



# Niagara Anglican

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NEWS • PERSPECTIVE • REFLECTION • FOR A GROWING CHURCH • FEBRUARY 2008

## Impressive Cathedral service fitly honours a fine bishop



**ALAN L. HAYES**  
THE ITINERANT CHURCHGOER

Thanking a bishop who is about to retire is a rare event in the history of a diocese. It's almost exactly as rare as welcoming a new one.

So I didn't want to miss going to the Cathedral on January 6, the feast of the Epiphany, for a service of choral evensong which merged into a presentation to Bishop Ralph Spence and a very jolly reception before his retirement in February.

Chairs had been added in the aisles to accommodate the crowd. The room was packed. A good attendance would be expected for any retiring bishop, but Ralph Spence has been extremely popular, and he will be very much missed.

### Crowd at evensong

The service was exactly right for the occasion. I don't personally know how decisions were made, but I can imagine that Ralph didn't want a special event in his own honour.



So this was, from one point of view, simply the usual monthly Cathedral service of evensong. It's just that it was more crowded than usual.

After a grand procession, the first hymn, "Christ whose glory

fills the skies," was perfect for Epiphany. Psalm 96, "O sing unto the Lord a new song," and Psalm 100, "O be joyful in the Lord," nicely encapsulated Ralph's creative, hopeful, and faithful ap-

proach to episcopal ministry.

The setting for Psalm 96 was indeed a new song; it was an upbeat Anglican chant with some stunning harmonies by David Hurd, professor of church music at General

Theological Seminary in New York. Brent Fifield and the Cathedral choir (naturally including its very faithful member Carol Spence) sang this and all the music so very beautifully, as always.

### Poignant canticle

The Nunc Dimittis, like the Magnificat, was sung in a setting by Herbert Sumsion, the late organist at Gloucester Cathedral. Joining in the song that Simeon sang when he finally received what God had promised him, and prepared to enter into rest, was particularly poignant on this occasion.

The preacher, the bishop of Toronto, had the impossible task of saying something about the Scripture readings, something about the feast of the Epiphany, and something about Ralph. His sermon led to the conclusion that the gifts presented by the magi, whom we particularly remember on Epiphany, can be interpreted as symbols of Ralph's own ministry: gold for his generosity of spirit; myrrh for his suffering on behalf of his diocese; frankincense for his life of worship and praise. That synopsis rang true.

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## Repentance and Ecojustice

**STUART PIKE**  
RECTOR - ST. ANDREW'S GRIMSBY

Another Lent is rolling around: another opportunity to stop, take stock of our lives and to ask some ques-



Prayer is not us telling God what he already knows or asking him to do our will. It is entering into spiritual communion with him.

tions about how we might change them. Lent is a time for penitence and repentance. It is a time to "worth-

ily lament" for our sins as we pray in the collect for Ash Wednesday.

The word, "sin" has largely fallen out of favour these days, not only in our secular society, but even among many Church folk. Perhaps it is our focus on welcoming and inclusivity which makes it seem uncouth to talk about sin. Isn't sin something which is very personal and needs to be dealt with between an individual and God? Can't we just let people think about their own sin during the millisecond of silence between the invitation to confession and the general confession itself? Surely that will take care of it! We try to convince ourselves

that Jesus wouldn't talk about sin. Didn't he just open his arms wide and welcome everyone into the new kingdom?

### Our greatest sin

Well, Jesus did talk about sin. He spoke about it a lot, but his understanding of sin had quite a different kind of focus than we often hear about now. Today, it seems there is always such a strong association between sin and sex. When Jesus talked about sin it was rarely about sex, but it was always about relationships.

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## Setting a new agenda



**MICHAEL PATTERSON**  
DIRECTOR OF EVANGELISM

This will be my final article as the Director of Evangelism for the Diocese of Niagara. Beginning this month, I take on the new and somewhat daunting responsibilities as the Executive Officer of our diocese. Marion Vincett, our outgoing Archdeacon, has fever-

ishly and graciously done all that she can to mentor and prepare me for all that lies ahead. I look forward to the new challenges yet I deeply regret leaving a field of work that has really only just begun.

With any shift in organizational leadership, there is with it an accompanied array of different feelings and expectations. Organizational change produces an undercurrent of excitement and hope, anxiety and concern and a whole lot of wondering about what the future may hold.

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## YOUNG AND PROPHETIC



## I am camp

### Summer opportunities for youth in Niagara

I am Camp.

I am sunlight; a sheen of the water, a mist on the mountains and Stars. I am a doorway out of the commonplace into a new adventuring experience. I am a place where youth learns the joys of play without a string, of fellowship without regrets, of creative effort that wearies not, of a good time that leaves no headaches—or heartache—behind.

I am a new purpose for life that will make the years different.

I am Noise—and silence with a thrill in it.

I am Laughter—and quiet resolution that seeks the comfort of the hills.

I am Energy—and the touch of loving service.

I am Youth—and the slowly emerging habits that make matured experience worthy.

I am Today and also the Tomorrow that is being shaped.

I am a Giver of Gifts—that pass not away, that time will not chill, that poverty will not quench, that riches will not deceive.

I am Habits, Ideal Ways of Living, Confirmed Attitudes in the Soul of Youth.

Because I am all these, and more—I invite youth into fellowship with me.

I am Camp.

Percy R. Hayward

These words have been spoken at the final camp staff Eucharist as a reminder of the reasons that year after year, our staff return to Canterbury Hills Camp. It is a place that brings growth and change to an individual as they touch the lives of others in the context of a caring and supportive community. It inspires and challenges, gives purpose and entertains. This experience is one that Canterbury Hills Camp extends to youth across the Diocese. Whether as a counsellor or a leader in training, we invite young people to join us this summer, shaping themselves and the campers they will meet through their leadership and commitment.

Summer 2008 staff information is now available for youth age 15 and older. Please visit [www.canterburyhills.ca](http://www.canterburyhills.ca) to download the 2008 Staff Application form or call the Canterbury Hills office at (905) 648-2712 for more information.

## Lent: Countdown to Easter



**CHRISTYN PERKONS**  
PROGRAM CONSULTANT, DIOCESAN RESOURCE CENTRE

Many families spend time during the month preceding Christmas talking about what Advent means and doing family activities such as lighting Advent wreaths, creating wreaths, creating crafts, baking and so on as they prepare for the birth of Christ. We're not nearly as committed to spending family time during Lent preparing for Easter. Lent can seem intimidating to families.

Historically it was a time of fasting, self-denial, and scrupulous examination of how one was living complete with a vast array of rules and regulations. Lent carried with it an aura of doom and gloom. Today, the focus is more about reflecting on our relationship with God and on how our lives reflect that relationship. So what can a family do to connect more with Lent?

Check out your local bookstore or library! There are many good books available that offer activities and reflections for families to use in the season of Lent; some of them daily and others are geared to whatever time you have. The activities include crafts, baking, creating prayers, growing things, and more. You might find yourself making

pretzels, creating cinnamon stick crosses, growing sweet potato plants, making sun prints, designing butterfly gardens or enjoying homemade hot cross buns. The activity books generally provide a reflection piece relevant to Jesus' ministry and the crucifixion story—a perfect way to share your own faith journey with your children and to be a part of theirs. Two favourites are Debbie Trafton O'Neal's *Family Countdown to Easter and Before and After Easter: Activities from Lent to Pentecost*. As well, *Easter Make & Do* by Gillian Chapman is full of Bible craft ideas for children ages 6-12 accompanied by beautiful photographs.

You will also find many children's books that retell the Easter story;

try Christopher Doyle's beautifully illustrated account of the Easter story drawn from Matthew, Luke, John and Acts covering Jesus' entry into Jerusalem through Pentecost. *The Story of Easter* is suitable for 8-12 year olds. Younger children might enjoy Lauren Thompson's *Love One Another: The Last Days of Jesus*; a simple retelling of the story with gorgeous artwork that will not frighten younger children. If you and your family enjoyed Jan Pienkowski's *Christmas*, you will find *Easter*, the King James version with silhouette illustrations, equally compelling. Another one that will appeal to younger children is *Duncan Carries a King* telling the Easter story from the perspective of a donkey, who feeling use-

less, gets one of the most important jobs—carrying Jesus, the King to Jerusalem.

For those of you who enjoy checking out online resources, let me recommend a few specific ones:

- [www.cpryion.org/prayer/child/lent/index.html](http://www.cpryion.org/prayer/child/lent/index.html) - offering prayer starters, based on weekly Sunday Scripture readings during Lent, intended to help you guide a child—or yourself—in some heart prayer.
- [www.er-d.org/documents/Lent06KidsActivities.pdf](http://www.er-d.org/documents/Lent06KidsActivities.pdf) has suggested activities for each week of Lent and each day of Holy Week, each based on a Scripture passage.

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# A word (or two) from the Secretary of Synod



**RICK JONES**  
RECTOR - ST. PAUL'S, WESTDALE

Rectories, Rectory Funds and Housing Allowances! As Secretary of Synod I am often asked questions about Rectories, Rectory Funds and Housing Allowances. In November of last year Synod Council affirmed some policies about these issues and created a new policy having to do with Rectory Funds and the amount parishes can withdraw. My hope is that this short article will help you understand these policies and the changes.

Did you know that there are 33 residential properties insured under the Diocesan insurance policy and only 16 are being used as rectories? This tells us a couple of things, firstly, that most clergy of the diocese are receiving "housing allowances" and may be buying their own homes with that money. Secondly, that many parishes still own former rectory property that they are renting out or using for some other purpose. It is worth noting that Niagara is ahead of other dioceses in allowing clergy to purchase their

own homes and that a diocese like Toronto still has 50% of their parishes with rectories.

The policy of our diocese has affirmed the trend by clergy to purchase their own homes. This has allowed clergy to build equity through home ownership and to gain from the appreciating value of the property. If your clergy express a desire to buy their own home the following are issues that you need to consider:

- It is the responsibility of the Wardens, in conjunction with the Bishop and the Diocesan Treasurer, to assist clergy in obtaining suitable housing.
- The housing allowance paid to clergy reflects the current fair market rental value for a single family house of approximately 1,700 sq. ft., consisting of three bedrooms, kitchen, dining room, living room, office area, at least one bathroom and full basement, within 15 kilometres of the church. (Note: the clergy are not expected to purchase a home of this description; this is the diocesan standard for housing allowances.) You may contact the Synod Office for a guide to these fair market rental values in different areas of the dioceses
- If the parish wishes to sell a rectory they must follow a process that involves the Synod and Bishop of the diocese. This is because all church lands are controlled by the

Anglican Church of Canada Act, 1979. Section 2 states that land shall not be sold, leased, mortgaged or otherwise encumbered except with the consent of the Synod of the Diocese. Our Canons are based on this Act and clearly state that you will need a Special Vestry Meeting in the parish, a motion from Synod Council and the Bishop's permission to list a property for sale. You will need another Motion from Synod Council, and the Bishop's permission to accept an offer to purchase. This can be expedited very quickly, usually within 48 hours, when an offer is received.

■ Assuming the rectory is now sold, the money is transferred to, and administered by the Anglican Church Ministries Foundation, Niagara. These funds will be treated as an endowed capital fund. In order to maintain the value of these funds and keep them growing at least to the rate of inflation, parishes may only withdraw 5% of the value of the total rectory fund each year. Any growth in the fund greater than 5% will be placed in a restricted fund and be used first to increase the capital of the fund at the annual inflationary rate, and second to be available to meet the 5% draw down by the parish when the growth rate in a particular year is less than 5%. If a parish chooses not to draw down 5% in a particular year, the difference

will accumulate and remain available to be drawn down in the future. This is a new policy that came into effect January 1st of this year. Treasurers take note!

■ Parishes may still borrow from their rectory fund for capital improvements to the church with the recommendation of the Financial Advisory Committee and subsequent approval by Synod Council. A repayment plan also needs to be in place prior to that approval. Mortgages for clergy can be offered from these funds as well, but details need to be worked out in consultation with the Wardens, Bishop, and Diocesan Treasurer.

■ Parishes are encouraged to grow and maintain the value of their rectory funds equivalent to the cost of a three bedroom home in their community. You may find you need to replace the rectory in the future.

■ If your parish owns a rectory, the parish is responsible for keeping up the property and at the time of a change of clergy it is the responsibility of the Regional Archdeacon to physically inspect the rectory and make a report to the Synod and the Parish of the condition and suitability of the rectory.

This then is most of what you need to know about the current rectory policies of the diocese. What you should also know is that the sale of diocesan land for any rea-

son is becoming a serious question for the Synod. There was a recent moratorium on the sale of rectory property, which has now been lifted, but one cannot assume that Synod Council members will automatically approve the sale of rectory or other property.

One issue facing the Synod is the challenge of rapidly appreciating housing markets, and the ability of parish Rectory Funds to keep pace with housing allowance expectations. The Diocese of New Westminster, which includes the City of Vancouver, is a place that is experiencing challenges in this area. The City of Toronto is another example.

There is also the worry that future clergy may not be able to buy affordable homes in such markets and that parishes might find it difficult to replace rectories if needed. Areas such as Oakville and Burlington are already considered part of the GTA. There is also the issue of clergy being able to resell their homes in slower market areas including some rural communities in the diocese. While this is the responsibility of the clergy, the ability of clergy to move and respond to new appointments affects the mission of the diocese. These are issues that continue to be discussed and will undoubtedly produce future changes to rectory policies in the diocese.

# Wheeling through a foreign land



**MARNI NANCEKIVELL**  
DIRECTOR OF TRANSITIONAL MINISTRY

The Book of Exodus reminds us: "I have been an alien, residing in a foreign land". Well, in the past months, I have done my own time in residence in a place where I do not usually belong. I continue to visit the country of the differently abled.

Like many people, I have been quite fortunate with my health. Oh, there was a foot injury a few years back and a broken collar bone too. But for the most part, I have been among the hearty.

However, I have watched and supported as my parents have aged. Substantial accommodation had to be made for my father, who was an invalid for his last five years of life. My Mother, the more long-lived of my parents, has recently had to adapt to life with a walker, and her mobility is increasingly limited with age. But for both of my parents, change in their physical ability came gradually, with age. As readers of the Niagara Anglican might already know, I had an accident involving me, an airport escalator and a load of luggage, and went from being quite

strong, to being surrounded by a world of limitations.

## Being differently-abled

I recall lying on the floor of Pearson Airport, asking for my cell phone (in my purse) and calling my husband and my mother to inform them of the accident. The airport nurse observed: "Ah, I can see that you're used to being in charge". (Who, me?) Any sense that I was "in charge" vanished at that moment. The next weeks were to be surrounded by the haze of pain pills, physio therapy and some of the most embarrassing moments that I have ever endured.

Kind person that I am, I will save you the recollection of how mortifying it is to attempt to use the toilet while having a brace on one's leg that prevents it from bending. I'll not tell you how exciting it is to go up and down stairs with both crutches and a puppy underfoot. Nor will I recount the moment when the Bishop called as I was emerging from the shower, during which the woman who helped me bathe was patting me dry and applying body cream. Such things are, you will understand too personal to share.

What I will share with you are some of the moments of being differently-abled that have infuriated me. Not for myself, for I am simply visiting in this land for a while. But my anger burns for those who live with physical limitations on a daily basis, and who endure such things.

There was, for example the

well-intentioned Mother, who tried to distract her 4 year-old's attention from me being pushed in a wheel chair while grocery shopping. She tried to get him not to stare at me (rather difficult, as we were at the same eye level). The loud and conflict ridden conversation that she had with him was offensive to my soul, to the child's and also, quite likely, to the Mum's soul. How different that moment would have been if the parent had used that as a teachable moment, to approach me and ask if I were open to a conversation about why I was in a wheel chair! But I suspect that the Mum was doing as she had been taught, teaching her child not to intrude on the "misfortunes" of others. And so it is that the sins of the forerunners really are visited onto the third and fourth generations.

## Thoughtlessness

The good news is that several stores now go out of their way to accommodate people with physical challenges. While in the grip of Cabin Fever around Week 3 of my recovery, I prevailed upon my husband to take me grocery shopping at Fortinos, at Appleby and New Street that has motorised carts. We went in the evening, after supper, and enjoyed quieter aisles than the hurly burly of day time shopping. However at the store at which I was shopping, only one of two motorized carts was in working order. The second time I went there, choosing to shop at this Fortinos over some of my more

regular stores, the functioning cart was already in use, and my husband pushed me in the wheelchair while I attempted to push the grocery cart. We made a rather ungainly train, my husband, the cart and I.

The evening that we did use the cart, however, was an exercise in frustration. As I buzzed along in the cart, there were one or two individuals that treated me as if I did not exist. They would step in front of me while I was driving, causing a jarringly quick stop. They would reach over me or around me, their elbows literally in my face without even an "excuse me". I learned at that time what it was to be in the world of the differently abled.

In addition to the physical discomfort and the architectural barriers that are part of functioning in the "normal" world, there is a kind of thoughtlessness that one encounters. It is not unrelated; I think of the "super consideration" of the woman who didn't want her child to stare at me. Except this thoughtlessness on behalf of some is the polar opposite. There is an insistence in the world of the young, strong and beautiful, that such physical limitations could never befall them, and so in a rather superstitious fashion, some people literally pretend not to see or interact with those who are different than they are. I experienced this so many times that I am quite convinced that this dynamic isn't simply about mindless self-absorption. I experienced some folks who seem actually angry that people with special needs exist.

(Like the person fuming behind me in line—the line at the Handicapped Checkout, by the way—who fumed aloud about how much room my wheelchair and our separate grocery buggy were taking.)

## Taking stock of ourselves as a church

Fortunately, such folk are not in the majority. Many strangers were kind, especially when I was learning to juggle wallet, purse and cane at the checkout. Personal friends and colleagues were truly awesome, pitching in with rides, doing Christmas shopping, rearranging things in my home to make it more accessible, etc.

As a guest in the world of the differently-abled, I have learned much about myself, and about others. However as a priest, I have been reminded of Jesus' commitment to those who for one reason or another "live on the edges" of life. For the past six weeks, I have done a lot of reflecting on what it is to be "normal" and what it is to live on the "margins". How are we doing as individuals at being a presence for those who need special accommodation? And how are we doing as a church to mirror Jesus' special love for those who in one way or another "live on the edge"?

Canon Marni Nancekivell, Director of Transitional Ministry has now returned to work on a part-time basis and can be reached at marni.nancekivell@niagara.anglican.ca or at 905-527-1316 (ext. 390).

# Getting to know you

**The Reverend Canon Stephen A. Witcher** Chair of the Cemetery Advisory Committee, and Rector of St. James' Church, Fergus

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

Benjamin Franklin wrote, "...in this world, nothing is certain but death and taxes." Ultimately, cemeteries are inescapable, but few people want to have much to do with them. The Reverend Canon Stephen Witcher, Rector of St. James' Church, Fergus, has a particular interest and expertise in legislation concerning cemeteries in Ontario.

Steve chuckles: "When I was a kid in Montreal, I often went to Mount Royal cemetery and was fascinated. When I met Carol, his wife, she was working for the Memorial Gardens Association, which, at the time, had thirty-two cemeteries across Canada. When we were courting, we'd drive out and look at cemeteries, the quiet village type, and get a sense of the community. Carol became Trust Accountant and looked after cemetery trust funds all across Canada for many years.

"When I was appointed (Rector of) St. John's Church, Jordan, I discovered an abundance of land, and felt it was a great opportunity to develop the cemetery there. We increased the trust funds to over \$100,000.00, improved the grounds, and added a columbarium (a wall containing niches for the deposit of ashes after cremation).

"I guess because Marion Vincett had seen what was happening (there), she asked me to be chair of the Diocesan Cemetery Advisory Committee. That was five years ago, just when notification came out that there were to be changes in the legislation" for establishing, licensing, maintaining and disestablishing cemeteries, and the care of trust funds (minimum \$100,000.00) accumulated to ensure proper care of such properties. "It was presented by the Conservatives, continued by the Liberal government, but it's been really slow in moving because of changes brought about by the legislation.

## Rules and regulations

"Under current legislation, a cemetery cannot own a funeral home or removal service and vice versa. However, if the legislation is enacted as presented, funeral homes and cemeteries (will be) right on site. Funeral homes will have their own crematories, and so on."

"The Diocese of Niagara is a member of the Ontario Association of Cemeteries and Funeral Professionals, because it is the accurate source of updates on new legislation." Steve and Bob McKinnell, Diocesan Treasurer, attend the Association's annual seminar. "We've been doing it for five years now, and it is really affecting the industry."

Steve emphasises, "Everyone in the business must be licensed, funeral homes, headstone makers, removal services, including church cemetery trustees."

Anglican history of cemetery care reveals lack of record keeping, mismanagement of trust funds, poor maintenance, and unwillingness to



keep grave prices concurrent with what's happening in municipal and privately-run, for-profit cemeteries. (This) "has created a legacy resulting in a general attitude by most parishes to view their cemetery as an encumbrance or liability. Unfortunately, generations too often inherit problems with cemeteries."

## The job description

Steve outlines his particular responsibilities as the self-dubbed "Niagara Cemetery Guy": "My job is to assist parishes with interpretation of and adherence to regulations pertaining to the Cemeteries Act of 1992."

He continues, "When I get an inquiry from a church cemetery, I meet with the trustees, wardens and rector." For example, an annual report is to be submitted, whether or not there have been any burials. "One (parish) hadn't done an annual report in seven years, hadn't had a trustee for a while, so the new Rector was a little overwhelmed. I went down there for a day, filled out forms, sent them off and made the (Provincial) Registrar happy!"

"It's a common thing: Very often a faithful parishioner will act for years as trustee of the cemetery (keeping records at home). When they die, the children go through their parents' things, and this sort of conversation ensues: 'What's this?' 'I don't know; throw it away.'" Steve emphasises that cemetery records should never leave the church office.

"Another cemetery had encroached beyond its limits, so we requested annexation beyond those limits. If a church with a columbarium closes, we have to figure out (how) to move that. If the church is taken over by another worshipping community, there's a question of maintenance. Another established a niche cemetery, but it was never licensed, and now has to establish trust funds to get a licence." Even if a corner of church property is used for scattering ashes, licensing and establishment of trust funds are mandatory.

The cemetery at St. John's, Jordan, received some old coffins found on a local housing construction site. A Roman Catholic Church

once stood where these remains were found, so St. John's cemetery now has a Roman Catholic section. "We have a mindset that only Anglicans can be buried in an Anglican cemetery, but rights of inheritance in Ontario means that someone holding several plots there may die, and leave plots to (a non-Anglican), who then holds the rights to those plots. There are so many rules and regulations!"

## Money matters

Always straightforward, Steve explains, "It is a money-making endeavour, and we need money! The average funeral costs \$7000.00, lasts a few minutes, and the Church feels guilty for charging fair and equitable prices for its graves. If a municipality charges \$1000.00 to \$1200.00, it makes no sense for us to charge \$200.00. One parish has a well-managed trust fund, and was able to contribute to the maintenance of the church, so they could afford to do other things. I underscore anything to enhance the use of property owned by parishes.

"...most clergy are disinterested, but I see proper management as an excellent source of continued revenue for parishes. If they're running out of land, (or have little available land), there's always room for a columbarium; it holds many more niches than graves (would occupy in the same amount of space). Cremation happens in about 60% of deaths in Ontario now; it's becoming the disposition of choice."

"The Roman Catholic Church has done wonderful things in caring for the dead," Steve comments. "The Toronto Catholic Diocese is excellent, so is Toronto Hebrew Cemeteries. If they are not buried in parish grounds, Anglicans get lumped in with the general population, and use municipal cemeteries."

Steve says that in recent years there have been fewer religious cemeteries around funerals, and "some thought they might disappear, but now the Baby Boomers want it all in life and in death. More memorials are happening in places meaningful for the departed."

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## CONT. FROM PAGE 1 » Setting a new agenda

Many have already begun asking what the Bishop's new vision of the diocese will be, what will be the priority, and what kind of strategic plan do we anticipate? It is difficult to outline, at this juncture, what the course our new Bishop and leadership team will set for the diocese. However, there are conditions and challenges that exist that will certainly inform and influence the agenda of the diocese as we move forward in this new era.

## Complacent, irrelevant and aimless

At a time when fewer Canadians are filling the pews of our mainline denominations, we continue to ask what it is to be done. How does a centuries old institution orientated around the 'Word' and practices that no longer speak to a media savvy, Internet exploring generation begin to get their message across? Many wonder what have we done wrong; others want people back but do not want to change and yet others are just concerned about surviving. Can we as a Church welcome and feed the spiritually hungry of this changing society without sacrificing what is truly sacred to us as Anglicans? I think we can but it will not be without challenge, risk, failure, change and a lot of prayer.

I have recently re-read a book that was pivotal and very contentious from the 1960's. It was Pierre Berton's *The Comfortable Pew* (Lippincott 1965) which the Anglican Church of Canada had commissioned to give an outsiders view of the Church. What followed was a scathing denunciation of an institution that had lost its passion for the very beliefs it espoused. The Church, according to Berton, had become complacent, irrelevant and aimless having lost its direction and identity as the conscience and voice of reason and faith for society. Berton challenged the Church to liberalize itself and engage with the world. It needed to remember what it was to be about and who it was about. The Church was and is the Body of Christ who came to challenge the status quo, bring good news to the captives, feed the hungry, clothe the naked, heal the sick, comfort the lonely, welcome the stranger, love your neighbour and love your God. The Church, Berton stated, needed to reclaim its identity and get back to mission and action based on a lively and informed understanding of scripture.

## Yearning for meaning and purpose

In the forty years following the ferment of *The Comfortable Pew* we continue to wrestle with a fuzzy self definition of who we are and what we need to be about. This may be one of our greatest challenges moving forward. As parishes and as a diocese we will never grow, thrive or even survive if we do not know what our mission and purpose is. As a parish on a voyage, what is our destination? In secular terms, what is our brand and what are we offering that no one else in the area can offer? What feeds the spirit of the faith community and what identity do we enjoy in the neighbourhood. This can be more difficult than it sounds; a lengthy period of self examination, experimentation and a committed effort are required to discover what the destination may be.

It is becoming increasingly clear that people who are coming to our

churches are yearning for meaning and purpose in their lives. Many are young, bright, successful and very busy. They want their lives to have value on a higher level than what can be experienced anywhere else in society. If they do not feel they are being spiritually fed or are experiencing God in our communities they will not stay. A challenge for us as a diocese will be to continue to work at supporting communities where the teaching and preaching is relevant, timely, and inspiring. We must continue to work at making connections for people between faith, family, work and play. The message of scripture has to make a clear connection between the faith of an individual and the world in which they inhabit. If people are to address their yearning and find meaning in their lives, the standards of our preaching and teaching must be excellent.

## Support for our parishes

Our parishes must continue to work at being communities of radical hospitality. As I have said on numerous occasions over these years, hospitality is more than just being friendly. Radical hospitality is consistent with the priority of mission and knowing who you are as a parish. It is about welcoming the stranger unconditionally no matter who they are or how uncomfortable they may make you feel. It is also about going out into your neighbourhoods and inviting the 'stranger' to break bread with you, discovering what their needs are and offering those things that they seek. We often, by virtue of our historic culture, send a message that says, 'you can join us as long as you believe what we believe and act as we do.' It is not our intent to exclude but unless we intentionally and prayerfully work at removing the barriers of exclusion, we will continue to diminish in time.

One of my greatest hopes is that there will be a greater awareness amongst the parishes of the vast array of resources and support that exist at the Diocesan Resource Centre and beyond. All too often, it is my experience that parishes tend to 're-invent the wheel' when it comes to education, youth initiatives, worship development, etc. I see a deepening relationship between parishes and the diocese around mutual accountability and support. The Diocesan Resource Centre exists to support the work of the parishes - to provide resources, encouragement, prayer, and expertise if necessary; to provide the people in ministry at the front lines everything they need to get the job done. At the same time, parishes must recognize that they do not exist in isolation and are accountable to the other parishes in their areas and to the diocese and its Bishop. We, together, share in our ministries and are called to each share our individual gifts that make up the common whole that we call the Body of Christ, the Church.

These are exciting times for the Diocese of Niagara. I ask your prayers for our diocese, our new Bishop and for all of us who will be engaging in leadership in the coming months and years. We must continue to have faith that through the Holy Spirit we will be the thriving, vital and relevant Church of Christ that God has called us to be.

# Lenten curriculum



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

"Our enormously productive economy demands that we make consumption a way of life, that we convert the buying and use of goods into rituals, that we seek our spiritual satisfaction, our ego satisfaction, in consumption. We need things consumed, burned up, replaced, and discarded at an ever-increasing rate" (Economist Victor Lebow, 1955).

"Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil" (Matthew 4.1).

There is a curriculum for Lent—the curriculum of the wilderness. There are things to pick up and things to lay down in the course of the curriculum, as we prepare to enter into the climactic events of Holy Week and Easter. The temptations that the Adversary lays before Jesus, and Jesus' response to those temptations, is the fulcrum across which the transformative power of this season attempts to lift us into readiness for what is ahead.

### Mutual custodianship

Jesus according to Matthew, has been fasting for forty days and nights, and is famished when the Adversary approaches. "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread." "They are only stones, after all, and you are hungry."

We assume, for the purposes of the narrative, that Jesus can do what the Adversary recommends. But he chooses not to. We do not live by bread alone, he says, but by every utterance of the Holy One. And the Holy One has called these stones into being—"Let there be stones", and has called creation 'good'. Moreover, the same One who called the stones into being has placed a limit on human consumption, has called into question our assumption that the creation exists for whatever purposes we decide will suit us. There is a tree in the midst of the garden that we are to tend but whose fruit we may not consume. We are not to see creation simply in terms of its instrumental usefulness, but as something good *in itself*, of and for its creator, and entrusted to our care.

As, by the way, we are also entrusted to *its* care. In Mark's very brief account of the fasting and temptations, the wild beasts are Jesus' companions during his long fast. He enters the wilderness not as a hunter or even a gatherer. Neither the animals nor the vegetation that nourishes them are at any risk from this man, and so they become not rivals but companions. There, in the wilderness, the new creation blossoms around Jesus. There he deliberately inhabits the Kingdom of God, anticipated, for example, by Isaiah 11.6-9, in which the sense of threat and hostility among creatures dissolves into the peaceable kingdom.

This mutual custodianship, in which the internal logic of creation is conviviality rather than exploitation, is the first of three elements of human purpose restored in the wilderness.

### Leveraging God

In the second temptation, we learn that if the creation is not at our infinite disposal, neither is the Holy One. In *Living on the Border of the Holy*, William Countryman warns against any attempt to leverage our encounters with the Holy for our own purposes. But leveraging the Holy is exactly the strategy the Adversary commends to Jesus. Leap from the temple and establish your credentials. If you are the Son of God, that is. Prove it, prove that you are protected by the one whose holiness is the source of your own.

How often and to what a tragic outcome we have tried to leverage the Holy One? We do it for power, for control, even 'for your own good'. And when we do, when the holiness of God is co-opted for purposes we have deemed desirable—you can supply your own list, which might include such self-serving purposes as, for example, the divine right of kings and the Grand Inquisitor—the power of our witness immediately fades. And so the second element that Jesus restores in the wilderness is the untamed and undomesticated holiness of God. God does not exist to be useful in our project, however convincing the value of that project might be to us. God exists with sovereign purpose.

### Exercising power

Finally, the Adversary pulls out the stops, and invites Jesus to take up power over the world. Again, we are asked, within the logic of the narrative, to believe that

such power is in the gift of the Adversary, and to wonder what that might mean. Is it possible that "power over" is in every case the gift of the Adversary and an obstruction or distortion of God's way? Is compulsion simply contrary to the way of God? And if it is, what are we to make of the church's use of such power in the past, of our shadowy desire to exercise that power today, and of all whose wealth or force of arms causes others to submit—not to what is right, but to what they cannot resist? What might this say, for example, to those who define the state as having a monopoly on lethal force?

But God's power, as we will learn during a week in Jerusalem, is not a matter of force or compulsion. It is, in the undoing of Eve and Adam's tragic confusion in the garden, the tending of a tree, not for one's own sake, but for another. In the end, death is not overcome by a more compelling lethal threat, but by one who kneels and washes feet, and who brings us life by absorbing death's power in the body in which nothing but love has every been decisive.

### Staggering in the right direction

In Lent, we follow Jesus as true humanity is restored in him, and as he offers it to us. The question in Lent is whether we will submit to the same curriculum by which humanity is restored—redeemed—in Jesus. Will we learn our place in the midst of earth as part of its mutual custodianship, as participants in its conviviality rather than as merchants of its usefulness to us? Will we approach the Holy One as sovereign, and let go all the schemes we have in mind to make that One useful in our own particular projects? Will we allow our bodies to take up the costly and compassionate servanthood by which love overcomes death?

These are not easy things to do. So much of the world is organized as if they did not matter, and so much of our imagination has been pre-empted by the witness of the Adversary. We may not make the journey all at once; a few staggers in the right general direction might be all we can muster. But the journey invites us to—at least—set out, to grow towards the purpose and identity with which we have been endowed, and in the cross of Jesus find our hope, that God is our companion on this hard and hungry journey.

# Doing our best



**LINDA MOORE**  
CENTRE FOR LEADERSHIP AND HUMAN VALUES

Every so often each of us makes a determined commitment to challenge ourselves to do better; to be better. We declare we are going to make changes in our lives. These changes can include everything from weight loss, being a more aware parent, getting more exercise, volunteering in a foreign land or any other significant life altering choice. The list of possibilities is endless. Armed with our determination we start a new day, a new year with the will and desire to succeed. For some of us our goal comes to fruition. For many of us our good intentions erode with time and we see ourselves as failing to live up to our inspired ideals.

The desire to be a better person or to achieve a life goal is embedded in who we are as human beings. The quick self judgment of our failure to do so is a learned response.

### 'Trying' to be better

As children, consciously and unconsciously, our parents and others of influence embedded in us a series of values and beliefs and expectations about our being and about our behaviour. Often their voices linger in our minds and jump up to whisper in our ear that we should do better.

When we read or hear about the awe-inspiring actions and accomplishments of others this self deprecation simply becomes more intense. We all fantasize about our heroines and heroes. We try to imagine ourselves being able to do what they have done and fail. We demean ourselves even further. Usually this cycle continues off and on throughout our lives. Still we continue to "try" and be better.

What do you think would happen if we simply stopped "trying" and instead spent our life "doing our best" in each moment of each day, joyfully and effortlessly?

I may want to have the passion of Martin Luther King, the dedication of Mother Teresa, the tenacity of Mandela and the reach of Oprah Winfrey. The reality is I am none of these people. I am uniquely me.

You are uniquely you. We have been given this gift of uniqueness. Becoming aware of our individual gifts and our humanness simultaneously is the "eureka" moment.

### Being human

I have recently met a marvellous human being who has been inspiring several women in her world with her humanness and her gifts. Her name is Crystal. She is a single mom of a teenage son and holds down a full time job. She has had a life much tougher than some of us will ever know. She is funny, articulate, dramatic and deeply passionate. We attend a 7:30 AM Saturday Weight Watchers meeting together. Each week she expresses the ups and downs of her life and tells a story that each of us can relate to simply about what being alive is all about. Recently she enrolled part time in university. This has been a life-long dream that is now beginning to come true. She shares her fears over an up-coming exam and then the joy of getting an "A". She is slowly losing the excess pounds she has carried and is becoming more aware every day. She is living her life and sharing it with us. What she brings to us is inspirational in its joyful passion to be better and to do more, balanced with the awareness that we are all simply human.

In our humanness we goof up all the time. We get it right some days and not others. We control our temper until we don't. We stick to our diet until we don't. We are tolerant until we aren't. It is called being human.

### Changing our world

Each of us has our own unique potential, our own unique contribution to make. What we have to give to the world isn't about size or scope. It is about our ability to effortlessly share our talents with others and do the best we can each day. Spontaneously giving someone a needed hug or making a delicious meal for friends is as significant as leading a nation to freedom. It is the intention of love and giving to ourselves and others.

Some days we are under the weather and our best that day will not be the same as the day when we are alert and focused. Doing our best and what is our "best" shifts with all the contexts we face as we live out our lives. In the end it is not about "trying" it is about "doing" and doing our best is more than enough to change our world.

## CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2 » Lent: Countdown to Easter

■ [www.domestic-church.com/CONTENT.DCC/19980301/FRIDGE/LENTREAD.HTM](http://www.domestic-church.com/CONTENT.DCC/19980301/FRIDGE/LENTREAD.HTM) - outlines a reading series which follows, in roughly chronological order, the history of God's people, from Genesis through to the New Testament. Since Christ's coming, ministry, death and resurrection were all foretold in prophecy, the readings are paired, first the Old Testament prophecy, then the New Testament fulfillment.

And here are a few that offer a variety of activities and other websites through which you can wander:

■ [www.presbyterian.ca/webfm\\_send/522](http://www.presbyterian.ca/webfm_send/522) offers Lent activities for the family.

■ [www.domestic-church.com/CONTENT.DCC/pages.dir/fridge.htm#LENT](http://www.domestic-church.com/CONTENT.DCC/pages.dir/fridge.htm#LENT) is a Roman Catholic-based website offering a plethora of connections to family activities.

■ [www.anglicanonline.org/special/leat.html](http://www.anglicanonline.org/special/leat.html) is a virtual cornucopia of websites for adults and families with a broad variety of Lent and Holy Week activities, reflections and meditations.

Do spend time with your children during Lent talking about your God story, creating memories and new God-experiences with your family, and deepening your connection to all that is sacred in

your life. Take part in all the Lent and Holy Week activities going on in your parish or in neighbouring parishes: Mardi Gras carnival parties and pancake dinners on Shrove Tuesday, Ash Wednesday services, Lent studies, and worship services. Talk about the events before you go, and share with each other what your experience was like. If you don't know the significance of particular events, customs

or practices, talk to your parish priest or do some research on your computer. Call Christyn Perkons at 905-527-1316 (ext. 460) if your family would like to borrow resources from the Diocesan Resource Library.

Above all, journey as a family this Lenten season and together swathe yourselves in the love of God as you move towards the cross and the Risen Christ.

# A Christmas that was anything but merry

**JERRY SALLOUM**  
ST. ALBAN THE MARTYR, GLEN WILLIAMS

Do you recall what happened on that fateful day in December 2004? I am sure we all do. During the time most of us here in Canada were beginning or finishing our Christmas dinner, an unimaginable catastrophe was about to strike the opposite side of the world. Far below the Indian Ocean, a geologic drama was unfolding. The crustal plate attached to Australia had been slowly drifting northward, encroaching on another plate attached to Asia. But, as frequently happens, the jagged line of contact separating these monstrous sections of the earth's crust had become locked. Over time, enormous strain developed as these locked surfaces resisted the relentless plate drift northward. On Sunday morning, December 26, the strain on this crust came to exceed the rock's capacity to bear that strain and the rock experienced a sudden massive and catastrophic failure. The bed of the Indian Ocean snapped violently. As a result of the seabed's vertical displacement, within the waters of the Indian Ocean, off the northwest tip of Sumatra, a seismic wave (or tsunami) was born.

This geologic snap was one of the fifth largest in all recorded geologic history. Islands adjacent to the fracture jerked into new positions

as seismic instruments recorded a violently quaking earth. Millions of cubic meters of water shifted to accommodate a newly shaped oceanic bowl. Our planet's North and South poles shifted whole centimeters. The shape of our planet was altered. Its speed of rotation increased, resulting in the microsecond reduction of day lengths.

What was happening? Why this sudden monstrous crustal perturbation? The answer is that nature was merely behaving itself, behaving in accordance with laws to which it is continually subjected. The problem was that while there was no one at the epicenter of the quake, the ocean was able to transfer the effects of the quake to places filled with people. Transferring its energy to the water, the quake generated a massive surface wave that radiated outward in all directions with a speed proportional to the depth of the ocean. As it approached land, wave speed dropped and wave height grew. People watched in disbelief as a wall of water crashed into coastal lowlands. From Sumatra to Sri Lanka, destruction descended with unbelievable fury upon low-lying coastal communities. When the ocean retreated, devastation and chaos were everywhere. Coastal landscapes resembled Hiroshima after the 1945 blast. Bewilderment, deep grief and shock

were seen on the faces of all those fortunate enough to survive. By the 7th day, estimates on the number of dead had surpassed a staggering 150 000. Many people had simply disappeared into the depths of an angry ocean. Injuries were too numerous to count. In an environment devoid of adequate food, clean water, medicine and shelter, fears mounted that deaths from diseases such as malaria and cholera would soon exceed those from the tsunami.

Destruction on this scale has a habit of sifting our fundamental values and righting priorities that have become overturned and misshapen. Events of this magnitude bring to the surface feelings and questions we largely ignore during times when our lives are not threatened. Our responses to the horrifying images on TV screens and in newspapers were immediate and strong. As spectators to this human tragedy we felt deep sadness, not only for the dead, but also for those who survived death, not only for the Canadian tourists who happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong time, but also for those surviving residents who cannot escape the mess because they have no other home.

We feel a sense of powerlessness as we contemplate the destructive power that nature is able

to generate and deliver. We fear an ocean that, with little warning, can burst its normal bounds and invade our space. We wonder about the uncertainty of life and the apparent randomness of death. We wonder if anything, or anyone, or anywhere is safe. We wonder if all of life runs on things like chance and luck and whether there is any truth to the doctrine of the sovereignty of God over all things. We wonder about the nature of an all-knowing and all-powerful God who, on certain occasions, appears to be anything but all-knowing and all-powerful.

The Bible is clear on two important points concerning our world. And each should generate in us serious thought. Firstly, we have assigned to this world a responsibility for our personal safety and security that it was never meant to bear. No component of this world is safe. The words of Psalm 46 testify that it is the Creator, not any aspect of His creation, that is ultimately trustworthy:

"God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging... The Lord Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress."

Secondly, the natural world in which we live is anything but natural. The processes and events we describe as thoroughly "natural" are NOT natural at all. That is, at present, they do not function in accordance with their original purpose. Elements of nature were never intended to destroy human life. Nor were they ever intended to induce fear among us. Rather, elements of nature were designed for our good to bring us joy and satisfaction. What proceeded from the creative mind and fingers of God was a benevolent world, not a malevolent world. And if we are to believe the words of the Bible, there will come a day when angry oceans causing unbelievable death and sorrow will be no more. The words contained in Isaiah 11 serve as a window through which one is permitted an eschatological preview of God's restored world and a glimpse of what the truly natural will look like:

"The wolf will live with the lamb... the cow will feed with the bear, their young will lie down together... the infant will play near the hole of the cobra, and the young child put his hand into the viper's nest. They will neither harm nor destroy on all of my holy mountain, for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea."

## CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1 » Impressive Cathedral service fitly honours a fine bishop

### Landmarks in Bishop Spence's episcopate

**September 1997:** Ralph Spence is ordained bishop.

**January 1998:** Ralph Spence is installed as bishop of Niagara.

**1998:** The bishop approves a significant upgrading of the diocesan website.

**1999:** The bishop becomes aware of severe financial problems in the diocese; expenditures are pared.

**2000:** The bishop launches the \$8 million Survive and Thrive campaign to promote creative ministry, education, and outreach.

**2001:** The bishop visits the Pope with local Lutheran and Roman Catholic bishops.

**2002:** The number of refugees assisted by Niagara parishes (since 1999) reaches 70.

**2003:** The diocese supports the Anglican Church's proposed agreement with the government of Canada regarding liability for the operation of Indian residential schools.

**2003:** The bishop ordains Niagara's first group of vocational deacons.

**2003:** The bishop appoints the diocese's first director of evangelism.

**2004:** The diocese of Niagara hosts General Synod.

**2005:** The bishop re-structures the synod office around Niagara's three-legged stool (evangelism, stewardship, leadership), and re-names it the Diocesan Resource Centre.

**2006:** The bishop launches the hugely successful "I'll buy you lunch" campaign. (He'll buy lunch for any visitor to a Niagara church who isn't warmly welcomed.)

**2007:** The bishop gives his formal assent to a synod resolution approving the principle of same-sex blessings.

**2008:** Bishop Spence retires.

The anthem, the evening hymn "Te lucis," was entirely appropriate for evensong, and the rich harmonies and romantic texture of the score by the Anglican composer Henry Balfour Gardiner (d. 1950) was lovely.

There followed a procession down the centre aisle, up the north aisle, and down the south aisle to the singing of "Lo! The Pilgrim Magi" by Walter MacNutt, the late organist of St. Thomas' Anglican Church, Huron Street, in Toronto. After prayers, the procession returned to the chancel up the centre aisle.

#### Joins traditions

Part of Ralph's effectiveness has been his ability to bring together the best of different Anglican traditions. The choice of the two concluding hymns reflected this. "Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness" is reminiscent of the Caroline high-church tradition which helped inspire Trinity College, Toronto; and "King of love, O Christ, we crown thee," was written by Charles Venn Pilcher, a professor at Wycliffe College, Toronto, and a descendant from the family that gave us the great English evangelical Henry Venn. (How tiresome it is when people make jokes intended to set these two great traditions in opposition.)

Before Ralph pronounced the blessing, some commendations were read from people too busy, I suppose, to be present, such as the governor general and the primate. They noted his great gifts for friendship, kindness, and good humour; his focus on mission, his ecumenical spirit, his commitment to building collegiality among the Canadian bishops.

One commendation referred to

the time that Ralph was detained as an I.R.A. suspect on his way to Lambeth Palace. This sounds like a story we'll try to get from Ralph in his retirement.

I have to say that when the dean read a letter which he claimed to have received from the Hamilton chief of police, people seemed suspicious of its authenticity. The letter asked Ralph to keep his "Mitre 1" licence plate so that traffic officers could keep careful track of him.

#### Very Ralph-like

So the whole service reflected the spirituality and service of Ralph Spence: the worship of the Lord; the love of Anglican liturgy and music; the joining together of conservative and liberal, catholic and evangelical; the wit and humour and decency; the pride in being Canadian; the excuse for a nice party.

This fine service owed much to the devoted behind-the-scenes work of (among others) the dean and assistant curate of the Cathedral, and to Alison Meredith, the Cathedral parish administrator, and Alison D'Atri, the bishop's secretary.

During the happy reception that followed, I thought of the many good things that Ralph has achieved (see the sidebar). I asked several people why they thought Ralph had been so successful. Here are some of their answers.

He has been a friend. A priest who had contracted cancer told me how Ralph had phoned her, sent her flowers, and brought her communion faithfully over many months. Others told me how accessible and supportive he had been for them personally, despite his gruelling schedule.

He has been a leader. He has worked from a vision of what the diocese was called to be, and has led it with conviction in that direction.

He has been a beggar for Christ and a remarkable fund-raiser. He has a tremendous gift for motivating people to contribute to the work of the diocese.

#### Unifier

He has been a unifier. Despite the diversity of opinion among us about various issues, he has maintained caring and respectful relationships with all who would let him, and this has been a glue that has helped keep us together.

He has been a physician for the church. Where he has diagnosed diseases of finances or personnel, he has brought healing (and sometimes surgery).

He has been a vocational guide. He has been very canny at discerning the gifts of clergy and layfolk, and has guided them into the right ministries. He has been committed to supporting the ministry of the laity.

He has been an agent of change. He has helped the diocese begin to adapt to its new historical situation.

He has been an advocate of justice. He has spoken out on issues of labour, human rights, the First Nations, and the environment.

He has been an evangelist. In word and example and decision-making, he makes it a priority to show why the message of God's love in Jesus Christ is appealing and life-changing.

Thanks be to God, for being faithful to us. Thanks be to God that this faithfulness has included raising from among us such a fine bishop.

# When I grow up



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

My father died when I was 15. I was the youngest in a family of four children and the only one still living at home when this happened. Because he and I were so close, one of the side effects of his death was that my relationship with my mother decidedly worsened once he was gone. I guess my dad formed a bit of a buffer zone between my mother and I, and with the buffer no longer

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Widows are the lifeblood of a parish... nothing short of awesome.”

present, what had once been an uncomfortable truce became more of an all-out war.

As I have grown older and had the opportunity to look at my life backwards, I have come to recognize that my father's untimely death had a way of protecting him from the criticism that, as a teenager, I directed solely towards my mother. Because she was the primary authority figure left in my life, rebelling against authority became an excuse to rebel against her. My father, on the other hand, died before any of this revolt began and, hence, he had the luxury of being idolized in my mind's eye. In reality, this is quite ironic, since much of who he was would have been precisely what would have made me rebel.

Are you old enough to remember men in cuffed pants? My father died several years after cuffed pants had gone out of fashion. Yet, he was never seen in a pair of trousers without cuffs because he swore he would never wear them—and he never did. Change was not something beloved by my dad and my mother, perhaps more than anyone, suffered the consequences of his resistance to it.

She was about 55-years-old when he died. She had not worked outside the home since before they were married, she didn't drive a car and, in the course of their marriage, my father handled all the finances. If memory serves me correctly, my mother didn't learn how to write a cheque until after his death. I don't know about driving a car but I do

know that not working outside the home and not having any insight into the household finances was the way my father liked it. While North American society was in the throes of the feminist revolution, my father preferred things the way they had always been.

Bottom line—in terms of his marriage, my dad was the epitome of a male chauvinist. His early death, however, prevented me from experiencing first-hand the reality of this part of his personality. It also allowed me to place him in stained glass while my mother became the recipient of all my teenager angst and bitterness. Because of this, I missed seeing who she really was and the amazing things she actually accomplished following his death. It has taken me years to come to regard my mother as the person who she really was rather than just the mother against whom I rebelled, and I might never have been able to do this if it hadn't been for my experience as a parish priest.

Years ago, I buried the husband of a parishioner. He had died suddenly and unexpectedly. Many people, including me, worried about his widow. As dependent on him as she seemed to be, we all wondered if she would be able to put the pieces back together and move on with her life. I remember visiting with her about a month after the funeral and asking her how she was doing. "Well," she said. "You know what they say: 'Laugh and the world laughs with you; cry and you cry alone.' I save the tears for when I'm alone. I laugh when I'm with everyone else." Ten years later, she continues to laugh with everyone else.

Another woman was married for 54 years when her husband died. He had been sick for quite some time before his death and she had nursed him at home through his illness. During a visit with this parishioner, she told me she had spent over 50 wonderful years with this man and she looked forward to spending another 50 with him when she died.

Yet another woman found herself in a somewhat similar situation to the one in which my mother was left after my father's death. While she was not quite as unfamiliar as my mother was with the nuts and bolts of living on her own, she still had to remake her life in a way that was quite different from when her husband had been with her, all of a sudden having to learn and master things that had previously been of little interest to her. Perhaps more than anyone, it was this woman

who led me back in time to my own mother and the struggles she obviously faced after my father was gone. It was my experience of this parishioner that made me realize just how many mountains my mother had to climb to survive her husband's death and to go on to live a fulfilling life for another 32 years.

I could write pages and pages of the number of experiences I have had of women who have lost their husbands and yet, moved on with their lives in the most positive and life-giving ways. Churches are full of these women. In fact, most people would be hard-pressed to argue against a supposition that might suggest that it is often these women—these widows, that is—who are the lifeblood of a parish. Their energy seems endless and their capacity to take the love which they have had for their husbands and which they continue to have for their children, and pour this into their volunteerism—which often means their church community—is nothing short of overwhelming or, as those younger than I might be inclined to say, nothing short of awesome.

Robin and I often have joked that if I die first, he will starve and if he dies first, I won't have a clue what to do if my computer crashes. (Under the circumstances, I figure my odds of survival following his death are better than vice-versa, although in this day and age I'm not sure computers haven't become as essential to life as food on the table!) The truth, however, is that ultimately neither of these things will have any bearing on how we survive one another's passing. The widows I have encountered through my ministry as a parish priest have taught me that what it really takes to survive the death of a loved one is attitude—an attitude of perseverance, an attitude of love and an attitude of thanksgiving—and the desire to maintain this attitude even at a time when it seems next to impossible.

I am grateful for all that the widows at Transfiguration have taught me about my own mother. Through their actions, they have taught me more about her than I ever would have learned without them. They also have taught me about life and how to live it.

If one day in the future I find myself having to figure out how to reprogram my computer after it has crashed, I hope I will remember the lessons which these widows have given me. When I grow up, I hope I will be able to exhibit the class that they do.

# Prisoner of hope



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

"The categories of optimism and pessimism don't exist for me. I'm a blues man. A blues man is a prisoner of hope, and hope is a qualitatively different category than optimism. Optimism is a secular construct, a calculation of probability. Hope wrestles with despair, but it doesn't gen-

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According to *Rollingstone*, the way of the future is one in which the leadership has no women and no racial minorities.”

erate optimism. It generates this energy to be courageous, to bear witness, to see what the end is going to be. No guarantee, unfinished, open-ended. I am a prisoner of hope."

This quote by Cornel West, a professor of religion at Princeton University, in response to the question "Are you optimistic about the future?" was enough to guarantee from me another year's subscription to *Rollingstone*. In 2007 the magazine celebrated its 40 year anniversary—40 years since it began its regular publication critiquing, reflecting, driving, enjoying, the trends of western popular culture, politics, activism, and art. In this third of three anniversary issues, *Rollingstone* interviewed "twenty-five artists, scientists, and leaders who helped shape our time" and discussed with them "the future of America and the world."

There was plenty about which to despair in slogging my way through the issue. With the possible exception of Bill Gates, who spoke in glowing terms about technology as the salvation of humankind, the picture of the world in which we currently inhabit—the world which is giving birth to this so-called 'future' is not a pretty one. The global warming crisis is finally dawning in the collective consciousness as being dire on a scale which the average person can no longer afford to ignore. In every pocket of civilization, the human

race continues to be sinking in the quagmires of violence and war, and although we have thousands of years of history from which to learn, that violence and war continues to stem primarily from religious conflict and fear of other. The United States—the Superpower of the world, a beacon of liberty, democracy, opportunity, and uninhibited artistic expression—is looking more and more like the popular guy in high school, the football star at the centre of every party, whom age reveals as superficial, angry, infantile, at best pathetic, at worst down right dangerous.

That wasn't what made this read particularly depressing however. *Rollingstone*, a magazine that prides itself on representing the liberal voice of America that goes to great lengths to be an alternative voice, a broad-minded, forward-thinking, voice, only saw fit to talk to three women out of the twenty-five people interviewed for the issue. Only three African-Americans made the cut, and those three constituted the only representation of visible minorities. No native Americans, no Asians, no Middle-Easterners.


And *Rollingstone's* editorial perspective proved itself limited in other ways too. Although the magazine spoke repeatedly of the need to address the environmental crisis, mindless consumerism, the greedy acquisition of more, more, more, is still very much assumed to be the rule of the day. Al Gore is lavishly celebrated as a modern-day prophet who has brought the world on board with recognizing the very real consequences of climate change, but Al Gore is perhaps ultimately appealing because he makes no demands on the individual. We can continue to live unsustainable lifestyles of massive consumption; all we need to do is vote for the right people who will put the right regulations in place so that carbon emissions will be miraculously lowered and we can all continue shopping and driving to our hearts' content.

What's more, the interviews continually tended toward one conclusion: the problems in our world are caused by religious extremism, by people who are so consumed by visions of heaven that they are willing to count as nothing life here on earth. Richard Dawkins was mentioned with reverence numerous times

» CONTINUED ON PAGE 20




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# Affordable housing is a human right

**COLLEEN SYM**  
SOCIAL JUSTICE COORDINATOR

Affordable housing is a human rights issue—we all need a decent place to live. The right to housing is recognized in international law and the right to housing free from discrimination is protected in Ontario's *Human Rights Code*.

It's a myth that you cannot be evicted in the winter. It's a myth that you cannot be evicted during a school year if you have children.

At the community legal clinic where I work the important days

The year 2006 set a new record high of 60,000 evictions in Ontario.

in December and January aren't Christmas Day and New Year's Day. The important dates are the last day for eviction hearings at the Landlord and Tenant Board in December, the last day in the calendar year that the sheriff will enforce an eviction order and the day when January rents are due. No one likes to be the bearer of bad news including advising someone that they need to spend the holidays packing before they're evicted or that Christmas will likely be spent in a homeless shelter. In the new year some of the worst conversations are with parents whose desire to provide Christmas presents made budgeting for that January rent payment an exercise in futility.

Arrears of rent is the main reason why people are evicted. The caseworkers at my office take turns acting as Duty Counsel at the weekly Landlord and Tenant Board hearings held in Halton. Similar services are provided at locations all over the province. I don't know

what stereotype pops into your mind when you envision a tenant facing eviction for non-payment of rent. Mostly what we see is that life happens: an unforeseen illness and inadequate sick benefits, family breakdown resulting in a dramatic loss of income, a necessary car repair, high heating bills, layoff, maternity leave. So many people who are one pay cheque from being homeless, who have no financial cushion to soften a fall because their housing is not affordable.

In October 2007, Miloon Kothari, the Special Rapporteur on adequate housing of the United Nations Human Rights Council visited Canada to examine and report on the status of realization of the right to adequate housing in Canada and to engage in dialogues with the Government and non-governmental organizations about efforts to secure these rights. In his preliminary observations Mr. Kothari commented: "Lack of sustainable affordable housing is one of the main issues that jeopardize the realization of the right to housing in Canada. Affordability is critical to ensure people keep their homes, no matter what the market dictates... The increase of housing prices and the lack of affordability is growing in all sectors of the population... One dramatic indicator of the growing affordability crisis is the record-breaking number of evictions in Ontario (there are no comprehensive national statistics). The year 2005 saw the greatest number of households facing eviction in the history of Ontario. The year 2006 set a new record high of 60,000 evictions. There are no comprehensive national statistics on evictions, but the high cost of rent set against the decrease in tenant incomes is a critical national issue."

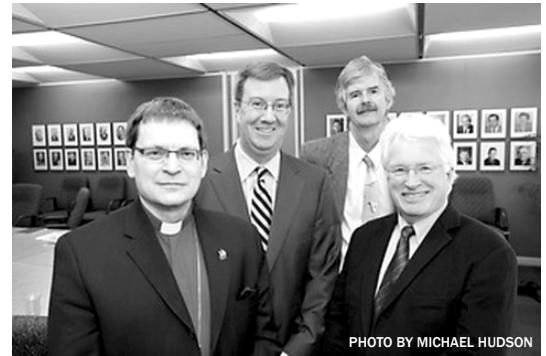
The affordability crisis is borne out in the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) na-

tional survey of the rental housing market which was released in December 2007. 36% of Ontario's tenant households are living at or below the poverty line. 42% of Ontario tenant households (564,735 out of 1,338,850) pay 30% or more of their household income on shelter costs. 20% of Ontario tenant households (265,995 out of 1,338,850) pay 50% and over of their household income on shelter costs; the risk for homelessness increases where rental costs consume more than 50% of pre-tax household income for a tenant household. The median income of Ontario's renter households is less than half of homeowner households (\$32,194 vs \$66,382).

That so many amongst us are enduring hardships involving their housing should speak directly to us. In the New Testament we are called to "love your neighbour as yourself" (Matthew 22:24-40) and take seriously Christ's command: "Whatever you did for one of the least of these, you did it unto me." (Matthew 25:40). If we were to ask why we as Anglicans should care about the need for affordable housing for those who are only one missed paycheque away from homelessness, then the most powerful answer would be that it is precisely amongst such people that we meet the One whom we call our Lord.

By providing a decent place for all people to live, we are taking seriously our baptismal vows to "seek and serve Christ in all persons... (and) to respect the dignity of every human being."

Murray MacAdam, Social Justice and Advocacy Consultant in the Anglican Diocese of Toronto is seeking the help of the people in our Diocese with a campaign to meet with MPP's from the Niagara Diocese to discuss housing and re-



From left: Bishop Colin Johnson, Municipal Affairs and Housing Minister Jim Watson, Murray MacAdam, and Social Justice & Advocacy Board member John Brewin meet to discuss affordable housing and poverty issues.



Colleen Sym meeting with Oakville MPP Kevin Flynn.

lated poverty issues. Visits in the Toronto Diocese are already underway. Briefing and background materials are available for you to use as well as an agenda for the meeting at [www.toronto.anglican.ca/sjab](http://www.toronto.anglican.ca/sjab).

If you do not want to take the lead on organizing a visit but would like to join a delegation, your par-

ticipation in that way would be very welcome. Please contact Murray at [mmacadam@toronto.anglican.ca](mailto:mmacadam@toronto.anglican.ca) or me at [socialjustice@niagara.anglican.ca](mailto:socialjustice@niagara.anglican.ca) if you are prepared to live out your faith in this way. Visits should be completed during the month of February as a lead up to the provincial budget.

## All in the Family Day

**SUE-ANN WARD**  
ASSISTANT CURATE - CHRIST'S CHURCH CATHEDRAL

What ever will we do with a day off in February? As I am writing this, it is only the beginning of January, but I am planning ahead. Family Day, February 18 2008, is our first February statutory holiday. I have read that it has been called

In my home family has nothing to do with genetics.

Family Day because spending time together as a family is good for us. I guess it depends on how one defines "family".

I, a former teacher, had a conversation about families with retired teacher Bryan Stopps a few days ago. We discussed how we talked about the concept of family with our students and how we dealt with holidays such as Mothers Day and Fathers Day. In elementary schools,

it is common for teachers to facilitate the making of cards and gifts for students to give to their parents on these days. Some teachers find it awkward when children in their classes have only one parent, more than two parents, or when children are in foster care or living with someone other than their parents. My strategy for these occasions was to talk about the role of a parent and to encourage each child to make a gift for the person or persons in their lives who fulfilled the role of parent. Bryan shared with me that he used to emphasize with his students the idea that families are composed of beings who live together and take care of each other. Family units can be big or small, multigenerational or unigenerational. He told me that his students were intrigued and delighted by the idea that he and his cat were a family.

In my home, family has nothing to do with genetics. When I was a young child, my parents divorced and remarried. I gained step-par-

ents and step-siblings who were very much part of my family. When I married Jeff, his parents began to call me their daughter, not their daughter-in-law, and all of Jeff's relatives became my family.

Jeff and I have raised quite a few children together - some that were once in my womb, and some that were birthed by others. Our foster children were always accepted by everyone in our extended families as "fully family" for as long as they needed us. There were never distinctions. My parents have always had a tradition of hosting each grandchild individually for a birthday sleepover and adventure day. This applied to any child living in my household or those of my brothers and sisters, no blood tests necessary.

In 1996, Jeff and I adopted one of our foster children. That gave us four children with the last name Ward in our household. Both of my sisters married men who had children from previous marriages. My brother, Bruce, and his spouse have cat chil-

dren rather than human children. My eldest brother, Mark, and his wife are the only ones in the family raising children that are all (ostensibly) genetically related to both parents. We have a pretty extensive gene pool at any family gathering.

On the 19th of November, Jeff and I became grandparents. Our eldest daughter and her husband had a baby girl. Maya Nicole was born into the world right before my eyes. She is a precious addition to our family and the first member of the next generation. Maya has been cradled in the arms of 2 parents, 4 grandparents, 6 great-grandparents, and 2 great-great-grandmothers. We have photographs that include 5 generations. There are going to be a lot of cards for Maya to make on Grandparents Day.

It occurs to me that Jesus' teachers might have had some thinking to do about how to deal with Jesus' family around Fathers Day. Jesus did not have your typical one father one mother nuclear family that some

Christians like to point to as the ideal family, a view Jesus did not seem to hold. Jesus' view of family is recorded in each of the Synoptic Gospels. In Mark's Gospel we read:

"Then Jesus' mother and brothers arrived. Standing outside, they sent someone in to call him. A crowd was sitting around him, and they told him, "Your mother and brothers are outside looking for you." "Who are my mother and my brothers?" he asked. Then he looked at those seated in a circle around him and said, "Here are my mother and my brothers! Whoever does God's will is my brother and sister and mother"—Mark 3:31-35 (cf. Lk 8:19-21; Mt 12:46-50).

Jesus teaches throughout the Gospels that God's will is that we love God and love our neighbours. That sounds like a good way to spend Family Day. I am hoping that this involves staying in my pajamas all day, telling stories, playing games, and eating and drinking with my family. The pajamas are key.



# "IT'LL BE LOVELY" - BISHOP RALPH MOVES ON TO NEW MINISTRY



## PARISH NEWS

# St. James Dundas joins the ranks



**DOUGLAS BROWNLEE**  
ORGANIST & DIRECTOR OF MUSIC - ST. JAMES, DUNDAS

The congregation of St. James, Dundas has heard some of the pipe organ that now resides in their church in downtown Dundas. The acoustically superb church had been without a pipe organ for close to thirty years and through generous gifts of funds and labour, the impossible is becoming a reality. For those closely connected to the project it was a very special Christmas Eve this year when the result of hundreds of volunteer hours was heard and felt in music as the old familiar carols were sung with a new spirit.

For Christmas 2006, The Venerable Jim Sandilands, Rector of St. James, announced that D. Leslie Smith of Fergus, Ontario, had been selected to build a 3 manual, 40 rank pipe organ for the church. David Palmer, Past-President of the Royal Canadian College of Organists, Professor in the School of Music at the University of Windsor, and Organist and Choir Director of All Saints' Church, Windsor has acted as consultant along with Douglas Brownlee, Organist and Director of Music at St. James.

The nucleus of the instrument is an 11 rank Karm-Warren, built in 1916 for St. James the Apostle in Hamilton which closed May 2004. The beautiful, matching, Arts and Crafts-style oak cases from St. James the Apostle accommodate the Great and Solo divisions at the

back of the room while new structures in the chancel house the Swell and Choir. The Pedal division is divided between front and back with 16' flues and reeds at both ends of the room. New ranks and some reclaimed, bring the total to 40 ranks. These have been added by D. Leslie Smith throughout the instrument, with great sensitivity to the organ's primary role in leading worship and also accompanying. The new, custom built, low-profile amphitheatre-style terraced console is easily moved to compliment the flexible seating and staging at St. James, Dundas.

Early in the project the congregation elected to contribute as much volunteer labour as they could – under the supervision of the organ builder. The Reverend David Linn, Director of Canterbury Hills and Honorary Assistant at St. James, along with Ron Vickers, have led the volunteer team. Ron, a member at St. James since 1960 talked about his inspiration,

"...I picked up a piece of the melted organ the day after the fire (in 1978) and I have been waiting ever since for a pipe organ, so I knew I had to take the opportunity to help."

On a hot summer day in 2006 volunteers moved the St. James the Apostle organ from storage to the church in Dundas and thus "Craft, Wind and Music" the pipe organ project began.

There have been many projects since that summer day This has in-

cluded building structures to secure the historic cases to the interior of St. James, rebuilding the oak cases, cleaning organ pipes on the church lawn, picking up and unloading new components and painting the new chancel cases that had been built by D. Leslie Smith in his Fergus workshop.

St. James, Dundas is not alone in soliciting the help of members to build a pipe organ. The Anglican Church of St. John the Evangelist, in Kitchener just completed the move and installation of a pipe organ this past fall with the help of a team of volunteers and the supervision of a skilled builder. There is a tremendous amount of physical, often unglamorous and 'grunt' work involved in building a pipe organ. To exercise good stewardship of available funds, for purchasing specialized labour (organ design, voicing pipes and building wind chests etc.) it is becoming more common for organ builders and congregations to act co-operatively.

The organ was dedicated on January 27, 2008 at the 10:30 AM Choral Eucharist by Bishop Ralph Spence.

The pipe organ has come to life at St. James Anglican in Dundas. D. Leslie Smith's Opus 6 has filled the church with sound and the congregation is singing a new song.

.....  
An inaugural Concert by Professor Palmer, consultant for the project, is scheduled for March 30 2008 at 4:00 PM. Everyone is invited.

## Lunch with Santa a great success despite the stormy weather



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

On Sunday December 9 St. Michael's Church Hamilton held their annual Lunch with Santa celebration. Despite the dreadful icy and snowy morning the parish hall was almost filled to capacity. Only one family who had ordered tickets failed to make it to the church for the fun. Parishioners and friends from as far away as Grimsby, Mount Hope and Caladonia managed to brave the storm and arrive at the church in time for the festivities.

Our parish youth were on hand dressed as *The Grinch* movie characters and other jolly festive well-known figures to escort the children and their families to their table.

Hot dogs, meat and veggie chili, along with veggie trays, popcorn

and ice cream sundaes were the order of the day.

Carolyn Astle played Christmas tunes and carols until the jolly man from the North Pole arrived. Children had the opportunity to visit with Santa and have their pictures taken. The children received a neat gift from "Cindy-Lou Who" and Santa.

Each person in a family was given a "penny sale" book of tickets to place in containers beside prizes they wanted to win. The minimal admission price covered the prizes, food and fun.

Once again a big thank you to the Charters, our parish youth and all those who helped with food, setting up and taking down of the tables and decorating the hall. Truly this was another well-planned and successful St. Michael's parish event.

## Children contribute to Canterbury Hills



**LYNNE TIMMINS**  
ST. STEPHEN-ON-THE-MOUNT, HAMILTON

For the past few months the Sunday School children and Youth Group of St. Stephen-on-the-Mount Anglican Church, Hamilton, have been raising money by collecting pop cans and pennies. Through those fundraising efforts they were able to present a cheque for \$500 to The Reverend David Linn, Executive Director of Canterbury Hills. This donation will contribute to-

wards the ministry of Canterbury Hills by helping to redecorate a bedroom at Artaban Lodge.

As well, the children and youth have been removing the tabs from the pop cans and giving those to the Girl Guides who will raise money with those tabs to buy wheelchairs for those in need.

Stay tuned for news from the children and youth of St. Stephen's on their next fundraising project.

# When you sing, sing out loud... you are singing to god!

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

As I put fingers to keyboard it is still the glorious season of Christmas. By the time you read this article it will be the penitent season of Lent.

We all look for ways to be contrite during Lent by asking ourselves, "What shall we give up this year for Lent. How meaningful do we find giving up sweets, chocolates etc.?? What inner spiritual satisfaction are we gaining? We should be asking ourselves "What should we give of ourselves this season?"

Although the sacrifice that the men you will read about in this article happened before Lent, it is fitting that their story is shared now.

**Overseas Mission Services**

For several years Garry Gadsdon, a member of the leadership group called *Leader Impact Group*, has been involved with OMS in Haiti. The *Leader Impact Group* was started by Paul Henderson (Hockey Canada Fame). Garry became a member around 1997 but it was not until 2000 that he became serious about mission impact. The first time Garry travelled to Haiti he found it so emotionally draining that he vowed never to return. But four years later he returned leading a group. A few years ago Garry started a *Leader Impact Group* on Thursday mornings at St. Michael's Church.

OMS (Overseas Mission Services) was conceived about 100 years ago by the Coleman family. It was originally called Oriental Mission Services. The Coleman's had a goal to carry salvation to the Orient. Through Garry and the Thursday morning group, George Foster, Al Olsen and John McBride have now become involved. Two years ago, Paul Martin, another member of our church accompanied Garry, George and Al.

John McBride is the most recent member to travel to the island. This past October (2007) was his first trip. Al Olsen and George Foster have been going since October 2006. Garry has been three times.

They have helped build roof trusses for three schools. They have helped to build a church and an orphanage in Cap-Haitien and poured concrete for a seminary for the training of ministers outside the town.

**How do they feel?**

George found it difficult to put into

words his feelings about his experiences. "It is a feeling inside of me that is hard to explain." People need to see for themselves and find out personally. He has found a new appreciation of missionaries whom he no longer sees as the bible-under-the-arm preacher which had been his perception in the past.

John feels that he is more grateful for what he has and for what we take for granted. He has become more mindful of those who have so little. Al feels that by taking part in OMS in Haiti he looks at life a lot differently. He appreciates God for the life we live. He has learned that being a Christian is more than just going to Church every week. He is proud to be part of St. Michael's whose parishioners have given great amounts of clothing, goods and monetary donations for the people of Haiti.

Last year \$3000.00 was raised by St. Michael's parish. \$1000.00 was used for benches for Schools. \$1076 was used to maintain pumps for the wells. \$924.00 was used for Radio 4VEH. The radio station has been changing lives in Haiti for 57 years through evangelism, discipleship and education. To many Haitians it is the only way they hear about news of friends and neighbours nearby or in distant parts of Haiti. What was it that John said about taking for granted our everyday luxuries?

Garry, I think summed it up perfectly. He has learned the meaning of humility and putting money in perspective. Garry recalls a woman emptying her purse for him to sit on so that he would not get his pants dirty while sitting at the prayer tree. While attending a church service the collection plate was passed around and remained empty until it came to where the men and others helping on the project were seated. (no PAP, here!) The plate did not reach the altar empty. The Haitians have no money. There is no plan for the future; they live for the day. Poverty is ordinary! Garry's criterion for caring about the "other guy" has changed drastically.

**Memorable moments**

John remembers on his visit is that two Haitian women who helped carry the roof trusses the last 500 yards to the school site. One woman was in flip flops and the other in bare feet. The materials to build the roof

and other projects have to be trucked as far as the roads are passable. After that "shank's pony" takes over on near impassable dirt tracks.

Al's memory is of the Haitians dressed in their best clothes for the Sunday service. They were so happy and smiling. He remembers the pastor saying (through an interpreter) "When you sing, sing out loud. You are not singing for the person beside you, you are singing to God!" Garry remembers a young boy to whom he gave a sandwich. The boy immediately shared it with another child. Another occasion he gave a child a ball and Frisbee. To thank Garry, he climbed a tree and brought down two star fruit. The saddest memory he shared, I felt, was that of a child asking for a candy for his friend who was dying of AIDS.

The reactions they see in the people range from hope, happiness and gratitude. "The people we saw and helped were so happy to see us and so friendly. They are absolutely incredulous that we would pay so much to come to their part of the island to help them. The women so badly want their children to receive an education that they will walk across creeks and climb rough hills in bare feet to help bring in the supplies to build the schools."

**Seeing poverty first hand**

Haiti has the reputation of doom and gloom but the people's attitude is positive and up-lifting. They show their love and appreciation in many different ways.

The cost to them personally is around \$1600.00-\$1800.00 CAD. (part of which is tax deductible). That includes airfare from Toronto to Fort Lauderdale, Florida and then a smaller plane to Cap-Haitien, Haiti, meals, lodging and a little money (U.S. Dollars only) to give away.

Garry maintains that there were two costs. With deep conviction he explained. One was to pay for the trip; the second was the loss for him personally of being judgmental, a loss of egotism and pride. "I don't mind losing this!" he said. He has come back a better person. He has returned with a deeper understanding and finds himself more forgiving of others.

Al comments that we hear about Haiti and how poor it is. "You see it first hand. These people work hard to survive and not just for material



Children play on the swings in their school playground (very evidently handmade), a far cry from the sophisticated creative play areas in our schools.



Children in one of Star Fish Schools built by OMS in Haiti.

things. To see the missionaries who go down to Haiti and spread God's word and work along with the Haitians is very humbling. To see the Haitians and how grateful they are for their life is also humbling." It was good to see, with his own eyes, the materials, money and help coming from Canada. Boxes of Bibles came from Elora and Mount Forest along with a container of lumber from the Hamilton area.

**Giving of yourself**

There is a place for women on these trips. OMS appreciates their presence and input. Notable women who have been a part of the projects are Esther Pauls, Tina Green

and Florence Couture. Florence does not actually go to Haiti but has raised countless amounts of money for the projects. Judy Martin, another member of our parish, who was influenced by husband Paul, is set to go in April with Esther.

There are many places for us in our own community where we can give of ourselves during Lent and any other liturgical season. These men are heavily involved locally in outreach projects in our community such as Christian Salvage, St. Matthews House and City Kidz.

If this testimony hasn't inspired you to investigate OMS in Haiti, then at least ponder this—where will you give of yourself this Lenten season?

# We are all the diocese whether we like it or not



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

I know it is Lent and I know I am supposed to forgive and to love all people but I am not sure I can do that at this time. Frankly I am annoyed and saddened at the same time at those among us who are trying to not only to split our Anglican

Church but also split our dioceses.

Over the years many have disagreed with some of the decisions the Anglican Church has made and that is ok. We all have deep seated biases and for one reason or another people have left our church and gone their own way.

A friend of mine who is a priest in the UK left the Anglican Church after the ordination of women and became a Catholic priest. I completely disagree with him but we are still friends, and when he decided to become a Catholic he did not try to take his church with him.

I think I understand the difficul-

ties some members of our church are having with the problems that are going on. It seems to be in the understanding that all churches are part of the diocese; in fact without the churches the diocese does not exist. The diocese is not some office hidden away in the cathedral. It is us, all of us. As we build the churches we each attend, we are, at the same time, building the diocese.

Also as Anglicans we follow the apostolic tradition of bishop, priest and deacon which is the outward and visible sign of inward faithfulness to the Christian message as laid down by St. Clement before the end of the

first century. We elect our bishops and give them authority over all churches, cathedrals and other ministries within our diocesan boundaries.

As ordained ministers we take an oath at the time of ordination to obey our bishop in all things. This does not mean we cannot leave the church because of a difference of opinion—of course we can. In doing so we give up all right to maintain our license as a priest and we give the keys of the church back to the bishop who according to tradition is the rector of all parishes.

We do not hire lawyers and try to take what does not belong to those

leaving the church by saying we are not leaving the church the church is leaving us. As I have said if we are part of the apostolic tradition then our bishop along with other bishops of the Canadian Church are responsible for the doctrine of the church. If we disagree with that doctrine then we leave the church not the other way round.

From my point of view I ask that you do not leave but stay and add to the diversity of our church that has always made us stronger. If however you cannot stay, then I wish God's blessing upon you but ask that you do not try to take what does not belong to you.

## ST. CUTHBERT'S, OAKVILLE » And a child will lead them



A new twist was added to the Christmas Eve Children's service at St Cuthbert's, in that a Nativity Puppet play led by Lucinda Landau, a Divinity student from Trinity College, was presented by Cuthbert's K.I.D.S. (aka. Sunday School). A beautiful mural was painted by Billy-Jim Green, a

youth member of the parish, while some elaborate puppets were designed and created by the children. The younger children served as puppeteers behind the mural while the grades four through six served as narrators. Since this portion of the worship served as the Liturgy of the Word, the filled-to-

capacity congregation of nearly 260 then enjoyed a child-friendly Communion to celebrate Christ's birth. It's a service that continues to grow each year and is obviously meeting a need for young families in the community since many of those who came were visitors to the parish.

## A word on the Word



ALAN COOK  
ST. JAMES THE APOSTLE, GUELPH

"Lutherans vote to read the Bible!" So ran the headlines in the Chicago Sun Times last August. The Evangelical Lutheran Church of America—partners with the ELCIC—had just launched 'The Book of Faith' Initiative, which aims to encourage the reading of Scripture at all levels of the denomination. It's a funny headline and a telling one. Mainline churches like the ELCA and ours are not always clear about how they regard the book on which our faith is formed.

At a personal level, we can be ambivalent, too. Reading the Bible is sometimes the mainstay of our spiritual lives and an essential part of our Church experience. At another time it might feel so distant and strange as it sits on the shelf untouched or is marginalized in the parish. As a parish priest in Niagara I sometimes wondered whether arguments over contentious issues have made us leery of looking to the Bible as a means of experiencing God or of using it to make important decisions in our lives: it just seems too complicated, unreliable or divisive. Or maybe it's just our general ignorance about what is in there that makes us reluctant to enter into a debate with someone who seems to know it chapter and verse? "Hey! I'm an Anglican. Don't expect me to know what's in there!"

### Guides to God

When we decide to read the Bible, it sometimes helps to have a guide. As a boy, I remember the children being instructed to "read one of the Gospels for Lent". I chose Matthew, and still recall scrawling with guilt and frustration "Blah Blah Blah" all over chapter 24 in my Sunday school prize Bible. I was lost and needed a guide! I am glad that God provided some soon after that because I was ready to quit.

Christyn Perkins in last month's Niagara Anglican described a guided encounter with the Book of Deuteronomy through which she was surprised and delighted to feel the Bible speak to her with authority, clarity and freshness. She had attended a lecture by Dr Walter Deller, after which she felt filled with joy and a radical hope. Many of us have had similar experiences—I hope! I will never forget the outpouring of applause, tears and joy that filled the lecture hall in Oxford at the end of N.T. (Tom) Wright's 16 lectures on Paul's letter to the Romans. After he had taken us through the text with patience and passion for eight weeks, we were all caught up in the overwhelming vision of God's inexpressible love for the whole cosmos. Through the standing ovation, our applause thundered praise not just to the speaker, but also to the God who

had been revealed to us in glorious light through the words of one of the Bible's toughest texts.

### Here's the pitch!

In my job as Congregational Sales Representative with ABC and Augsburg Fortress, I have the privilege of unlimited access to some great resources for my faith. I'd like to share some of them with you from time to time. Yes, I also hope to sell them to you and make money for ABC and Augsburg Fortress and those who work for these companies; but much more than that, books are a means of ministry, and I am still a priest. If you come to our stores in Toronto or Kitchener, or look on [www.afcanada.com](http://www.afcanada.com), you will have no problem finding some good guides. Of course, we all need to start with a good Bible, one we feel comfortable reading.

Many appreciate a 'study Bible' that has maps, historical notes and timelines and basic explanatory notes on the same page as the text. Some Bibles have questions for reflection or group study there, too. Daily notes such as 'New Daylight' from the Bible Reading Fellowship or the ELCIC's favourite, 'Eternity for Today', can help us form a plan of approach. Some have little comment; others have notes to help us understand the text. Many contain a 'thought for the day' based on the text we are given to read. We have all of those varieties in stock!

Commentaries are books that take us through a book to help us understand what the authors may have been trying to say with more detailed explanations. Clergy always have them; I reckon laity should have them, too! Tom Wright's are very accessible and William Barclay is never out of style. Ask around; try different resources. As a mentor said to me once: "we all need to jazz up our Quiet Times once in a while!" Group study books are plentiful, too. 'No experience necessary' is a great new resource put out by Augsburg Fortress. Gathering with others around the Word has so often been a place of growth in learning and in fellowship for me and in the parishes I've served... Give me a call and I'd be happy to tell you more.

Sometimes, however, it's good just to let the word come unmediated, without a guide to lean on. Isn't it good just to sit and read for a while? I like to listen to a recorded reading, often in the car, several chapters at a time. It's like going into the forest alone: I experience the beauty, I see things familiar and things I have never noticed before; I see things I love and things that make me squirm or feel afraid. It's a time to wonder, to wander in something much bigger, older, wiser and more permanent than myself. I find my place in God's scheme; it may make me happy or it may make me afraid. But it is itself and I am I, and it is good to be together.

"God of light, your Word brings us to see a new vision of your glory..." (Lent 4, BAS p. 292). May that be so for you this Lenten season.

## Beginnings and endings



PETER WALL  
DEAN AND RECTOR - CHRIST'S CHURCH CATHEDRAL

Around Cathedral Place these days, we are very much aware of transitions, of new beginnings and of difficult endings. A new Bishop is hard at work preparing for a significant transition into a demanding office;

The Eucharist sends us into the world as redeemed, nourished, prepared people—ready to do the work of ministry

a new Executive Officer also makes the transition from one position at Cathedral Place into another. Everyone around Cathedral Place—staff, volunteers, daycare staff, and many visitors—are saying goodbye to two much loved people—a Bishop and an Archdeacon. There is emotion, gratitude, anticipation, excitement, uncertainty, and deep interest in all that is going on. While it may be a much worn cliché to say so, life is all about endings and beginnings: usually, and ending of something marks the beginning of something else. For Bishop Ralph and for Archdeacon Vincett, these endings mark the beginnings of exciting new things in retirement. For Michael Patterson and for Bishop Bird, endings also mean the beginnings of new responsibilities and duties. For all of us in Cathedral Place, and indeed, for all throughout the Diocese, the endings of

some things mark the beginnings of new things, and we look with keen anticipation on the future.

### The beginning or the end

My concern in this column is usually with matters liturgical; with issues and practices surrounding the ways in which we worship. Beginnings and endings also are important facets of what we do in our parishes and congregations as well. Recently, I had the pleasure of meeting with a group of people looking at just how we 'begin' and 'end' the liturgy week by week and day by day. Liturgical beginnings and endings should, some would say should, have all of those characteristics which we associate with other kinds beginnings and endings—gratitude, anticipation, excitement, uncertainty—to which we might add commitment, determination, promise. Of course, we have ritual ways of beginning and ending which provide us with 'ways' of doing things; and sometimes get in the way of what we really want to do or say.

There are some fundamental understandings of what we do at liturgy which can inform the ways in which we do some things. Is, for example, the beginning of a Sunday morning liturgy the beginning of something, or is it the ending of something? When we conclude the liturgy on Sundays, are we ending something or beginning something? Surely, the liturgy of the eucharist should 'begin' something in each of us—the 'sending' part of our liturgy does just that—'sends' us into the world as redeemed, nourished, prepared people—ready to do the work of ministry for which the eucharist has equipped us. Similarly, the 'opening' of the liturgy is more than simply a beginning; it could be seen as the conclusion of the work of ministry which all have

done—all is brought to the liturgy and becomes part of what is offered so that we can begin again, as the liturgy concludes. Interesting, no?

It seems to me, in light of all of this, therefore, that significant attention needs to be given to the details of how we begin and end services. Our beginnings and endings are not, some would say, our finest moments. The concerns of church architecture, relatively large numbers of vested people to move into certain places, 'traditions', and the old Anglican chestnut: 'We've always done it that way' really do mix the message up, and deepen the gulf between what we say and what we do. Two things, both fairly basic, strike me (and others) as paramount: the liturgy begins with the apostolic greeting (The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ etc.) and ends with the Dismissal. The many ways in which we add glosses to both of those acts need to be examined carefully. Choir entrances, hymns which follow words of dismissal, organ postludes—each very important and valuable pieces of our tradition—but all ones which confuse the important message about beginnings and endings. Addressing these things requires care, sensitivity to needs, attention to detail, and recognition both of history and of important local tradition. But if we hold to the importance of an ending sparking a new beginning; if we really do want to live out our belief that we bring all that we are and have done to the Lord's table, so that another beginning also is an ending, then we will take the care and the time to sit down and plan carefully and faithfully how we have our own endings and beginnings.

And, oh yes, Marion and Ralph, enjoy those retirements! And hats off to the Michaels as they begin new and exciting times!

# The happiness doctrine



**COLIN C. M. CAMPBELL**  
ST. HILDA'S, BURLINGTON

The goal of life is to be fulfilled. Recent studies have shown that the happiest people are those who have many friends. Nice people win admiration. For nice people and successful people to become good people, however, they must test



Prayer is not us telling God what he already knows or asking him to do our will. It is entering into spiritual communion with him.

their values against God's. Justification occurs when a person accepts God's values. Sanctification is the life-long process of living them out. The happiness doctrine shows us how to surrender our desire to be nice, successful people in our own way, and how God remakes us in his image, if we submit to his will.

Since God has determined our nature, by way of our genes, the desire to be popular must be good. All enduring societies tell us that we make friends by following a universal theme, the Golden Rule. Its prescription is that we should treat other people, as we would wish to be treated. Since people, who live by the Golden Rule are "nice"

people, it seems that the goal of life is to be a nice person.

Friendship, however, is less deductive than admiration. In a traditional adventure, the hero does not set out to win friends and influence people. He seeks fame and fortune. Fame is recognition for what we have done (admiration for our talents). Fortune provokes recognition for what we have (admiration for our possessions). Since talent and wealth attract the admiration of others, they form the goal of many people's lives. Those who achieve recognition for their ability and wealth are "successful." This implies that the goal of life is to be a successful person.

God sets his face against the proud (James 4:6). The desire to be admired for our talents is pride. The desire to be admired for our wealth is greed. A society, motivated by pride and greed, such as our own, is self-destructive. It believes that it is our achievements and possessions, which make us attractive. We must earn popularity. This variant of Social Darwinism leads to arrogance in the "fit," depression and guilt in the "unfit," and fear of failure in both. Since God wishes to bless such people with the happiness they need, he arranges for a crisis to happen in their lives.

A crisis, arranged by God, always has a spiritual purpose. We know that God wishes us "to have life in all its fullness." He does not do this by giving us talents and wealth, as we would understand them, but by giving us spiritual gifts and treasure, in the form of a joy and peace, which attracts others. The opposite of pride is humility. The opposite of greed is generosity. Since God wishes to bless us with a spirit, which is humble and generous, a "successful" person has

based his (or her) life on principles, which are directly opposite to the will of God. For the good of the person, God must break his desire to control life and bend the world to his will. He does this so that he may come to an end of himself, and find the reality of God's Presence. The Reformation doctrine of the Wrath of God expresses this belief.

Although successful people must submit to this humiliation, so must nice people. Nice people generally follow the Golden Rule because their society raised them well. A story comes to mind. A teacher asked a student what two plus two made. The student answered "Five." When asked how he knew this, the student said, "Because my father told me." The teacher then asked another student the same question. This student said that the answer was "Four" and that she knew this because her mother had told her. Neither student really knew what two plus two made. They both knew only what their father or mother had told them. For nice people to become good people, they must make goodness their own in the great test of life. The rich, young ruler was a nice person. As the Devil pointed out to God, nice people, such as Job, are only nice because being nice works to their advantage. No doubt, they obey the law. As Anatole France observed, however, the law prohibits the rich as well as the poor from sleeping under bridges. Since nice people generally resist the sacrifices involved in becoming good, God denies them happiness, if they seek it apart from him. When our plans for happiness fail, a basic choice faces us—either to topple into bitterness, cynicism, and despair, and turn to addiction for comfort, or to turn to God.

If we turn to God to seek purpose

for our lives, we receive an answer. This is the moment when we know God as he is. We can never know him more fully than at that moment. Our spiritual journey is not a series of steps by which we gradually see God more clearly. Rather, it is a repeated returning to this event. Before this moment, we are lost. It is true that we may have learned the Golden Rule and may be on a quest for meaning. This consists of trying to find a set of principles, which will lead us to happiness, if we follow them. Finding happiness then becomes our work. Since God is not a set of principles, we never find God this way. God is a Spirit, who finds us. We do not find him by our search because we cannot know what God is like. In the parable of the Pharisee and the sinner, both knew who they were. The Pharisee knew that he loved God and the sinner knew that he was a sinner. The difference was that the sinner found out who God was. The Pharisee did not. Like him, we may make God in our own image—a projection of our wishes. Autocrats have used him to bolster their authority in Ancient Egypt, Rome, China, and South America. Others have believed that he is the Sun, or the Life Force connecting all things. For us, he is the One revealed to Israel by the prophets, and finally in the life of Jesus. We can only know who he is by revelation. Any sincere pursuit for meaning, despite the wishes of inclusivists, is not a valid substitute for this.

All too often, we are only willing to accept the message of who God is when he prepares us by breaking us. We do not learn about God by practicing, in the way that we might learn, for example, how

to play golf. The opposite is the case. Before justification, there is grace infused. Its purpose is not to make a spiritual process continue but to make a profane process stop. We are saved from being lost simply by our acceptance of this revelation. The theological term for this is justification. Justification is a change in our juridical status before God, by which we cease trying to live our lives on our own terms and begin to live them on God's.

The process, which follows justification, is sanctification. Sanctification builds on justification, through a series of conversions, but is distinct from it. Justification is the event, when we first know God's Presence. Sanctification occurs when we return repeatedly to that Presence, and allow its energy to enliven our hearts and minds. Justification alone will not transform us. We need disciplined daily prayer of the right kind. Prayer is not us telling God what he already knows or asking him to do our will. It is entering into spiritual communion with him, taking his Presence into the events of our lives and allowing it to act in us and transform our participation in those events. In sanctification, there is indeed a spiritual journey. However, it is not one in which we progressively obtain a clearer understanding of God. Rather, it is a journey, in which his indwelling Spirit progressively helps us to understand our imperfections, and find fulfillment in the Christ, that is within each of us.

In this period of Lent, may we use this time of prayer and fasting to renew our life with God so that we may be transformed, and be agents of transformation in a broken world.

## CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1 » Repentance and Ecojustice

Most of the time, Jesus spoke about the sin of not sharing with others. For Jesus, wholeness was about living in right relationships with other people and with God, and that means living according to God's purposes. I believe that God's purpose also includes living in right relationship with all of God's creation.

For this reason, I am so appreciative of the Church's current focus on Ecojustice. It helps us to understand that wholeness is about living in harmony with all of God's creation including the world (eco) and people (justice.) Our greatest sin is the way that we live out of balance with God's purpose: the way that we accumulate wealth just for ourselves, and the way that we destroy God's creation in the process.

### Acting collectively

Dr. Christopher Lind made an excellent point at Diocesan Synod in November that Justice issues and Ecological issues aren't essentially in opposition to each other. It used to be that those who worked in Justice issues, such as working to reduce global poverty, might feel that we couldn't afford the "luxury" of working in ecological-friendly ways. The two issues

were thought to be a dichotomy. The growing awareness of our catastrophic abuse of the environment shows us just how wrong-headed this false dichotomy is. We have been living in a wrong relationship with the earth and this threatens all life: both the wealthy and the poor and every living creature. We need to get back to balanced relationships: we need to find again God's purpose for us.

Where to begin? It might seem, for many people, to be far too big a problem. What possible difference can I possibly make in such a big issue? Well, for one thing, it's not just about you or me. We can act collectively with others to make big changes and to restore ecojustice to our world. Acting collectively is about making a stance: about standing with others and for others. It's about solidarity.

### True solidarity

It is hard to believe that it was twenty-seven years ago that Lech Wałęsa began a trade union organization in Poland which stood in opposition to the Soviet Communist regime. Those of us who were conscious in those days were astounded, but we became used to hearing about the organization

called Solidarność and how they stood up to repression for nine years before the government finally realized they had to negotiate. By August of 1989 a Solidarność-led coalition government was formed, and in December, Wałęsa himself was elected as the President of Poland. The familiar red banner which we had seen raised and waving over hundreds of striking Gdansk shipyard workers was now waving in victory and the people were ecstatic. Solidarity: people standing together in support and opposition to oppression, had won that battle. But their popular support extended much farther than that Shipyard or even all of Poland. People around the world understood that they could stand in solidarity with those workers.

More and more, as I have lived my life, I have understood that a major part of my role as a Christian is to stand in solidarity with others. Many churches around the world took the opportunity last fall to stand in solidarity with the people of Burma. We had a Sunday of prayer for the people of Burma. We changed the liturgical colours in our Church to Red: the colour of blood and fire, the colour of martyrs and the colour of the Buddhist monks of

Burma. We invited our parishioners to sign the petition supporting the people of Burma. If you haven't already done this, you can join the cause by going to [www.avaaz.org/en/burma\\_hope\\_lives/](http://www.avaaz.org/en/burma_hope_lives/).

Acts of solidarity are about more than signing petitions, however. They involve the choices which you make in your everyday life. They are about where you go to buy your fuel for your car and how you buy your coffee. St. Andrew's is one of the churches in Niagara which has started selling Fair Trade Coffee with our own label. The proceeds of the modest mark-up all go to support the Primate's World Relief and Development Fund, which is another way in which we can stand in solidarity with the oppressed. Why not find out how you can help your local Church do the same thing?

### Balancing our relationships

Standing in solidarity with our earth is essential too. At our Diocesan Synod every parish was given a CD-Rom disk called "Greening Niagara 2007" along with a Booklet called "Just Living" produced by the Partnerships division of the Anglican Church of Canada. These contain resources to help you and your Church become part of the

solution regarding our ecology. What a wonderful resource to use during Lent to help your Church come up with an action plan.

Also, at our Synod, a resolution which originated from the youth of Niagara was approved, basically asking each parish to put in place a process to measure our greenhouse gas emissions and energy consumption, and to reduce these by at least 15% and for each Church to report back to its annual vestry meeting and to Synod regarding their progress. For a really good, twenty-one minute look at the system of consumerism which fuels our economy and our ecological ruination try checking out [www.storyofstuff.com](http://www.storyofstuff.com).

This Lent, let's take a look again at penitence and repentance, keeping in mind the worst sort of sin which plagues us: being out of balance in our relationships with others and with creation. There's a great quote from Thomas Berry on the "Greening Niagara" disk: "The nobility of our lives depends upon the manner in which we come to understand and fulfill our assigned role".

God has a purpose for our lives. Repentance is about coming back into a right relationship.

# Singing a song of justice



**BILL MOUS**  
DIVERSITY STUDENT

A remarkable thing happened in December. In the span of just three or four days, it brought more than six hundred thousand people together from one-hundred and ninety-two nations, of which one-hundred and ten thousand were Canadians.

What could possibly bring so many people together in so little time? A tiny Indonesian island is the short answer. The longer answer is that the destructive actions of the United States, Japan and Canada to block a new international climate change treaty at the Bali Climate Change Summit; a treaty that would carry with it tougher targets for green house gas emissions by developed nations. Environment Minister John Baird stood firm in his position that the treaty not include specific targets for cutting emissions throughout the summit.

## Advocacy efforts succeed

Enter the remarkable thing. Over one hundred thousand Canadians demanded that our government stop blocking the overwhelming desire of the international community, supported an ad campaign in Canadian newspapers, and called the Prime Minister's office and their members of parliament. All of this was enabled by an on-line advocacy group called Avaaz.

org—which means "song or voice" in several languages. Avaaz aims to "ensure that the views and values of the world's people—and not just political elites and unaccountable corporations—shape global decisions"; to reclaim our collective song and voice and proclaim it to the powers that be.

As you may know, the result of this groundswell of support was that the summit was extended an extra day for additional negotiations. In the final hours, Canada backed down from its previously held position, thus isolating the United States. This resulted in a compromise that, although not perfect, called for "deep cuts" by 2020; this was among other provisions such as acknowledging that the evidence for global warming is "unequivocal" and that further delays in reducing emissions increase the risks of "severe climate change impacts." In doing so, and with the advocacy efforts of six hundred thousand citizens throughout the world, the Bali Climate Change Summit moved from becoming the Bali Road Block and instead charted a new course, the Bali Road Map, for the international community to sign a new climate change treaty by 2009.

## No crayons and colouring paper

In the meantime, the United Nations has declared 2008 the International Year of Planet Earth. Our synod recognized the importance of environmental stewardship and has challenged parishes to reduce their green house gas emissions by 15% in the coming year. It was a wonderful first step on our own road map to be better stewards of creation, yet it's

not the end of the road; others have gone further. The Diocese of British Columbia and the Diocese of New Westminster have called on the British Columbia government to impose a carbon tax, which "forces heavy polluters and heavy consumers of fossil fuels to change their way of operating." While we look inward to provide a model of environment stewardship, how might we also be prophetic to our society?

This brings me to a conversation I had with a group of children and youth at St. James Dundas around the same time. As part of the visioning of our children, youth and family ministry programs, I sat down with this group to listen to what they were looking for in terms of Sunday morning programming. "People with energy", "social justice issues", "doing something" were the affirming statements of the conversation. They told stories of their engagement in social justice issues at their local schools—advocating for the children of the Sudan, organizing local food drives for food banks, educating themselves about global issues through YouTube—an online collection of videos.

These were issues with which they were passionate and interested. Crayons and colouring paper wouldn't cut it with this group of folks. YouTube and social justice engagement seems to be the order of the day. And yet very few churches offer this type of programming, very few churches sing this "song" of social justice.

## Mixing religion and politics

It seems to me that as a church we have gradually eroded our cap-

acity for social justice. Sure we are corporately part of ecumenical coalitions such as KAIROS, and engage in their campaigns from time to time, but it is exceedingly rare that we—as members of the Anglican church—engage in local social justice issues. For example when was the last time any of us visited or wrote our Member of Parliament to speak about an issue that was motivated by our faith community's commitment to social justice? Most of us will likely answer never or rarely. Archbishop Desmond Tutu describes this as the "pristine neutrality" doctrine that the church is frequently deemed by society to have.

I'm not sure about you, but I don't remember affirming silence or neutrality in my baptismal covenant; nor do the Gospels call us to be passive in the face of injustice. Instead we have an imperative to love God and others with our whole being—a love that necessitates us to lend our support to issues and causes that have been marginalised by society. Critics—both in the church and outside—have long pointed out that the arena of politics is no place for the church to be engaged.

And so we've gradually eroded our prophetic voice in our society, speaking out occasionally, but rarely in cases that would face significant societal opposition. Again in Archbishop Tutu's words: "It has never ceased to amaze me that the accusation of committing what would appear to be the heinous crime of mixing religion with politics is made almost invariably when a particular socio-political and economic dispensation is condemned as unjust and exploitative".

And so governments, corporations and even individuals often stand unopposed.

## Reclaiming our prophetic voice

Nevertheless this doctrine of pristine neutrality isn't adopted by all in the church. There is no doubt that many people in our own diocese make regular visits to their local politicians. Our neighbours to the north in the Diocese of Toronto regularly meet with their local MPPs and MPs to discuss issues of concern—especially poverty-related issues. In recent years our diocese has taken significant steps in raising the profile of social justice advocacy by appointing a volunteer coordinator in the person of Colleen Sym to animate and enable work at the local level. And there are people in our communities who are engaged in any number of social justice issues, or who support the advocacy work KAIROS and PWRDF does on our behalf.

As 2008 rolls in, I wonder how we might reclaim our prophetic voice in society? How do we proclaim our song boldly in our communities? Imagine what influence we might have if we banded together—much like the one-hundred thousand or so Canadians did around the Bali Climate talks—and spoke out about an important issue in our diocese; even one issue in 2008. We often get trapped into thinking that we no longer have a voice in society, yet if this is true, it is because we don't exercise our voice regularly. As Bali has remarkably demonstrated to us, we do have a voice; we just need to reclaim it.

## CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4 » Getting to know you

Displaying a paperweight of a model casket, the gift of a local funeral home, Steve smiles ruefully. "There was no Parish Administration 101 in seminary, and we really need to educate potential clergy!"

## Claims to fame

Born in Montreal, Steve moved to Toronto at the age of six, when his father, fleet superintendent at Dominion Dairies, was transferred there. Moving to Rexdale, Steve's family joined the parish of St. Paul the Apostle, at the time a portable building. Sunday School was held in a bowling alley. A permanent building arose on Kipling Avenue; Steve was confirmed there at age 18, and he and Carol were married there.

Steve became a diesel mechanic. "I'm a maintenance guy; I come from three generations of people in the automotive business!" Then he chuckles, "My paternal grandfather chauffeured Lily Langtree; a great-uncle was a stoker on the Titanic and went down with the ship—those are my claims to fame!"

Steve and Carol moved to Georgetown, and became members of St. Alban's, Glen Williams,

where their children, Leonard and Catherine, were baptised.

## Adventures into ministry and chip Wagons!

Then came a great change: "I always thought I had a place in the Church. Like most people the calling became loud enough that I had to respond." In 1984, Steve began studying towards a degree at the University of Guelph. When he graduated in 1989, Steve and Carol sold their home and his tools, moved to London, and Steve began seminary studies at Huron College at the University of Western Ontario. In 1992, he graduated with an M.Div., and was ordained at Niagara's Christ's Church Cathedral by the Primate, the Most Reverend Michael Peers.

After his curacy at St. Paul's Church, Fort Erie, Steve was appointed as Rector of St. John's Church, Jordan, and St. Mark's Church, Louth, in 1994. As well as advocacy for the parish cemetery, in 1989, Steve initiated what has become a trademark, a parish chip wagon. Moving to St. James' Church, Fergus, in 1998, he has introduced a chip wagon there; they have both been very productive sources of funds for the parishes.

Created a Canon of Christ's

Church Cathedral in 2005, by the Right Reverend Ralph Spence, Bishop of Niagara, Steve is enjoying his ministry at St. James. He says cheerfully, "I figure they'll take me out in a box!"

Happily married for forty-one years, Steve and Carol are the proud grandparents of ten-month old twins, Lucas and Melanie, children of Len and his wife Trish. Steve and Carol enjoy golfing, and "look forward to times when (they) can visit the grandchildren. You've got to take opportunities when they present themselves!"

## Think it through first

Steve reflects on his family, his ministry, and his work as Niagara's self-named Cemetery Guy: "I would rather leave a legacy of jobs well done, and be praised, than cursed (for less). If you're going to do something, do it well. Think it through first."

An interest in cemeteries is unusual, but once again this Diocese has benefited from a clergyperson's decision to get involved beyond his parish, and the people of Niagara can be confident that Diocesan cemeteries are in good hands, and that Steve Witcher's legacy to the rest of us will be praised for years to come.

You are invited by  
The Right Reverend Michael Bird, Coadjutor Bishop

to the collation of  
**The Reverend Canon Michael Patterson**  
as the new Archdeacon of Niagara.

Choral evensong will be at Christ's Church Cathedral  
Sunday, February 3 at 4:00 PM

Reception to follow  
Clergy are invited to vest in choir habit.

Guest preacher  
The Reverend Canon Dr. Richard Jones

# The passion of the Earth

"The Second Vatican Council alerted the Catholic world to the plight of the poor in a dramatic way as a 'sign of the times.' We were encouraged to see it as religiously significant—the Holy Spirit teaching us new dimensions of the virtue of justice. It became possible to extend our sense of the sufferings—the Passion of Jesus to include the poor and speak of the Passion of the poor—calling us beyond a moral response to a religious investment of meaning. For Thomas Berry... it is crucially important for Christians to respond in a similar way to the Passion of the Earth."

.....  
STEPHEN DUNN, Passionist Father, University of Toronto Professor of Ethics, and Director of the Holy Cross Centre for Ecology and Spirituality, 1998.

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

My husband and I have been watching *The National* on CBC TV now for decades. In the past year or two, however, we've been dismayed by special reports on global warming, melting Arctic ice, extinction of species, extreme weather, water shortages and massive oil spills.

I find these reports and their subtext, that humanity is rendering planet earth uninhabitable for our children's children, so disturbing

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The greatest single cause of atheism in the world today is Christians, who acknowledge Jesus with their lips and walk out the door, and deny Him by their lifestyle.

that I often cannot watch. Sometimes I dismiss the reports as exaggerated fear mongering, knowing full well that my avoidance is an inadequate response. The image of the polar bear isolated on its melting ice floe haunts me.

What are we, as Christians, to do? The following comments offer the underlying premises of a possible Lenten devotion on God's creation and creatures. The basic belief is that caring for our planet is God's will for us. Exploiting this fragile earth for short-term profit is evil, as is the abuse of any of God's creatures.

The Genesis instruction that people should have dominion over the earth and its creatures is a dangerously obsolete imperative. The science of the Old Testament was applicable two to three thousand years ago, but now, with human overpopulation the root cause of our environmental crisis, we have obeyed too well the command to "be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it." Jesus, the focus of the "New" Testament, also lived long ago, when the earth's population is estimated to have been between 170 and 400 million. He did not need to address issues of environmentalism. We do.

Interpreting the spirit of the Bible for our new age is one of our primary challenges. Doing so wisely is difficult because of the danger of reading one's own ideas into the biblical text. Fortunately, there are, within mainstream churches, respected theologians who can teach us new ways of understanding the relationship of Creator and creation. For instance, Thomas Berry, an American Roman Catholic priest and

ecologist (theologian/ecologist), wrote a number of books whose ideas have been adopted by many religious environmentalists. The concept summarized in the phrase, "the Passion of the Earth," connects the Earth's current suffering to Christ's.

We need to revise our intercessions beyond our typically anthropocentric focus and pray for the physical world where God is incarnate, for the balance of nature and the well-being of each ecosystem and each species.

Then, maintaining our focus on God's creation and creatures, we can act appropriately, whatever our age, position and ability. If we are business people, we can adopt Scrooge's learned credo ("Business! Mankind was my business. The common welfare was my business!") and extend it to "The well-being of all creatures is my business!" If we are legal workers, we can work for eco-justice for all life forms. If we are students, we can learn the theory and practice of ecology. If we are cooks, we can buy and prepare foods respecting the 100-Mile Diet. If we are cleaners, we can use non-toxic products. If we are farmers, we can grow organic. If we are artists we can, in Robert Bateman's words, "Think like a mountain." If we are in a line of work that is primarily destructive, should we not look for another, earth-friendly job? As citizens, we can emphasize to our representatives at all levels of government that our top priority is the environment.

A recent news story had a significant but largely overlooked environmental component. Why are Canadians not upset that our former Prime Minister, Brian Mulroney, was taking money for lobbying arms dealers? Weapons destroy not just people but also other creatures and the surrounding landscape. "Collateral damage" includes more than "innocent civilians." Mr. Mulroney should be using his retirement years constructively, as do former American Presidents Carter, Bush and Clinton and former Vice-President Gore. Canada has recently been listed as the sixth largest global arms supplier. Is this not a horrifying statistic?

A related news item reveals Canada's refusal to take positive leadership in the reduction of greenhouse gases. At the international climate summit in Bali, we were reviled for choosing short-term profits over the long-term wellbeing of the planet as we produce so much of the oil that is the root of global warming and avoid taking action to address Kyoto protocols. We are all implicated in these decisions. How quickly have we Canadians lost

our role as ethical leaders on the world's stage!

As we citizens, through greed and laziness, have allowed Canada's reputation abroad to tarnish, we Christians have done the same with our church. Our moral authority, especially in the eyes of young people, is in tatters. In the words of Brennan Manning at the beginning of a song by de Talk, a 1990's American Christian rock/hip hop band, "The greatest single cause of atheism in the world today is Christians, who acknowledge Jesus with their lips and walk out the door, and deny Him by their lifestyle. That is what an unbelieving world simply finds unbelievable." When religious leaders preach world peace, the unchurched ask why religions are at the heart of most wars. And when churches remain largely silent on the crisis of global warming, our inaction renders us even more irrelevant. Religion erodes into secularism.

As individual Christians and as the Church we can struggle to offer credible hope to each other and to non-believers. Young people today ask themselves whether it can be God's will to bring children into such a polluted world. In the 1960's, facing the possibility of global nuclear extinction, young adults asked the same question. Having children was an act of faith then, as it is now.

The green church movement has already started. See what they have done at Toronto's St. Gabriel's, Steven Dunn's home church. Now is the more difficult stage: applying it in every church, making it the top order of business of the 2008 vestry meeting.

Where do we find this hope as we endure winter (and Lent and Crucifixion) and dream of spring (and the new life of Resurrection)? Depression is epidemic and cannot be relieved by secularism; meanwhile, the theology of Passion and Resurrection is traditionally presented at a level of abstraction and exclusivity that confuses believers and atheists alike. To clarify, we need to see the Passion of the Christ in the Passion of the Earth; the Earth today, like Emmanuel two millennia ago, suffers, dies, and lives. If we can continue to believe that love and life triumph over hatred and death, we can find the strength to believe in and work for our Creator and Sustainer God. "Sustainable" is a word that has evolved to refer to both an ecological goal and a positive religious concept. "Sustainability" may help "save" our planet and call our lost believers back to a Church capable of articulating a viable and hopeful faith.

# Let go and let God



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

It must be fifty years ago that I attended a service at All Saints, Hamilton, to hear a man named Albert Cliffe preach. He was a layman, a noted scientist who, in spite of his scientific knowledge, had come to believe in God after being a non-believer. Little did I know that I was destined to become a member of that parish twenty-five or so years later. Albert Cliffe wrote a book, "Let Go and Let God".

Some twenty years ago the Diocese of Niagara was involved in a project called *Next Step Niagara*. Even in those days we were struggling with the question of the direction our diocese should take in the future. I led a group of young people aged 17 to 35 at All Saints in searching for an answer and I asked the Rector not to put in an appearance in our deliberations. I did not want the "collar" to inhibit the participants. I then asked the group "What is God?" The answers were all of the heavenly father figure.

I stopped the discussion with "I asked you *what* is God, not *who* is God". There was silence. I then said "Come on! It's in the Bible!". The group was still lost for words. I told them the answer was in St. John's gospel, but they still could not tell me. God is a Spirit and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth (4:24 KJV).

As I write this I still have the memory of a very recent CBC television programme on my mind; the title was *The Pagan Christ*. The very title must stir the ire of many committed Christians and yet the protagonist was an Anglican priest who could claim that his faith had been strengthened by his studies. Furthermore, I had already read the book. What sort of message should I take away?

Just this past Sunday the large print issue of *Our Daily Bread* were handed to me. I distribute this Bible study booklet in the parish. In the course of announcing their arrival, I told the congregation that there were still plenty of copies of the regular print issue available on the rack at the entrance to the church. I suggested that they might find the Bible interesting if they started using this guide.

All this reminded me that I had recently made some comments about Bible reading among those who profess and call themselves Christian. I had suggested three levels:

- The Novice (or Apprentice) who reads the Bible spasmodically as a duty.
- Postulant (or Journeyman) who reads the Bible for inspiration and/or comfort.
- The Brother/Sister (or Master) who studies the Bible for knowledge of God and may well search in other fields.

In our Anglican Communion we must learn to accept all people at their own level of understand-

ing. This means that we must accept those who are literalists, whose minds seem to be inflexible, as well as those whose studies have carried them so far beyond our own comprehension that they seem to be denying the faith that we have achieved.

In the beginning God—who is Spirit, who created us, who gave us characteristics that would help us to find our way back to Him. He implants his Spirit within us when He gives us the breath of life (see Genesis 2:7 and compare Ecclesiastes 12:7). The breath of life is God's very own energy and science tells us that energy is indestructible—it is simply transformed (the Principle of Conservation of Energy).

What right had the ancient Hebrews to limit God's activity to a small corner of the Earth which we now know as the Middle East? The answer, of course, is that they didn't know any better. What right have we in the 21st Century to limit God's activity and revelation to the same area as we read the Old Testament and the Gospel stories? If God created mankind does it make sense to think that He could only reveal Himself to His own Chosen People? All people are God's choice, for He created them all. It is conceit to think otherwise.

Human beings' knowledge of themselves and the world in which they live has expanded throughout the ages; we now live in a *Global Village*. Is it not time that we come to recognize that God could have, and has, been revealed in many places on the Earth since humans were first created? God has to be understood in the context of the cultures in which s/he is revealed, be it Chinese, Indian, Arabian, African, or any other Indigenous peoples. We all have our own God-centred myths.

Could not an all-powerful God have sent special messengers from time to time to His creation? Was not Abraham a "special messenger"? How about Moses. Isaiah and other prophets? These were special to the peoples of the Middle East. How about the peoples of Ancient Egypt? How about Confucius? How about the Buddha? These all came before Jesus. Did Constantine's meeting at Nicene wander from God's purpose in trying to exclude all other paths to the one true God? In Constantine's day who knew anything about the faiths of China and India, or even of North America? Regardless, they were all labelled as "Pagan" and must therefore be destroyed. What a "Christian" concept!

One great faith was to follow. Did God send Mohammed as a warning that Christianity was going off track? Unfortunately, Islam has fallen into the same trap that has plagued other faiths from time to time—the true and original message has been corrupted, as was Jesus's by clergy who could sell indulgences.

So what of Tom Harpur, the Anglican priest who wrote *The Pagan Christ*? Must our own personal faith be upset by his cogitations, or can we remain comfortably in the faith that God has revealed to each one of us, according to our own personal understanding? As Albert Cliffe wrote—*Let Go and Let God*.

# Change is in the air

**CHRISTOPHER GRABIEC**  
EDITOR

Lent has a history of being a time of preparation for Easter that dates back to the earliest days of the Church. In 203 CE, Irenaeus wrote to Pope Victor I, commenting on the celebration of Easter and the differences between the preparatory practices in the East and the West. "The dispute is not only about the day (Easter), but also about the actual character of the fast. Some think that they ought to fast for one day, some for two, others still for more..." Athanasius in 373 CE asked his congregation to make a 40 day fast prior to the more intensive fasting of Holy Week. In 386 CE, Cyril of Jerusalem had 18 pre-baptismal instructions to be given to catechumens during Lent. Cyril of Alexandria in 444 CE emphasizes the need for fasting during the 40 days of Lent. The point here is that we have a very long history of the days of Lent being set aside as a time of preparation for the greatest mystery and the most joyful news in our Christian community.

Undoubtedly Lent in the early church had a huge baptismal emphasis. In most churches it was first and foremost about preparing catechumens (those who wanted to become Christian) for the day of their baptism which would be at sunrise on Easter morning. There was also (and this would grow as the centuries went on) an emphasis on renewing baptismal commitment and covenant every Easter for veteran Christians. So as a Church

in Niagara, let's think about these two thrusts for a moment.

## New folks being baptized

Hopefully somewhere in our diocese there are adults being baptized into Christian faith this Easter. It would be wonderful if some of our parishes shared this journey with the rest of us. The baptism of adults at Easter is a true sign of life and vitality in a parish community. When "thinking" people make a positive choice to join a community—something powerful must have attracted them in the first place. If this is happening in your parish—we should be thankful and would love to hear about it. Unfortunately, it isn't happening in many places, and this is a cause for concern. Concern is not about giving up—but about action. This leads me to the second thought.

## Renewal during Lent

If we're not doing too well with the recruiting of new Christians (and God only knows there are many adults in the world who are not and who have not been baptized), then maybe, just maybe we need to do a little soul-searching. Perhaps it's time for some spiritual renewal. Please make no mistake, spiritual renewal is not a "program". Spiritual renewal is about taking the time to let go of whatever holds us back from accepting the love of God and from living the footsteps of His risen Son. It is about taking the time to listen in the depths of our hearts to the Word of God alive and current in our lives. It is about renewing our faith in the

God who has revealed him/herself to us. It is about asking that God to open our hearts and to give us the strength to embrace whatever we need to do to build the reign of justice and peace that Jesus of Nazareth envisioned. No doubt this is a big job—but nevertheless an important one.

## Not enough

In our last synod, over 80% of God's people spoke and said two very important things:

■ No more injustice against gay and lesbian people in our church. The time to change is now. Our Bishop Ralph, with the support of his successor Michael, led the charge and said that the process would now be underway.

■ That our church would no longer be quite in the face of global destruction of the environment. Conversion would begin with our parishes as we each actively and with accountability would reduce our green-house gas emissions. God has entrusted this world to us and we said that we would do our best to preserve it as God has intended.

But you might notice that even with these two radical moves, people have not been breaking down the doors of our churches. It's still not enough. These are catch-ups, so to speak. As Archbishop Hiltz said in his January 9 address to the world primates, we live in a country where same-gender marriage is legal. The people have spoken about this already and the church is just catching up. Good for us, we shall not tolerate injustice in this area or in any other area anymore!

The environmental issues have been promoted by Green Peace, by Dr. Suzuki, Dr. Lind and many others for a long time. We're just catching up. Good for us, we're doing the right thing. We're realizing that the preservation of God's creation is in our hands and that we need to take a stand by changing our own lives.

Ah... perhaps that's it. Perhaps what people need to see, is that we really are changing our lives. That we are a people of conversion, a people who can humbly admit our "sinfulness" individually and corporately as a church. Perhaps they need to understand that we are on a pilgrimage that leads us to a better world and to a joy that can only be realized in the Resurrection of Christ.

Ash Wednesday begins Lent this year on February 6th. What are our plans? We should be standing on the street corners with ashes and inviting people to put them on their heads to join us as we grow in the spirit of the Risen Christ during these 40 days. We really need to open our hearts to that kind of growth.

On February 3, Michael Patterson becomes our new Archdeacon of Niagara. On March 2, Michael Bird becomes the new Bishop of Niagara. Change is in the air. Let's commit ourselves to the Lenten journey so that we can align ourselves with that change, listening to the call of Spirit in our hearts, becoming the people that God wants us to be. What have we got to lose? Change is really in the air.

## Words, words, words at Vestry time



**FRANCEAN CAMPBELL-RICH**  
CHRIST'S CHURCH CATHEDRAL, HAMILTON ONTARIO

Spoken, written, acted. They come, they go, or they stay. The Internet breeds them like fruit flies. The Anglican Church invents them, covets them, splits them, broadens them, hides behind them. Right now, the word is *governance*. Even the University of Toronto is calling for nominees for a new member for the Governing Council, 'willing to learn about the University's governance'.

Somewhere in the mass of words that comes to us from the national office of the church there is a message that hints at trouble in paradise.

It's Vestry time. Talk of words! One can only assume that it's vestry time throughout the Diocese; clergy appear to have a password that admits them to professional information on the website. The rest of us must wish, or guess, or look it up. My paperback Concise Oxford Dictionary of Christianity is literally a basket case. Look up 'vestry' and you will find several meanings, and an asterisk or two, leading to further meanings. 'Canon' lists ten or more, and 'governance' does not appear at all—but probably will. I suspect, from fragmentary evidence, that the

word means 'administration' on the national level of things.

I needed to know about vestry, because I have a role to play (we all have), here and now, as a parishioner, a delegate to Synod, a member of the nominating committee, and several liturgical functions. I had even looked up the Canons of the Diocese in the parish administrator's office, some years ago. And I had put my foot in it by raising a question at vestry.

So I consulted a senior theologian, eminent and approachable, equally at home with Greek origins as with today's blogs. I hoped for a little assistance in preparing these words, here and now. Big mistake. I learned that I know absolutely nothing about governance in the church, and am totally

unequipped to talk, let alone write about it. All I do know now is that governance exists, that all is not well in governance. I concluded that for the time being, I should be prepared to put up or shut up, go with the flow (and avoid clichés).

So it's back to the canons, the traditions, the origins, the words. When my sister was ten, she was put off church by a word when she heard "Suffer little children..." You can get more fundamental than that.

At the Cathedral, we sometimes dramatize the scriptures, acting out passages from the Hebrew Testament. Perhaps there is room for more of this, with mime, or dance, or even sign language. And music, which can express what words cannot—leaving the Word to St. John. Amen.

## The Niagara Anglican

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## The Diocese of Niagara

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

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## GREENING NIAGARA

**RUSSELL G. KELK**  
ST. ALBAN THE MARTYR, HAMILTON

As most of you are aware, the Diocese of Niagara voted at the November Synod to declare our Diocese to be a Green Diocese by reducing green house emissions by 15%. It also directed that a committee be formed at the Diocesan level to develop an accreditation pro-

gram called Greening Niagara that would allow a parish to be certified as a Green Parish.

Many of our parishes have already started the process with recycling programs and changes to lighting systems.

Besides reducing emissions a financial benefit is there for parishes with lower energy bills and earning

money from selling pop tins. Much more needs to be and can be accomplished if our parishes have the will to proceed.

Grants are available from many sources to assist us. Richard Reble of Environment Hamilton can set up an evening for a two hour program involving Al Gore's Inconvenient Truth or another on oil. He can be

contacted at 905-560-9556.

For those parishes outside of the Hamilton area he can put you in touch with similar groups throughout the Diocese of Niagara. After the first Synod Council for 2008 I hope to be able to communicate more information to the diocese. Stay tuned for next month's article.



## IN YOUR OWN WORDS

# Resurrection essential to Christianity

**GEOFFREY MCLARNEY**  
TORONTO, ONTARIO

Eleanor Johnston does a disservice to her fellow progressive Anglicans by implying that there is something unacceptable in recognizing the Resurrection of Christ as a "bottom-line" tenet of Christianity. Many conservative Anglicans want to paint a picture of "liberals" as heretical, quasi-Unitarian, and lax on creedal Christianity, and Ms Johnston's comment gives them further fodder. I may disagree with Bishop Harvey's stance on same-sex unions, and with his implication that nonbelievers should be ejected from the Church, but I cannot deny that the Resurrection is a core doctrine of the church catholic, of which the Anglican Communion

is a part. Without it, or with only a "symbolic" reading of it, Christianity is just a feel-good self-help and social-reform system, with no eschatological significance. It is not narrow-minded to point out that people who do not believe in the Resurrection have plenty of options in terms of religions to belong to. If one cannot recite the creeds in good conscience, why be a Christian? My antipathy towards Essentials does not entail a disavowal of orthodox Christianity. Coupled with the Dean's insistence, in the same issue, that the "views and responses" of those who do not believe in the Trinity (that is, of non-Christians) must be accommodated in the Church, I was disheartened by last month's *Niagara Anglican*.

**A note from the editor**

We thank Mr. McLarney for his comments. It was an editorial decision to let Eleanor's comments stand about Bishop Harvey. She was only re-stating what he preached. I remember being at a lecture in Chicago by Eugene LaVerdiere, a prominent scriptural scholar. It was a lecture about the Resurrection. In the end he asked us—"if an archaeologist were to announce that he found the tomb of Christ and in it were a pile of bones, would your faith be shaken?" He concluded that his would not. The same is very true for me and I hope for most of us. I know that Christ is raised from the dead—period. In the unlikely event that his bones are in a tomb—he is still Risen as much as he ever was.

# Staying or leaving, prayerfully!

**BILL PARKER**  
ST. JAMES, FERGUS

I was having conversation with a few good friends on the topic of the vote of the Niagara synod of the Anglican church to recommend that the bishop permit the blessing of same sex unions by Anglican clergy, if their conscience so dictates. I have come across a quote on the Internet that may help any who are suffering with indecision, anger, or who feel their personal relationship with their church is being threatened. This topic at first blush releases a flood of emotional reactions from both sides of the argument. Several years ago, when the topic was first raised for discussion in the Niagara Diocese, I had a terrible wrestle with the issue. I strived to understand why a solid traditional organization like the Anglican Church could possibly entertain such a move. I wondered if I could in good conscience remain in a church that would take such a bold move in the wrong direction (my view at the time) One of the toughest topics for us to consider is that of our own mortality. It also is emotional, and the answer to what really awaits us will have to be put off until the actual visit is made. The quote below deals with this wrenching issue. However, the advice given, I believe is equally applicable to the problems that arise in the heart with our current dilemma.

From a sermon by Ray Stedman "What is your view of your approaching death? Do you have some sense of anticipation about it, with the awareness that beyond death is the final explanation of all the unanswered, unexplained questions of life? I became a Christian when I was 11 years old. Like all young boys, I faced life then with mixed feelings of both anticipation and dread. But one thing I have always wanted to do was to grow old. God has answered that prayer. Now, as I near the end, I can say that looking ahead is a time filled with happy anticipation that God is going to answer all the questions which I have had to leave unanswered, because the full meaning of this present experience will never be brought out

until death intervenes. Then will come all the answers, abundantly, satisfyingly, fully.

That is the Christian perspective of life. If we succumb to the empty view of the world around us we too will find ourselves all frustrated, feeling bitter, angry and upset with our circumstances. But these words call us to the realization that the meaning of life can never be found by trying to solve all the problems. Rather, it is by trust in the Living God, who knows what he is doing and is working out his strange purposes through our existence, teaching us all we need to know as we go on through, so that our eyes should reflect the peace of God and our hearts respond with joy at the promises that await fulfillment yet to come." I have highlighted the phrase that, for me, helps to put the situation in perspective. Our commitment as Christians raises our personal peace and comfort with any unanswered questions above denominational fences. We must all be at peace with the God and Christ that lives in our hearts.

Our job as Christians has not changed. We are called by Christ to be the best Christians we can be. Sometimes this may not be very good. Other times it may be almost saintly. In any case it is between us and God. When we pass on from this world we will not be answerable for anyone's thoughts, words, and deeds, but our own.

Whether or not anyone would either stay or leave the church, at any time, is a decision that should be made with prayerful consultation with our Lord. If you believe that the church would be making a terrible mistake in this move, you should remember that Christ did not spend his time hiding in 'safe' places. He was with 'publicans & sinners'. If you believe that this is a great and wonderful step forward, you should remember humility and send prayers of thanks to the Almighty.

Today I attend St. James in Fergus. I am there because God wants me to be there. I will remain there until he tells me to do His work elsewhere.

# Synodical Governance

**JOHN PENNYLEGION**  
CHAIR, NIAGARA ESSENTIALS

Essentials Niagara watched the Niagara Synod with interest, particularly since Bishop Spence had said that we are a synodically governed church and General Synod had made a decision rejecting the local option and he would abide with it. Despite this statement, a motion was presented to permit the blessing of same gender marriages. Assent was then given by Bishop Spence and Bishop Bird after the motion passed and this was clearly stated in the Pastoral Letter issued after synod. On November 28, a clarifying letter was issued stating that assent was not given. At Synod, delegates heard Bishop Spence give assent. Is this assent now formally withdrawn?

A diocesan group has been formed to develop the liturgy for the blessings and to determine the Canons that require change. Did not General Synod request a national body to undertake this same work? Niagara diocese is now preempting the work of this body.

The Anglican Church of Canada

is now in a position that dioceses are free to overturn decisions of General Synod. Why then hold a General Synod? Is there a national Church at all? Does the national church have any authority? What is its purpose and how can it function if dioceses are free to overturn its resolutions? Is there any unity in the Anglican Church of Canada?

It also suggests that if Diocesan Synods can overturn resolutions of General Synod, the Parish Synods (vestries) could overturn resolutions of its Diocesan Synod.

In October the Canadian House of Bishops reaffirmed its moratorium on blessing same-sex unions. Bishop Spence and Bishop Bird gave assent despite this agreement. Niagara diocese is no longer in unity with the House of Bishops.


We wrote to Bishop Spence and Bishop Bird in September requesting they not proceed with a motion or give assent in order to allow healing to occur. The wounds are now reopened and the consequences are being seen. The bishops called for unity after taking this action. If unity truly was desired,

assent should have been withheld at the Synod and clearly stated. Those wishing to achieve reconciliation, healing and unity do not take steps that bring harm and suffering. As a result, we now see parishioners and clergy leaving the Anglican church and talk of schism dominating the media.

Thus Niagara became a rogue diocese being the only one to appear to give assent since General Synod. The Diocese of Niagara is no longer compliant with the Windsor report. It has in fact acted in defiance of that report. The diocese is no longer in unity with the Canadian House of Bishops, General Synod or the Anglican Church of Canada.

Essentials Niagara will continue to speak forcefully and boldly for historic Christian orthodoxy. We will continue to strive to bring the church back to its biblical roots. We have warned the church locally and nationally that unity is threatened if it continues to undermine and overturn the teachings of the historic church. Our voices continue to be ignored and we see the results.

**Caralei Peters** MSc, ND  
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The installation of  
**The Right Reverend Michael A Bird**  
as Bishop of Niagara

Sunday March 2 at 4:00 PM  
Christ's Church Cathedral



Unfortunately due to limited seating we will be issuing tickets for this event, HOWEVER, we hope to have a live webcast of the installation for private viewing in homes and at parish centres.

We will also post a file to be viewed after the service.  
Stay tuned for more details.

## SHOOT, READY, AIM » God's hand in history today

**HOLLIS HISCOCK**  
RETIRED PRIEST - BURLINGTON

### SHOOT - The photograph

This photo was captured at Pearson Airport, Toronto, Ontario on Thursday, December 13 as I began my flight to St. John's, Newfoundland. The weather changed rapidly and it became necessary to de-ice the plane in preparation for takeoff. The monster robotic vehicles, with their powerful nozzles, sprayed the plane with a green coloured substance to remove any frozen water or build up that would prevent us from travelling safely through sub-zero atmospheric conditions.

This unique experience sent me scurrying to unload my camera safely stowed underneath the seat in front of me. My first digital photo produced a dim outline of another plane through an ice covered window. Paul's words flooded my memory, 'now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face (1 Corinthians 13:12). The 'face to face' happened after the de-icer worked its magic.

Soon we were ready for the 'high' road. I recalled the Bible reading for the third Sunday in Advent, Isaiah (35:1-10), which describes the characteristics of the ROAD OF HOLINESS as the highway through life. Isaiah describes what conditions we can expect as we travel through life with God, in particular...

- Weak hands and feeble knees would be strengthened.
- We would rejoice with joy and singing.
- We should be strong and not afraid.

■ We would be free from sorrow and grief.

■ We would be happy forever.

■ We would see the greatness and power of our God.

These are encouraging words for any leg of any journey along God's road to holiness.

### READY - Words behind the photo

The following day I travelled over 300 kilometres by automobile to celebrate a 20th anniversary. On December 16, 1987, John was ordained a priest in God's Church. The timing was intentional, as the Bishop wanted John priested so he could celebrate the Christ Mass and provide the Holy Communion for people at Christmas.

In preparation for the anniversary worship, I asked John if any special Bible passages were hallmarks for his ministry.

His first came from Paul's letter to the Philippians (4:4) where Paul suggests that in every situation, under all circumstances and with every personality type, Christians should 'rejoice always and again rejoice'. In my sermon, I said, 'since his ordination over 7,280 days ago, John has kept the faith and is still rejoicing'. Quite an accomplishment.

John's second hallmark passage is called in my Bible 'the final judgement' (Matthew 25:31-46). Jesus told about a king who separates the good people from the others. To the 'righteous ones' the king (God) says, 'I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me some-

thing to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.'

The dumbfounded righteous people inquired, 'Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink, or when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing, or when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?'

God's answer hit home, 'I tell you, when you did it to one of the least of my people, you did it to me.'

One example of John bringing this to life occurred recently. After training for many months, he entered a 10 mile (16.5 kilometre) road race. People sponsored him, and at the end of the race he had raised \$1,400.00 to help construct a school building in Belize.

Several days later, I was sitting on the tarmac at St. John's airport waiting for our plane to be de-iced before heading home to Toronto. I began thinking about this passage and what had happened to me during the previous few days.

Now I rarely consider myself to be 'one of the least of God's people', and yet I had become the recipient of the kindness of many 'righteous people'. Long time friends Ruth and Charlie opened their home to me, quenched my thirst and satisfied my hunger. Mary and Rick, whom I had met for the first time several hours



earlier, volunteered to transport me 150 kilometres so I could catch a bus to St. John's and avoid an impending fierce winter snowstorm. Alberta residents Joyce and Herman, visiting their daughter for Christmas, welcomed me, a stranger, into their car and brought me the other 150 kilometres to my brother's house.

As the plane released its grip on the freshly cleared St. John's runway, a warm feeling engulfed me as I realized how the Scriptures came alive in me that weekend.

### AIM - Questions and actions for you

■ Take a few minutes to reflect on where you see God helping you through the people you encounter on the 'road of holiness' in your life?

■ Ask yourself these questions and write out your answers, "Lord, when

did I see you hungry and give you food; when did I see you thirsty and give you something to drink; when did I see you a stranger and welcome you; when did I see you naked and give you clothing; when did I see you sick and take care of you; and when did I see you in prison and visit you?"

■ Take each of the above and make another list of what you can do during Lent 2007 to bring this Bible passage alive in your personal life, in your Church and community, as well as in the world wide global village.

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

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

# Taking time to fall in love

**LYNNE CORFIELD**  
RECTOR - ST. JOHN'S, NIAGARA FALLS

February is the shortest month and perhaps that is just as well when so many people get the BLAHS! The good thing is that slap bang in the middle of this short month is Valentine's Day—so that makes February the month of LOVE! There are several myths or popular stories around St. Valentine but it is thought that he was a priest or Bishop in third century Rome. Rome at that time was ruled by the Emperor Claudius who wanted to build a large army and so he decreed that all the young men would sign up! It seemed that the young men had other ideas and did not want to leave their wives and families. Next thing Claudius decreed there would be no more marriages. That idea went down like a ton of bricks! Valentine began to perform secret marriage ceremonies, which he got away with for some time, until one night the soldiers came and took him to prison, and his punishment for disobeying Claudius was death.

While Valentine was in prison many young people came to the jail to visit him and would throw cards and flowers up to his window. Wait—the story gets better—one of his regular visitors was the daughter of one of the prison guards. Her visits helped to keep his spirits up and he was deeply appreciative of her friendship and loyalty. On the day of his execution Valentine left her a thank you note, and signed it "love from your Valentine." The date

of his death, February 14, 269, and now you know the rest of the story! Well, that is the part of the story that is remembered and celebrated commercially but it is also thought that while he was imprisoned Valentine ministered to both prisoners and guards alike, baptizing many into the faith and was martyred.

### Letters of love and appreciation

Most years Valentine's Day is the only bright spot in an otherwise dreary month—it certainly cheers up the card companies and the chocolate companies—not to mention all the recipients. Valentines can be expressions of what is in our hearts—it can be a day to declare our feelings of love and admiration. We could be doing worse things than spending time giving messages and expressions of love!

When you stop and think about it most people don't send notes of appreciation. Disgruntled people tend to grunt—and express their disapproval by sending angry letters. Satisfied people tend to be silent! I am pretty sure that during Bishop Ralph's ten years as our bishop nine of every ten letters were of complaint. I am going to encourage you to send him a love note in this his retirement month! Let's see if we can blanket him with letters of appreciation for a change!

Edward Hays says in *A Pilgrim's Almanac*, "Valentine's Day reminds us that we can become ministers of a most needed sacrament. While it is usually bishops who administer the

Sacrament of Confirmation, each of us can become a minister of affirmation. All that is required to administer this sacrament is love and the willingness to take the time to express, by voice, postcard, letter, or email what we feel in our hearts."

This February is somewhat action packed with several important dates. This being a leap year we do have one extra day—the 29th is not only Bishop Ralph's retirement date—it is also traditionally when women can propose to the men in their life! February is the month of love and affirmation!

### Lenten journey

Two other important dates that occur this February in the month of LOVE are Shrove Tuesday and Ash Wednesday. In the Western Christian calendar, Ash Wednesday is the first day of Lent and occurs forty-six days before Easter. It falls on different dates from year to year, according to the date of Easter; it can occur as early as February 4 or as late as March 10. This year Ash Wednesday falls on February 6... and so our minds will turn towards deciding what we will give up, and/or take on for our Lenten discipline. You might want to think twice about choosing to give up chocolate this year when just one week later someone may be giving you some sinfully delicious chocolate! As far as I am concerned, chocolate can never be sinful, only delicious!

As we are in the month of love, why not make a suggestion that this

Lenten journey a time to in love with God!

In the mid-1990s I came across a book that is one of those we call a 'defining book' in that it changed my life. I was in seminary at the time and in between writing papers and serving in a parish, would take time to ponder about my ever growing and deepening faith and love for God. I was wrestling with a thought "what makes some people work so hard in the church, and be totally engaged in their faith, while other people seem content to sit in a pew and do nothing?" Did I get zapped by some mysterious energy? Was that zap meant for me or the person beside me? Why did I feel so driven to serve God with all my heart and soul? In the midst of this wondering I came across a book called *Earth Crammed with Heaven: A Spirituality for Everyday Life*, by Elizabeth Dreyer (yes, it is still available through Chapters for \$10.50). Lo and behold, on page 10, I found the answer to my questions! In the very first chapter Dreyer writes, "One can look at spirituality from three perspectives. First, what might be called as the originating experience of God. At some specific point in history, a person falls in love with God." Eureka! That was an epiphany moment for me! That is it! I had fallen in love with God. Brilliant!

### Take the time

Think about times in your life when you have met someone, become

attracted and interested in them. Likely you couldn't get too far through your day without thoughts of this person creeping into your mind. The same can be true in our love relationship with God.

In our busy lives we sometimes lose touch with the people we love. In God's case it's ok because it is one of those relationships that we can pick up where we left off, and Lent is a perfect time to do that. Bidden or not, God is present.

Take time to assess where you are in your relationship with God at the beginning of Lent. That could be anywhere from distant and estranged to madly in love. As with any relationship that is important to us, we do need to spend time on it so that we can be in touch, share in each other's lives, share experiences. During Lent we can take (make) time to pray, to meditate, to appreciate God in nature, and in each other. Take out a journal and write some love notes to God. Reading the book of Exodus is a great way to remember how Moses and God grew in their relationship so that by the time Moses was an old man he could feel comfortable to chat with God about anything; even to say "how come I have never seen your face?"

This February, make God your Valentine and take time to renew and refresh your relationship. February is the month of LOVE. Be a minister of affirmation to others and takes time to fall in love with God again! It's a win-win!

# Ramblings from Cairo



**MICHAEL BURSLEM**  
ALL SAINTS' CATHEDRAL, CAIRO

"Whatever things are true, whatever things are honest, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things" (Philippians 4:8).

This verse from Philippians, which I had to learn by heart at school, is posted by the telephone and the computer which we share at the Diocesan Guest House in Cairo, to remind us that what we say and send out from here should be profitable and wholesome to both hearer and reader.

We have been coming to Cairo almost every year since 1968 and All Saints' has been our church all that time, during which we've attended five churches in Canada. The English services at the cathedral are at 10 a.m. on Fridays, for those who have that day off work, and 10.30 a.m. on Sundays. There are other services in Arabic, Sudanese, Ethiopian and once a month in Swedish. In the past we have always attended the Sunday service with friends we have known for nearly 40 years. The congregations are now mostly African, with a large number of Sudanese refugees.

The cathedral, together with the congregation of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, supports many thousands of refugees. No church in Canada that I know has such a large outreach program. The care of refugees, a ministry to the deaf, the prison ministry, Manouf Hospital in the Delta, the Diocesan Guest House, where we meet new friends from around the world, all cost money, and a lot of it, and is worthy of support from our Canadian church.

On the Tuesday of the week before Christmas, we had a service of Carols and Lessons, the lessons

being read in many different English accents; Egyptian, real English, Sudanese, Malawian, Kenyan, Ugandan, Burmese and New Zealand. In Scripture and in song we heard the wonderful news of God's gift to all humanity, in the person of his son, Jesus Christ. In the address after the reading of the passage from John 1, Bishop Derek Eaton, acting dean, spoke of this coming of Jesus as a baby in the manger, but Lord of the whole earth, an event in history we call the Incarnation; a mystery we shall never be able to fathom with our limited human minds: but all we do know about God we know through Jesus Christ, the Word of God, the Light of God, and the Life of God.

Thankfully, the sounds of the carol service drowned out the bleating of the sheep being slaughtered in the street a few blocks away. They were on the sidewalk for a few days before, looking very frightened and pathetic. We just assume that they knew why they were there. We think of sheep at Christmas time grazing peacefully, being watched over by caring shepherds, on the hills, not huddled together on the sidewalk in a large city. It was impossible to look into their eyes. The sacrifice of the sheep on the last night of the *Haj*, the pilgrimage to Mecca, is in preparation for the celebration of the feast, *el Eid*. It's in grateful memory of God's provision of a substitute for the sacrifice of Isaac, Abraham's son. The following morning there were puddles of blood and sheep's carcasses all over the sidewalks. *El Eid* is a truly *carnivorous* feast, (as told in the *Al-Ahram Weekly*, 20-26 December 2007) but only those who can afford to buy a sheep for the family can enjoy it. However, those who can, are instructed to divide it into three, one portion for the poor, one for one's relatives, and one for the family. Two thirds are therefore given away. It's a moveable feast based on the lunar calendar, so it doesn't always come at Christmas time. Sometimes Christmas coincides with the feast that celebrates the Prophet's birthday, when all the candy shops and patisseries are decorated with lights, and



there are lots of good delicacies, which we normally associate with Christmas.

However, the killing of the sheep this Christmas season has caused us to think again of the whole purpose of Christmas. The look of the frightened sheep before they were killed gave us just an inkling of what the Old Testament sacrifices would have been like. We wouldn't have had the stomach to watch their being killed, and were thankful we were in the carol service. We decided that if we felt so squeamish about it, what would it have been like when Solomon made his sacrifices in the thousands? This made us all the more thankful that God has indeed provided a substitute, not so much for the poor sheep, but *for us*.

The *muezzin* (chosen person at the mosque who calls the reminder to the 5 daily prayers) reminds us five times a day, starting about one hour before dawn, just how

great, how awesomely holy, is our God, before whom all sinful beings like us should just drop dead. But instead God has again and again offered a substitute; first the sacrificial lambs killed in the temple; then his son, whom St. John later calls the Lamb of God. Not by anything we say we believe (words are cheap), still less by anything we do, but only through his death, and not ours, have we, not just life, but the abundant life of which St. John later speaks in his Gospel. There's another mystery of our faith, which we call the Atonement. We'll be thinking about that as we approach Good Friday and Easter, and at every Eucharist we thank God for this wonderful gift.

We know from John's Gospel the state of those who do receive God's gift. They're children of God. But what of those who don't? Some years ago Bishop Kenneth Cragg, former assistant bishop of Jerusalem, whose ministry was mainly

here in Cairo, spoke on the subject, *And What of Others?* in Canterbury Cathedral. He made three points which I still remember. Firstly, we need to identify with those who don't accept the gift, and not to separate ourselves from them. We are all of one flesh, sharing a common humanity. Secondly, we need to tell them the Good News, being sure that it is the good news, and not merely Western culture. Thirdly, he said that we just have to leave them in the hands of a merciful God. With what we know of God that's not a bad place to leave them.

Postscript—We had planned an early visit to the cave churches at Mokattam to complete the article on St. Samaan the Cobbler, but it was too chilly, only 16, and too cloudy for any photography. Actually the party that did go had to turn back, as there was an accident in the garbage village, and no traffic could get around it. Hence this rambling essay instead.

## PEOPLE IN THE NEWS

- Best wishes to Archdeacon Marion Vincett who retired as Executive Archdeacon of Niagara, effective January 31. We wish Marion and Paul every good wish as this new chapter unfolds.
- Our sympathy to the Reverend David Ponting and the Ponting Family on the death of their mother, Marjory Ponting, O.N., on December 15. Marjory was a long time and faithful member of St. Matthew-on-the-Plains, Burlington. Funeral service was from her parish church on December 19.
- Our sympathy to David McPetrie and family, on the death of Carol, on December 14. (Sister in law of Archdeacon Bruce McPetrie). The

- funeral service was held from her parish church of St. Christopher's, Burlington, on December 19.
- Our deepest sympathy to the Reverend Richard Ruggle, retired priest of this diocese, and family, on the death of his mother, Marion LePatourel, at the age of 102, on January 3.
- Marilyn DeBeau, O.N., a long time and faithful member of St. Paul's, Fort Erie, passed away on January 1. Our thoughts and prayers are with her husband, Jake, and their children, Blair and Scott.
- The Reverend Canon Michael Patterson will be Collated Executive Archdeacon of Niagara on February 3 at Christ's Church Cathedral.

- The Reverend Canon David Howells and the Reverend Canon Lucy Reid have submitted their resignation effective February 29, 2008. David and Lucy have accepted the appointment jointly to the rectorship of St. Michael and All Angels, Victoria, British Columbia. We wish them well as they take on a new chapter in their lives.
- The Reverend Joanne Beacon will begin as Rector of the Ridge Parish (All Saints Anglican, Ridgeway, St. John's, Anglican, Ridgemount and St. Luke's Evangelical Lutheran, Ridgeway) beginning February 1. Please extend a warm welcome to the Reverend Joanne Beacon to the Brock Region of this diocese, from Saskatchewan.

- Congratulations to Peg and Don Jones, long time and faithful members of St. Stephen on the Mount, Hamilton, who celebrated their 65th Wedding Anniversary in December.
- The Reverend Lyndon Hutchison-Hounsell, on leave from Niagara, transferred Orders to the Diocese of Rupert's Land.
- The Reverend Maria Nightingale was appointed honorary assistant at St. Elizabeth's Church, Burlington, under the direction of the Reverend Jean Archbell.
- The Reverend Carole Langlotz was appointed honorary assistant at St. John's Church, Burlington, during the interim period, under the direc-

- tion of the Reverend Nigel Bunce.
- The Reverend Canon Laurie Duby was appointed honorary assistant at Christ Church, Flamborough, under the direction of Canon Barry Randle.
- The Reverend Charles Easson was appointed honorary assistant at St. Cuthbert's, Oakville, under the direction of Canon Joseph Asselin.
- The Reverend Nancy Rowe began her ministry as Deacon in Charge at St. Paul's, Norval, on a quarter time basis.
- Our sympathy to the family of Archdeacon Harold Llewellyn who passed away on January 13th. Harold retired from full-time ministry in 1987.

# SNAP Workshop a resounding success



Pictured with Bishop Ralph Spence and Bishop Michael Bird are the Secretaries who attended the December workshop

Secretaries of the Niagara Anglican Parishes gathered at Canterbury Hills Conference Centre in Ancaster for a one-day workshop and over night retreat on December 3 and 4 of 2007. The ladies congregated in the afternoon of the third for social time and a sumptuous meal.

In the evening, we were treated to a stamping presentation and workshop, led by Jane Buunk and her business partner, Debbie, of "Stamping Up". Each secretary made two Christmas cards, which would be combined with gifts that were brought for the women of Interval House, a Hamilton women's shelter, which was this year's outreach project.

Later on in the evening, Linda Watson, of St. Columba Anglican Church, in St. Catharines

showed everyone how to make long-stemmed, "Hershey's Kisses" roses, and "cheek squeezers" which also went with the gifts sent to Interval House.

Tuesday morning's breakfast was joined by Bishop Ralph Spence, Bishop Michael Bird as well as Diocesan Evangelism Officer and incoming Executive Archdeacon, Michael Patterson. This made for a pleasant opportunity to say goodbye and thank you to Bishop Ralph and to meet and welcome Bishop Michael.

After breakfast, Michael Patterson spoke about how he envisions his role as Executive Archdeacon and about professional development, and partnerships with one another. He encouraged the ladies to send representatives to him in

the New Year to talk about how he can help with technical training and technological advances. He said he would like to see the churches in the diocese work together, instead of "re-inventing the wheel" every time each church performs a task.

Jane Wyse, from the Synod office, led the next workshop, which was an overview of the Volunteer Screening in Faith process. This diocesan initiative first took place three years ago and the time has come for each parish to update their records and report back to the diocese. There will be more in-depth workshops on this subject held in various locations in the New Year.

Some of the participants took the opportunity between Jane's presentation and lunch to go for a brisk winter walk around the grounds. The deer were welcoming during the secretaries' stay, and came by the windows of those who chose not to venture out into the cold.

After lunch, the ladies held an interesting and helpful round-table discussion about when the next secretaries' meeting should be held, and answered questions on how the job of a church secretary can be better executed.

Later in the afternoon, the Venerable Bruce McPetric came in to speak about Synod Council's requirements for Long Term Hall Licensing Agreements and reminded the group about the procedures for user group insurance, licensing renewals and the need to keep registers and other documents archived and filed, according to Diocesan policy.

The workshop closed with a short worship service led by Linda Watson and the day concluded with a wonderful Christmas dinner prepared by the staff of Canterbury Hills.

The group plans to meet for their next workshop in the spring of 2008 and would love to see even more of our Diocesan secretaries present for this enriching and uplifting time of renewal. The ideas we share will benefit not only the secretary, but the whole parish. Please encourage your secretary to participate!

## CONT. FROM PAGE 7 » Prisoner of hope

as being a mentor, a model of enlightenment, a voice to which we all must have the courage to listen if we are ever to make this world a better place.

According to *Rollingstone*, the way of the future is one in which the leadership has no women and no racial minorities, business can literally continue as usual, and all of the mess and muss of God and conviction and faith can be safely disarmed.

Now, I happen to be someone who believes I've got my money's worth out of a piece of writing if it makes me want to chuck the pages across the room in an angry fit, so problems withstanding, my subscription was probably safe. But it was nonetheless a wonderful surprise when I realized that someone with a different voice had made *Rollingstone's* futuristic cut. Cornel West, a professor of religion. A person of faith. A person of faith who can articulate his beliefs with wisdom, with artistry, with beauty. A person who speaks outside of the clichés which are so often the only representations of religious conviction to be found in the mass media.

"I am a blues man. I am a person of hope. Hope wrestles with despair. I am a prisoner of hope."

The Gospel of Christ lays a claim on our lives. It claims us as prisoners of hope. It claims us as people who don't take the easy way out, who are willing to knock up against the challenges, the paradoxes, the tensions, the untidiness and discomfort of life. It claims us as people who are neither optimists nor pessimists, people who are as equally uncompromising in the project of truth-telling as we are in the project of wrestling our collective and individual demons.

In fact, this issue of *Rollingstone* has something compelling to say to us as Christians just beginning to forge our way into yet another new year.

The problems that are currently presenting themselves to our human race are nothing less than gigantic. They are gigantic, and the secular world does not have all the answers. A world thoroughly sanitized of God and faith and religious conviction might be greatly appealing to some, but history has just as much to teach us about the disaster of "enlightenment"—of cocky, rationalistic, self-sufficient humankind run amuck—as it does to teach us about the tragedy of religious warfare. Our faith has wisdom to impart. About our collective interdependence. About the freedom of living with less. About discerning our hearts' deepest desire. About the care—care of the earth, care of one another, care of the vulnerable—with which God has entrusted us. About humility, awe, wonder, creativity, prayer, beauty, joy. About love.

We have something to say. We have a voice that needs to be heard. And we need to learn again (and again and again) just how we might go about bearing witness to these words, to this voice. There is a lot of baggage attached to the language of faith, there are far too many people, now and in years gone by, who have justified great violence, enacted horrific harm, in the name of God. Richard Dawkins is appealing for a reason. And we do have our work cut out for us.

And yet, as Cornel West says with such beauty, the hope of which we are prisoners creates an energy to be courageous, the take a wild leap of faith into the unknown, to wrestle with the problems that are most daunting, and in the midst of that wrestling to speak of the Truth that binds us, that lays claim to our lives, our being.

In this New Year, may we find ourselves prisoners once again. And may we have the courage to sing our song.

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Niagara Children &  
Family Ministries Event

Mark your Calendars!

Making Heart-Bread

February 8-10, 2008

Canterbury Hills Camp, Ancaster



This retreat creates opportunities to enrich faithful, nurturing relationships and homes. This year's theme is based on the book *Making Heart-Bread* by Matthew Linn, Sheila Fabricant Linn and Dennis Linn. There will be campfires, workshops for children, youth and adults, hearty meals, tobogganing, lively music, creative worship times, puppet show, family crafts, bread making and time to connect with loved ones. Everyone welcome; please join us for a fun-filled time.

For registration and information, please contact:

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