AM	St. John the Evangelist, Hamilton	Parish Visit [RS]
10	5:00 PM	Christ Church, Whitfield and St. Paul's, Shelburne	Parish Visit and Pot Luck Supper [MB]
11	12:30 PM	Cathedral Place	Meeting of Candidates Committee [MB]
11	Evening	Mount Carmel Spiritual Centre	Fresh Start gathering in Niagara Falls [RS] [MB]
14	8:30 AM	St. Mark's Church, Orangeville	Parish Visit [RS]
14	10:00 AM	St. Paul's Church, Dunnville	Parish Visit [MB]
16	9:00 AM	St. John's, Ancaster	Meeting of Quint Diocesan Group [RS] [MB]
17	TBA	Church of the Nativity, Hamilton	Meeting of Mission Strategy [MB]
18	10:00 AM	Cathedral Place	Meeting of Archdeacons [RS] [MB]
19	6:30 PM	HMCS Star	Flag Presentation [RS]
21	9:30 AM	St. Luke's Church, Hamilton	Anniversary Service [RS]
21	10:30 AM	St. George's Church, Guelph	Parish Visit [MB]
21	4:00 PM	St. Luke's Church, Burlington	Farewell Event [RS] [MB]
23	8:30 PM	St. Mildred's Lightbourn School, Oakville	Visit [RS] [MB]
23	7:00 PM	Cathedral Place	Meeting with Division of Outreach [MB]
24	9:30 AM	Cathedral Place	Orientation Day [RS] [MB]
25-30	—	Huron Diocese	Meeting of the House of Bishops [RS] [MB]

» For a complete list of events around the diocese, visit [www.niagara.anglican.ca/events/](http://www.niagara.anglican.ca/events/)