

Let's celebrate
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Evensong - Jan. 6
See page 7 for details



St. Thomas Anglican

A section of the Anglican Journal

REFLECTIVE • REFLECTION • FOR A GROWING CHURCH • JANUARY 2008

Church on Tap

PAT DAVIS
ST. JAMES AND ST. BRENDAN PORT COLBORNE

Who says you have to do church in a church? On Sunday, October 28th, the Parish of St. James & St. Brendan Church in Port Colborne held its inaugural "Church On Tap" in association with the Canalside Pub and Eatery on West Street. The worship committee under the leadership of Rev. Robert Hurkmans had worked hard to plan and promote the event, but leading up to the first night we weren't sure what to expect. Some people who had heard about the event phoned to find out more, while others who had seen our advertising had voiced their displeasure, complaining that the idea of holding church in a pub was "offensive" and "disgusting". We would soon discover the outcome.

Upon entering the pub, we were met by Tim who cordially welcomed us to an evening billed as "Faith, Friends and Froth". He handed us a bulletin and we found an unclaimed table. The establishment had a capacity crowd and was electric with chatter and laughter as people, some from other parishes in town, some from no organized church, and a few "out of towners", mingled on their way to and from the bar area to get their refreshment in preparation for the "service". Some chose to have a bite to eat as

well and the wait staff were inconspicuous as they delivered orders to tables.

The tables were decorated with candles, the room was dim, and on the bar stood a brass cross and two lit candles. On the large screen above the bar was a quote by Benjamin Franklin, "Beer is proof that God loves us and wants us to be happy." Linda and Alfredo were playing jazz and contemporary music such as "All You Need Is Love" and "Stand By Me", that had surprising spiritual messages for those with ears to hear.

The service opened with a prayer, a toast and a visual of a billboard showing a picture of Jesus holding a bottle of Budweiser and the caption read, "King of Jews, King of Beers." Rob pointed out that it was a billboard that had been altered by graffiti artists in Houston in 2006. Of course the billboard was quickly removed as there was much anger and offence taken by the commuters that our Lord would be associated with beer drinking. However, Rob used the picture to remind us that Jesus had been called many names, glutton and drunkard being but two, and that he had been judged because he hung out with the "wrong people" and in the "wrong places". He also reminded us that this type of gathering was entirely consistent with the life and ministry of Jesus.



We watched a short video about a gentleman who daily and persistently was using a bullhorn/megaphone to preach a "turn or burn" gospel message. However, it didn't seem to be working for him or the people on the street who he was trying to reach with his message. The speakers commented that, "How you love others is how you love God." Following this there was a short break for re-fills, and music before table-discussion ensued.

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God, scripture, us and the marginalized Out of the bleakness



CHRISTYN PERKONS
CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILY MINISTRIES

I spent Saturday morning engaged, fully engaged, in a Bible study! It was a morning that left me filled with hope; hope for the church, and hope for me and my place in that church. And it was a morning that left me excited about the Old Testament. And that's really saying something! I have been one of those Anglicans who is deeply engaged by the Gospel but feels pretty unconnected to the Old Testament.

I recognize that's about me, not the Old Testament but it's a common view of the Bible among many of my peers. I have had a difficult time finding a place to connect with much of the Old Testament, with the images of violence, anger, judgement, etc. I have always found it much easier to connect with the humanity of Jesus, and the unconditionally loving nature of the God of the New Testament.

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ELEANOR JOHNSTON
ST. THOMAS, ST. CATHARINES

"Woe to the shepherds who destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture! says the Lord... I myself will gather the remnant of my flock out of all the lands where I have driven them, and I will bring them back to their fold and they shall be fruitful and multiply... They shall not fear any longer, or be dismayed, nor shall any be missing, says the Lord" (Jeremiah 23: 1-6).

Anglicans in this Diocese have expended enormous efforts to reach

the agreement that priests may bless same-sex couples and to absorb the very public attack launched by the Essentials Network Conference. Yet it's as if the Diocese is in the midst of an inevitably messy divorce. We dread the fights over who's to blame, who's leaving whom. Who gets the family house? Where did our love go wrong?

The Anglican Church of Canada is also facing the larger breakdown of the worldwide Communion.

» CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

The fullness of our relationship with God lies in how we treat the marginalized.

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PARISH NEWS



Charlie's Angels (from left): Carmen Saivola, Charlie Holman, Chantal Gilroy-Gibson and Alyssa Peavoy.



Parishioners check out the items and make their bids during the auction.



Friends and parishioners enjoying the Pub Fare.

Charlie's Angels serve up a scrumptious pub dinner

SUE CRAWFORD
ST. MICHAEL'S, HAMILTON

The recent Pub Night and Auction at St. Michael's Church in Hamilton was an overwhelming success. About 80 people enjoyed a delicious dinner provided by Charlie Holman and his young ladies from Parkview Secondary School in Hamilton. Charlie is a teacher in the Food Services department and has often provided catering from his school at our functions. This

time Charlie brought three of the young students to help serve the repast. This meant that parishioners who wanted to take part in the evening's fun did not have to spend much time in the kitchen.

The food, of course, included a delicious shepherd's pie, along with scrumptious salads and cheese cannelloni for the vegetarian appetite. Decadent desserts were donated by parishioners.

The Special Events commit-

tee who oversees our fundraisers throughout the year decided on a Pub Theme for the Silent Auction night. The hall was tastefully decorated with British flags. Candles in glass holders were attractively ensconced amongst green tartan material.

Throughout the evening Christy Charters kept the karaoke machine and music going for those brave enough to show their singing prowess. Several people did get up and sing some of their favourite oldies.

Parishioners could also visit the Fireside Room and keep bidding on their favourite article(s). The room was divided into three sections of items. At the end of every hour after 7:30 p.m., a section was closed and the "winners" of the bid could pay for and claim their items. There were some great items that were donated for the auction. The most money raised was on the pair of Toronto Maple Leaf tickets, while a gourmet dinner for four

fetched the next highest bid. The organizers were extremely grateful to all who donated items for the auction.

It was grand evening. The event planners were Charlie Holman, Gina Newhall and Janine Charters. Vito Marzoli helped out with ticket sales. They are to be congratulated. As usual many others helped setting up, taking down the tables and clearing everything away. The church raised over \$3500.00.



Celebrating 30 years

GILLIAN HOWARTH
WARDEN

On Sunday November 25, the parish of Christ Church, Flamborough held a celebration to mark the 30th anniversary of the ordination of their rector, Reverend Canon Barry Randle. The congregation worked together to organize a service to mark the occasion as a surprise. Bishop Michael joined the parish as celebrant for an evening Eucharist.

Despite conflicting with the Grey

Cup, the church was filled to capacity and Barry was greeted with applause as he arrived at the church. Friends and colleagues had traveled from as far away as Ottawa to join parishioners for the occasion.

The youth group began the service with an acrostic poem showing their appreciation for Barry's ministry. The homily was given by Reverend Canon Robert Schroeder who was ordained in Ottawa at the same time as Barry. Children from the Sunday School closed the ser-

vice by singing their own version of "Go Tell It on the Mountain." The offering at the service was given to St. Matthew's House, a ministry that Barry describes as "close to his heart".

Following the service Barry was toasted at a reception in the Parish Hall where the cake was complemented with butter tarts—Barry's favourite indulgence! The celebration gave parishioners an opportunity to demonstrate their appreciation and support for their Rector.



Rainbow Chorus coming to St. James

DOUGLAS BROWNLEE
MUSIC DIRECTOR

On Saturday, January 26 at 8:00 PM, The Rainbow Chorus of Guelph, Artistic Director, Robert G. Miller and accompanist, Allison MacNeill will present a dynamic, winter themed choral concert at St. James' Dundas. This is the fourth concert in the MUSICA St. James 07-08 concert series and everyone is invited.

Their profile outlines their commitment to community and music.

"The Rainbow Chorus is a charitable, non-profit organization of amateur choral singers who have joined together in song and celebration of the diversity of our community. The chorus welcomes everyone: lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgendered, and straight alike. Our members come predominantly from Waterloo Regional and Wellington County in Ontario, Canada. We believe that, through the universal language of music, many of the perceived barriers and misunderstandings about sexual diversity can be resolved in a safe and respectful manner. Our hopes are to

promote excellence in the study and public performance of choral arts, and to educate and bring appreciation of music through a variety of performances at public and private venues."

The Rainbow Chorus performs their concerts entirely from memory. Often there is choreography and special effects that highlight their program. Founded in 1994 the choir has grown and matured into a fine choral ensemble brimming with passion, enthusiasm and musicality. Recent performances saw the choir at Place des Arts in Montréal at the VIIe Festival Internationale de GALA Chorus where they were invited to be part of a massed choral performance of the Aids Requiem, *When We No Longer Touch*, at Carnegie Hall in New York City in February of 2006.

Details are incomplete at this time but the proceeds from the concert will be given to a local charity. Please check the church website, www.stjamesdundas.ca, or call 905-627-1424 for more details and tickets.

HOLY TRINITY » 150th Anniversary



As part of the continuing 150th Anniversary celebrations of Holy Trinity Church, Welland, Archdeacon Laughton Binns was invited by the present rector, Reverend Dan Bennett, to preach at Holy Trinity at last Sunday's services.

Shown to the right of Reverend Bennett, Laughton, who came to Canada from Jamaica, worked tirelessly for the Anglican Church. He and his wife Marion retired to Burlington following 12 years at Holy Trinity.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1 » Church on Tap

Rob led us through the questions being displayed on the screen and everyone was encouraged to share their thoughts with the table, and then with the whole pub. There were many comments about God, love and organized religion and no one seemed anxious for the discussion to finish.

The service was brought to a close after about one hour, with a prayer and a thank you to all who came out for the event. Many stayed on to mix and mingle with friends. We left with a feeling not only of having grown spiritually, but also with a feeling of community that evening. Since that evening there has been a bit of a buzz around town since one of the attendees was a local journalist who wrote an article for newspaper and promoted the event.

This event is not for everyone, but then again, it isn't meant for everyone. It is a fresh way of doing church for our Anglican parish, as well as an opportunity to reach out to those in our community who have a longing for God, but not for the organized church, people who enjoy discussing their faith and beliefs in a more relaxed setting with a pint in their hand. All that is required is a loving heart and an interest in sharing thoughts and listening to others.

"Church On Tap" is held on the last Sunday of every month beginning at 8:00 PM. Our next service will be on December 30. For more info call: 905-834-3184.

Being born again



MARTHA TATARNIC
PRIEST - ST. JUDES, OAKVILLE

Before giving birth to Cecilia, I was told by more than one excited friend about a new baby book. This was a book that was going to solve any possible parental problems. This was a book that would tell me how to de-code my baby's crying so that I could understand what it was my baby was asking of me.

A piercing cry

This sounded very useful and promising pre-baby. Becoming a mother was a rather intimidating proposition, and the idea of having a leg-up in the complex task of trying to care for my newborn child seemed a very good one. Post-baby, the whole thing sounds like one great big scam designed to line somebody's pocket book and make parents even more paranoid and up-tight than they already are.

There are countless times over the past six months that Cecilia has cried. It is a sound to which I have become well accustomed. Her cry is specifically engineered with the purpose of piercing me to the bone because that cry is the only means she has of asking for something. And in the course of a normal day, Cecilia often wants something.

However, what she wants is not complicated. The list is, in fact, very short:

- She wants food. (Number one request in the first three months)
- She wants companionship. (Current number one).
- She wants to be more comfortable. (A diaper is wet, something has hurt her, she has some gas or sore gums, she's tired).

A silly premise

Cecilia is not asking for a doll she saw at the store that she just has to have, or for a prettier wardrobe, or for ketchup chips rather than salt & vinegar. I do not have to rack my brains trying to figure it out; running through a thirty second checklist almost always gets to the bottom of the mystery. Is she hungry? Is she wet? Is she tired? Is there anything out of the ordinary that should raise alarm bells? And

if the answer to all of the above is no, then she obviously needs to be reminded she's loved. (In fact, even if the answer is yes, this reminder is always in order).

When all is said and done, a book about the secret language of babies makes for quite a silly premise. It is not just silly though, it is also potentially destructive. Because one of the most wonderful and refreshing things about hanging out with a baby is that they actually *do* let you know what they want, when they want it.

Not knowing what we want

In order to understand why this is such a wonderful thing, we need only compare a baby to an adult. And for the sake of authenticity, I am willing to use myself as an example.

When I want something, I do everything *except* ask for it.

I drop hints months ahead of time, expecting those closest to me to remember these hints at appropriate celebratory times.

I say things like, 'oh, I like to be surprised,' when what I really mean is that I want to be surprised in exactly the way that I have visualized in my mind.

I tell one person (ie. a friend) what I would like another person (ie. my husband) to get for me or do for me, meanwhile hoping that the said person (husband) will have become suddenly adept at the skill of mind-reading.

The things that I think I want can not be found on a simple checklist like my daughter's. I really might think I need to have one kind of potato chip rather than another.

And even worse, frequently I don't know what I want. I don't know what I want, but I do know that I want somebody to do something, or give me something, that will make me feel special and affirmed and complete and loved.

It's not easy to ask

Why with all of the grown-up language at our disposal, language that can express amazing subtlety and complexity, is it so hard to express to another person what it is we want, to ask for something? Maybe there is a need for books that will help us decode one another's language so that we can decipher what it is we are actually asking, but that book is not needed with babies. After spending most of my adult life communicating with

those around me in a 'read between the lines' manner, it is liberating to spend all of my time with someone who has no qualms in telling me forthright what it is she wants.

Isn't it interesting then that Jesus tells us over and over again to take our needs and desires to our God in prayer: *'Ask and you shall receive.'* *'How great the gifts the Father will give those who ask.'* *'Ask whatever you wish and it will be given you.'* *'If you believe you will receive whatever you ask in prayer.'* We stumble over these passages, mostly because we know that prayers are not always answered, or if they are always answered, they are certainly not always answered with a 'yes.' And yet, Jesus' words are not meant to suggest some sort of mail-order God. Instead his words call on us to be open to a challenging and demanding relationship. Jesus' words place on us a profound responsibility.

Because the thing is, it is not easy to ask for what we want.

Asking another being to meet our needs, expressing our wishes and desires out loud, involves radical intimacy, deep trust, thoughtful discernment. It involves being able to share with someone the things that are closest to our hearts—our wishes, our dreams, our hopes, our expectations, many of which, when actually named, can feel silly, outlandish, or unreasonable. It involves believing ourselves worthy enough to be able to ask for something and hope to receive it. It involves relinquishing power, because most of us are more comfortable being in control, giving rather than receiving. It involves knowing what it is we want, knowing our deepest desire, and knowing the difference between that deep desire and a basic insecurity that has been warped into wanting things that will never make us whole.

The book as already been written

Opening our hearts to God in prayer, asking God to meet our deepest desires, this is not simply about trusting that God will look after us if we just have enough faith. This is about truly being 'born again.' It is about approaching God in much the same way that a newborn baby approaches her parents—with our desires laid bare, with our neediness unmasked, with keen awareness of the shocking intimacy that binds us to the source and sustainer of our life.

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Bring on the disturbance... a little anyway!



BILL MOUS
DIVINITY STUDENT

During a break in one of our classes, a fellow student returned to the classroom with a large manila envelope. She excitedly announced that she had in her possession an Intention to Graduate form! This resulted in a rush to the divinity office by the four other graduating students in the class. After what might have looked to the curious onlookers like an Olympic speed walking competition down the hallway, we were disappointed to discover that our forms had been put in the mail the day before.

The truth of the matter is that none of us were particularly overjoyed by the prospect of filling out a large form detailing our academic history while at Trinity, but we were all excited by what it signalled: that our time at Trinity was growing short.

Having reached the end of the chapter in several academic enterprises, this feeling of excitement about moving on the next step is a pretty normal thing; the final term

in high school focused more on university scholarship applications and acceptance letters than it did on the work and activities of the school and while my thesis kept me somewhat rooted in the final semester of my undergraduate degree more than I was in high school, my heart was more interested in things like applications for ordination and interviews with divinity schools.

Yet as I near the end of my Master of Divinity degree, I am mindful of the fact that within this looming large scale transition there have been a number of somewhat smaller transitions at the beginning and end of each of the three or four field education placements one is required to undertake. In my experience these smaller transitions were much more difficult than the ones which come from the changing of one's academic milieu. The reason is that many of these placements last only three months. After being inserted into a community, one is normally just at the point of finding a place and role within that community, when the time comes to return to school to reflect on that experience. At times it seems cruel, but I think the theory is that this system of field placements allows for the greatest amount of experience.

With all these beginnings and endings in mind, I've been pon-

dering the implications of an ecological theory, the Intermediate Disturbance hypothesis, to help me understand times of transition—in life and in ministry. The hypothesis calls into question the often assumed notion that stability leads to optimal conditions for the greatest amount of biodiversity to be present in any given area. Instead it suggests that both stability and high levels of disturbance reduce diversity. This is because areas that are stable aren't able to foster many opportunities for new species to arrive because the species that are present in the area are well entrenched. On the flip side, areas with too much disturbance have very little diversity because species aren't able to find their niche before a new disturbance comes to change their environment. Thus the hypothesis predicts that the most number of species will be found in areas with intermediate levels of disturbance. When we extend this idea to our own personal, professional or parish growth, there may well be some significant implications for the way we undertake ministry!

On one end of the scale, that of too much disturbance or change, we might categorize three month field placements or parishes with a revolving door of leaders. With constant turnover between situations, one is significantly challenged to

be able to understand their environments well enough to develop a great number of substantial ideas or initiative from one's experience. One of the reasons why we have interim ministry—and why it almost always last more than six months—is to enable parishes to pause and reflect upon their ministry and their future in a manner that enables discernment.

On the other end of the scale, that of long periods of stability,



Both stability and high levels of disturbance reduce diversity.

we might categorize parishes that haven't undergone a considerable challenge to its ministry in the last three or five years, or perhaps those whose leadership has remained more or less constant and without significant new vision for several years. As a result, the parish or its leadership might become too comfortable, to the point where worship, programs and ways of doing things become 'tradition' or 'the way we do it here', so much so that new comers are excluded and new ideas are discouraged resulting either in frustration or oppression.

The middle way—the *via media*

if you will—is the realm of intermediate disturbance. It's a place where a happy medium between stability and change is found; where traditions and leadership is allowed to continue to be, but not without regular opportunity to be challenged by new ideas and new leaders. To find this place is probably not an easy thing to do—for it requires a great amount of work, humility and discernment. All of these are considerable challenges for the majority of us who, for any number of reasons, are more likely to be content to stay in the comfortable place of stability.

I think the time is nearing for me to move from Trinity to the next chapter—to take what I have learned, and despite all the comforts Trinity may offer, to look forward to the next challenge, that of professional ministry.

My Intention to Graduate form arrived in the mail the other day. With it begins a gradual process that won't fully reach its conclusion until such a time when I step upon a stage to receive a rolled up piece of blank foolscap, symbolizing my efforts, learning and growth in the past three years. It's a happy time, a reflective time, a discernment time; yet I know that in order to continuing growing, it's also time for the comfortable academic place in which I live to be disturbed.

Where goeth prophecy?



NISSA BASBAUM
RECTOR - TRANSFIGURATION, ST. CATHARINES

When I was a child, I lived in a neighbourhood populated by Roman Catholics and Jews. My best "street" friends were Roman Catholic.

It was the mother of one of these friends who introduced me to the sweet, salty and sinful taste of baked ham, and it was my friends themselves who introduced me to the black and white and anything but sinful nuns at the local Catholic Church. I was overcome by both. At the time, I desperately wanted to be allowed to eat ham and I also decided that when I grew up, I would become a nun. (Please, don't laugh so loud!)

What an odd combination of things! Eating ham felt like the height of disobedience in the context of the orthodox Jewish faith in which my mother was raising me, while becoming a nun felt like the breadth of obedience in the Roman Catholic religion of my street buddies. And, lo these many years, really nothing for me about this contradictory universe has ever changed. Life remains a battle between disobedience and obedience,

an ever-constant struggle between what I know "tastes" good and what I am told "seems" right.

Is there a place for prophecy?

Now all of this may appear to be very Pauline—I find myself doing the things that I should not be doing when I am fully aware of the things that I should be doing—but, in fact, it is *anything but* a "hats off" to this apostle. Unlike Paul, I am not necessarily convinced that the things I'm told are right are the things I actually should be doing. Then again, neither was Paul adhering to the teachings of the synagogue in which he had grown up, when he chose to follow his conscience by preaching Jesus as the expected Messiah. Perhaps my struggle between obedience and disobedience is not, after all, that far from the actions of this apostle.

Too often, in the church, what "seems" right is actually just an attempt to keep the status quo intact; an attempt to prevent chaos from usurping the mighty place of order which has for centuries gripped the institution. And, because of this, I find myself asking, "Where goeth prophecy?" Is there any longer a place for the prophetic voice in this 2000-year-old plus institution which we call the church? Recent missives in the Anglican Church of Canada unfortunately suggest to me that the answer to this question is a resounding NO. What "tastes" good

most definitely is to take second place to what "seems" right.

A clear position

I mainly refer to the final pastoral letter of Bishop Victoria Matthews, written to the people of the Diocese of Edmonton. In that letter she critiques recent events in the Anglican Church of Canada, including the actions of two former Canadian bishops in consort with the present Primate of the Southern Cone, as they "infiltrate" dioceses in the Canadian church; and the action of our own bishop, Ralph Spence, at our synod in November, as he assented to the motion requesting that clergy in the Diocese of Niagara whose conscience permits be allowed to bless same-gender civil marriages. Bishop Matthews is abundantly clear about her position.

"As your bishop I am under orders. I do not make up the rules to suit myself and this Diocese cannot and will not permit clergy to depart from the doctrine, discipline, and worship of the Anglican Church of Canada... The instruments of unity for the Anglican Communion are the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Primates' meetings, the Anglican Consultative Council, and the Lambeth Conference. Please let these bodies and not individual members or dioceses lead the way."

The Season of Advent is only just behind us. For Anglicans (and others) this is a season that is biblically described each Sunday mor-

ning by words from the prophets of the Hebrew Bible, words that hardly describe an adherence to the status quo. In the Christian Scriptures, it is the season of John the Baptist, a man whose person and actions also hardly describe an adherence to the status quo. And, finally, also in the Christian Scriptures, it is a season that describes the coming of the Messiah into the midst of the people, a coming that hardly was intended to maintain the status quo.

In all these instances, it was never a legal body, an approved council or a representative speaking on behalf of the ruling power that proclaimed this new thing among the people. Rather, it was always individuals—rising from the ground up—who voiced their message to those who would listen.

A Rosa Parks moment

Apparently, on occasion, what "tastes" good is intended to surpass what "seems" right. When we seek to crush the people that voice these expressions of the faith, we are in danger of crushing the prophetic voices among us, with only one result; we will undoubtedly repeat the mistakes of our ancestors.

Clearly, I am not comfortable with the actions of the Primate of the Southern Cone, just as those who are opposed to the blessing of same-gender unions are not comfortable with the actions of the Bishop of the Diocese of Niagara.

Yet, what I see in each of these actions is a desire to stand up for something that, from both perspectives, is judged to be the prophetic utterance. Ultimately, as it is written in scripture, we "shall know them by their fruits." Yet, we will never "know" anything if all we ever do is allow ourselves to be ruled by whatever is the current rendition of the law, which is how I read Bishop Matthews' letter to her flock.

In his charge to synod, Bishop Spence invoked 1960s civil-rights protests in Selma, Alabama; Rosa Parks refusing to move to the back of the bus; and the 19th-century abolitionists who fought the British slave trade. In each of these instances, the people involved challenged their church, their government and their society. Then, Bishop Spence went on to speak of a meeting he had with South African Bishop Desmond Tutu, essentially concluding his charge by saying, "I feel the hand of a black bishop on my shoulder saying 'Courage, bishop. Courage.'"

At this time in the church's history, with whatever point of view we hold, we are being challenged by a groundswell to respond with courage to the spirit of the law. I hope and pray that we can exhibit such courage; yet I fear we will find ourselves unable to do this, because there are those among us who choose to rely on the letter of the law to contain what may be the prophetic voices in our midst.

YOUNG AND PROPHETIC

Generation 2008

CHRISTYN PERKONS
CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILY MINISTRIES

Are you ready for a five-day national gathering of Canadian Anglican youth ministry leaders that will change your ministry, transform your life and renew the national vision for youth ministry in Canada?

If you answered "yes" to any of the above, then you'll want to be at Generation 2008; a National Anglican Youth Ministry Forum hosted by Huron University College in London, Ontario from Tuesday, June 10 until Sunday, June 15. This five day ministry extravaganza is packed with nationally and internationally renowned speakers, three streams of workshops, innovative and engaging worship, and opportunities for spiritual renewal. No need to worry about getting lost in the crowd; each day involves small group time to enhance community building, and to facilitate integrated learning. You'll leave with lots of practical ideas for your own youth ministry, supportive connections with youth ministry leaders from all across Canada, and a strong theoretical and theological understanding of what God is calling you to do.

Powerful speakers

Plenary speakers are David White; author of *Practicing Discernment with Youth*, former executive director of the Youth Discipleship Project at Claremont School of Theology, and currently on the faculty of Austin Seminary, and Rev. Reggie Blount; Assistant Professor of Formation, Youth and Culture at Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary, Senior Pastor, and accomplished workshop leader/speaker with a current focus on the Seven Spiritual Yearnings of Youth. Guest speakers include Simon Bell; youth ministry leadership and training experience in South Africa and England and the author of *Happy in my Skin; Youth Ministry with Young People from Minority Ethnic Groups*, the Rt. Rev. Mark MacDonald; National Indigenous Anglican Bishop of Canada and co-author of *Native American Youth Ministries*, and Lisa Calderone-Stewart; author of 20 books and more than 50 articles focusing on youth and

family ministry, faith formation and creative spirituality, and currently the youth leadership director of House of Peace, a Capuchin community center in Milwaukee.

Workshop streams

The three workshop streams (Equip, Empower, Renew) focus on equipping newer leaders with basic skills and theory, empowering more experienced leaders with reflection on the philosophy, theology and practice of youth ministry, and renewing participants who want to focus on soul tending and re-visioning their ministry. Participants may concentrate their workshops in one stream or select workshops across all three streams. You can register for Generation 2008 at www.generation.anglican.ca. The early bird registration (by April 10) is \$375.00 and following that date will be \$400.00.

Thanks to a grant, a number of delegates from each diocese will be financially sponsored to attend the conference. The Diocesan Youth Ministry Committee will be accepting applications for sponsored participation in Generation 2008 beginning in January 2008. Applicants will be asked to provide a description of their past and current involvement in parish and diocesan youth ministry; to explain how their attendance at the conference would benefit both their parish and other parishes in their region; and to share how the diocese might benefit from their participation in the conference. Applications will be available at www.zipsqeal.com after January 6 and must be returned electronically to Christyn Perkons or Joyce Wilton by January 30. The Diocesan Youth Ministry Committee will select the sponsored participants at the February meeting and notify applicants by mid-February.

This is a "don't miss" event for those who minister to youth; it's close to home, brimming with meaningful experiences and learning opportunities and not prohibitively expensive. Youth Ministry leaders (paid and volunteer) will be nurtured, challenged, connected, stretched, and cherished! Come—be a part of this community!

OUTREACH



Leading by serving

Everyday Anglicans who respond to a call



COLLEEN SYM
DIOCESAN SOCIAL JUSTICE COORDINATOR

The theme of World Aids Day for 2007 was leadership. This coupled with what I observed at a meeting in Oakville in November caused

Momentum started to build and now they have gathered approximately 120 Oakville community members who are collaborating and are inspired to lend a hand to make a difference.

me to reflect on leadership in the context of the mission of the church in our time.

I am very fortunate to have the opportunity to work alongside those who I consider to be leaders in the Church. Through my position as the social justice coordinator for the Diocese of Niagara and as a Primate's appointee to the national church's Partners in Mission and Ecojustice Committee I have met and gotten to know Anglicans who are passionate about justice and mission from across the diocese, the country and from around the world.

They were not called to lead. They responded to a call to serve. Serve God, serve the church and provide loving service to those in need.

All of us are church and have it within ourselves to discern how

each of us is being called to serve. Through prayer and reflection I am confident we can each discern how God is calling us to use our gifts, knowledge and skill to further Christ's mission on earth.

By heeding the call to serve, each of us can be a leader in our own way in our own time. Nothing illustrates this better than examples off what I learned are happening in Oakville.

Million or More Campaign Oakville

The meeting I attended in Oakville in November was to support the work of a group of individuals who were called to serve and who were inspired to do mission after attending a prayer breakfast.

Peter Knox of St. Simon's in Oakville and a member of the Steering Committee, Million or More, Oakville Region, described for me how while listening to Dr. Brenda Zimmerman, the keynote speaker at the Oakville Prayer Breakfast in December of 2006, he had a sense of the reality of the injustice facing the African population suffering from HIV/AIDS. He went on: this "started to get my mind and heart racing with excitement. Perhaps this is not the reaction which one would anticipate; however the challenge of what to do was overshadowed by what we needed to do improve the justice equation. In fact, I felt embarrassed at my limited knowledge of the African landscape and how blessed we are in comparison. Sitting in the warmth of a very attractive ballroom with 600 plus caring Oakville faith community members, it occurred to me that my response to this serious human issue needed a significant shift in attention to make a difference for our African brothers and sisters".

What followed for Peter was a conversation with the keynote

speaker, and two of his fellow parishioners from St. Simon's, Rosemary Anstey and Irene Richards. Together they examined the simple question "what needs to happen?" Peter said that was simple because solutions are easy, the hard part is the implementation.

A few coffees and teas later they started to get serious and a grass roots campaign was born to educate the Oakville community about HIV/AIDS and harm to human life and to raise a million dollars in support of the Stephen Lewis Foundation to ease the pain. This is the \$Million or More Campaign Oakville.

The next step for the group was to invite others to join a Steering Committee. They identified champions to serve with them, a renowned journalist, Sally Armstrong, is the honorary chair and the former mayor of Oakville, Ann Mulvale joined the committee.

Then they reached out to the community seeking partnerships with others to help them reach their goal. Momentum started to build and now they have gathered approximately 120 Oakville community members who are collaborating and are inspired to lend a hand to make a difference.

Now the Steering Committee has finalized their strategic concept paper, the campaign website www.millionormoreslf.ca is up and running, the Stephen Lewis Foundation is thrilled, York Region, the first campaign to be successful at raising \$ 1.0 million, is offering full mentorship, Iroquois Ridge High School is providing leadership with the education community, Oomama grandmothers unite their efforts with African grandmothers caring for the orphans of Africa and many faith communities are looking to help.

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CONT. FROM PAGE 3 » Being born again

In my own limited experience of being a parent, I can say that it is one of the loveliest things in the world when my daughter, with her non-existent vocabulary, lets me know in the most raw and direct terms possible that she wants something. That loveliness is compounded by the discovery that I am able to provide that something, the discovery, more often than not, that the something she desires is simply me.

Maybe it shouldn't surprise us then that God, so often revealed to us as Mother or Father, is inviting us to know something equally lovely.

Maybe it shouldn't surprise us that there is a book which has already been written, is continually being written. The book which isn't some new fad preying on our anxieties, but which holds the wisdom of the ages, the wisdom lived out by the holy women and men who went before us. The book telling us that the desire at the heart of all of our crying—the 'sighing too deep for words'—is as simple as the cry of a newborn. The book telling us how this life is about seeking and finding the One who gives us life, the One who makes us whole, the One who defines love.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1 » Out of the bleakness

As carefully polite public statements are published and angry words spoken, the underlying sadness is of loss. How can this be happening to us? We're Christians but not acting like it!

A sympathetic outsider (or a non-conformist insider) might well ask, "How can you Christians work for world peace if you're spending so much energy tearing at each others' throats?" Or, "Does 'Episcopal oversight' mean something that a bishop ignores?" Or, "You mean, after all this fuss, your priests still can't marry gays?" Or, "What about the environment?"

We aren't done with the breakup. So here's my Bishop Harvey story.

On Easter Sunday, 2004, our family woke up before dawn in St. John's, Newfoundland, and drove to Cape Spear (the most easterly place in North America) to be the first North Americans to see the sun rise on Easter Day. The cold wind off the Atlantic brought waves crashing against the rocks as we looked out towards Europe for signs of light in the sky. Suddenly the sun rose, like a yo-yo yanked up by a child, shooting red through the clouds on the horizon. We turned back to look at the land and saw the bunkers used by Canadian and American soldiers guarding against invasion by German U-boats in World War II.

After a hike and breakfast (and a nap) we were ready for the 11:00 AM choral Eucharist at the cathedral. The sermon, by Bishop Harvey, was the most narrow-minded and hostile we had ever heard, both in terms of his tone of voice and the content of his message. He ranted at us about the sin of believing in modern theology. One line in particular I remember: "If you do not believe in the physical resurrection of Jesus Christ, you do not belong in this church!" We sat there, stunned. Even the poem we'd recited the night before as we were screeched in had made more sense.

Thank God, the bleakness of this Easter sermon gave way to the ancient truths of the ensuing Eucharist, as Cape Spear had been blessed by the brilliance of sunrise.

The Church in the 21st century

But the Anglican Church in Canada still struggles with such issues as falling attendance. Is this our problem? ("Is this our fault?" Paul Simon would also ask.) Yes. Part of our fault and our problem is that we're embarrassed as well as frightened. We don't want to be labeled left-overs, remnants. Our

egotistical feelings that prevent us from moving on are based on 20th century assumptions, for instance, a full church is a good church and an almost empty church a failure.

Let's look more closely at our early 21st century situation. Those of us old enough to remember the full churches of the 1950s should acknowledge that people came to church then for a lot of reasons not directly connected to worship. There was social pressure to belong to one of the churches on our town's Church Street and we established our identities by the church we attended. Anglicans were immigrants from England, uncomfortable at finding themselves stuck in a colony. Presbyterians were Scottish and had the money and education to control big business and the banks. United Church people had been in Canada for generations and were intent on social justice. Catholics were the poor from Ireland, Italy and Quebec with large families; their forms of worship seemed superstitious to Protestants who were suspicious of both Mary and the Pope. Baptists were the most conservative in their theology, convinced that they would prosper financially in this world and triumph on the Day of Judgment.

We accepted the assumption that we had to belong to a church and demonstrated our religious commitment by regular attendance and willingness to help run the church; both were socially expected. Business deals were made with fellow churchgoers and social lives focused on church suppers, picnics and after-service gossip.

Now the face of Canadian society has changed, fundamentalist sects have grown and "mainstream" churches, including the Anglican, find themselves marginalized. One can succeed and even be a good person without being a practicing Christian. The most common excuse for skipping church is that our lives are too busy; oddly enough, most people devote hours each day to surfing the net, playing video games and watching television. Do these addictive activities meet a more pressing human need?

Leaving our brains at the church door

In the past, when post-secondary education was an unattainable luxury for most, our intellectual lives also focused on the church. The minister's sermons were, along with the newspaper, our intellectual stimulation and our source of information. Now we are accused

of leaving our brains at the door as we enter church; this insult carries some truth, we must admit. Too many people attend church to be reassured by familiar rituals. Too many priests, although trained themselves in progressive theology, succumb to their congregation's insistence on dated concepts.

These are our faults, our problems. What would Jesus do? For starters, he would, I think, be looking forward and not backward. He would accept the situation he found himself in and work with it: healing and teaching, loving and seeking justice for all. Surely we can do this.

Perhaps our shrinking numbers are good because those left in our churches, the remnant, are those who really want, or need, to be here.

Perhaps we'll be more thoughtful, more creative, more energetic, more welcoming, more effectively Christian, without the drain of the perpetually angry ultra-conservatives such as the former Bishop Harvey.

Remnant theology

Have you heard of 'remnant theology'? The Jewish people, with all their wanderings, through all the pogroms, have held onto their beliefs, traditions and identity for thousands of years, trusting that as long as a few of their people, a remnant, maintain their faith, all is well. Since the time before written history, with the exception of the era of the Old Testament kings, they have experienced themselves as strangers in a strange land. Yet they have held to the belief that the remnant were the chosen people and that one day God would bless them with peace and call them home to rebuild their temple. For millennia their prayer has been, "Next year in Jerusalem!"

Anglicans have been a proud and powerful group within Canadian society and it threatens us to be shrinking in size and significance, enduring schism. Once we get over this and ask what is our calling, here and now, we can make ourselves more useful. We are marginalized, as the Jewish people have been for so long, the remnant God can choose to make history. We don't need to worry so much that, for now, in this bleak mid-winter, we can't see God's pattern. Walking by faith, we can trust that what we see as a rip in the fabric will either mend or become the shape of a new pattern that God is creating, that we will one day see.

Praying inclusively



PETER WALL
DEAN AND RECTOR, CHRIST'S CHURCH CATHEDRAL

Much has been said recently in our church about inclusivity and the need to be an inclusive church. Being inclusive is an intentional and, at times, challenging thing. It must pervade all that we do and the ways in which we think about who we are and how we do things, even at the micro level. As an example, I have the honour for the next six years of being the Anglican Co-Chair of the national Lutheran Anglican Joint Commission (LARC). LARC's mandate is to monitor and encourage implementation of the Waterloo Declaration from 2001, and to encourage, sometimes ambitiously, ways in which our two churches work together. One way is for us all, on our church signs, on the covers of our Sunday bulletins, and in other publications, to say: 'Anglican and Lutherans—Churches in Full Communion' or some similar 'tag' line. Communion is a highly valued and, at times, fragile thing—we should celebrate it every day!

Inclusive preferences

Inclusive worship should also be a hallmark of our parishes and communities. Inclusive of different approaches and needs, of different preferences and experiences, of differing views and responses. A member of the Cathedral community said not so long ago to me that he had real trouble with The Holy Trinity—didn't think that he could believe in it, and struggled with the divinity of Christ. He translated that into a sense of unworthiness to celebrate weekly with the gathered community.

Another parishioner has real trouble, medically, with the occasional use of incense at the Cathedral while another communicant significantly afflicted with asthma, loves incense and would like it at every service! Some *strongly* prefer all the furniture staying exactly where it has always been, while many others long for those times when we create a different atmosphere through worship in the 'round', placing the altar in the nave and taking the risky chance of actually looking at each other during the service.

For many the exclusive language

of even the BAS (how archaic parts of it now seem), to say nothing of BCP language, leaves them cold and alienated; for others, of course, the magnificent cadence and innate beauty of Elizabethan English carries them to heights sublime. There are still those for whom the *only* way to hear The Word is in the language of the King James Version of the text. A month without much beloved hymn tunes like *Hyfrydol*, *Lasst uns erfreuen*, *Darwall*, *St. Denio*, or *Aurelia* would be painful for many to bear; for others the presence of such new tunes as *Praise the Lord*, *Bridegroom*, *Chereponi*, and *Incarnation* is very important; and that's all just from one hymn book, to say nothing of fantastic other new sources of church music!

For many the organ is an unapproachable and inhospitable instrument; while for still others it is 'church'.

Honouring all points of view

Do the Prayers of the People truly reflect local concerns and ministries; is the language used both sensitive and appropriate? Is ours a 'wafer' parish or a 'real bread' parish? What kinds of posture do we suggest and expect? Is our community one which allows people to 'do their own thing' or does our community expect newcomers and visitors to conform to the way we do things? There is virtue in both, by the way.

If this sounds like I am describing a breadth of practice in which one could not possibly find order or peace or inspiration, then I suppose that is one of the possible pitfalls of a broad liturgical palate. But that is precisely the range of expectations, needs, and wants of those worshipping in our pews. Those who plan and carry out liturgies week by week need to balance all of those factors which will, always, be heavily influenced by the traditions and local customs of the particular parish or community.

If we want Inclusive worship to reflect the inclusive church, then we need to be aware of and prepared to respond to all of these issues and more.

An inclusive church demands that we honour and respect all points of view—those with whom we agree and, perhaps particularly in light of the life of Jesus, those with whom we significantly disagree. *All* are welcome at the banquet; *all* are welcome in our communities; *all* can worship together.

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SUE ANN WARD
ASSISTANT CURATE - CHRIST'S CHURCH CATHEDRAL

Christ's Church Cathedral hosted a community meeting to discuss the drug problem in the neighbourhood around the Cathedral. The goals of the meeting were to create an opportunity for people to connect with others in the neighbourhood, to map community assets and share good news stories, and to articulate some of the hurdles that stand in the way of a drug free community. More than eighty community members gathered in our worship space on the afternoon of Tuesday, November 13. There were a number of parishioners from our Anglican churches and about a dozen clergy from the diocese in attendance.

Bishop Michael Bird welcomed participants, who included health care workers, police officers, politicians, city staff, clergy, neighbours, business owners, artists, emergency service workers, researchers, educators, social service providers, community centre staff, and withdrawal management professionals. His heart-felt and uplifting address set a positive tone for the afternoon.

Signs of a healthy community

I was given the opportunity to share some background on the relationship between substance abuse, poverty, crime, and other social ailments. I shared some of the information presented in a report published in Alberta November 6, 2007 called "Keeping Communities Safe: Report and Recommendations of Alberta's Crime Reduction and Safe Communities Task Force." You can find this report on the internet.

I also shared some information about Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD), a community development strategy developed by John McKnight and John Kretzmann. ABCD involves community members making opportunities to grow in relationship with each other while discovering the community's assets (strengths, resources) and then working as partners, using all available resources, to undertake activities that will improve the

health of the community.

Signs of a healthy community included adequate housing; access to public transit, schools, parks, and public spaces; safe routes for pedestrians and bicyclists; meaningful and productive employment; unpolluted air, soil, and water; cooperation, trust, leadership and civic participation; places of worship; social supports, recreation, and health care; beauty and green space; well-maintained infrastructure; guidelines and responsibilities; and systems of communication and decision-making.

The problem of drug abuse in a community can only be addressed if a wide partnership of people works together towards a common goal. All must share their gifts with the community so that it can become strong. We encouraged PACT participants to view the Beasley community in North Hamilton as is a glass half full of assets not a glass half empty with needs. Our goal is to identify and mobilize the resources that are already present in our community, and use them to make it stronger.

Not attributing blame

Christyn Perkons, a member of the Niagara Diocese program department staff, led participants in a small group activity which provided individuals with the opportunity to share good news stories about programs and activities which are already happening in Hamilton. The stories evidenced that many gifted hard-working people are striving to improve the situation. The community has many resources in terms of talented individuals, institutions, local voluntary associations, and the physical environment.

Archdeacon Marion Vincett asked group members to brainstorm a list of hurdles that have to be overcome in order for us to be more successful in solving our drug trade and substance addiction related problems. Participants were careful not to attribute blame to any person or institution. Assigning blame holds people back. We are attempting to find healthy ways forward.

David Derbyshire from the Hamilton Community Foundation challenged us to paint a word picture of what we want our community to be like in five years. We decided that in 2012 this neighbourhood will be a place where people want to live and raise their children. Businesses will thrive and no store front will be vacant. Artists will own their own galleries and people will purchase their artwork. Schools will be full of eager students and parks will be safe places to play. There will be no brown fields, crack houses, or marijuana grow ops. People who become addicted to substances will be able to receive compassionate support immediately. There will be no drug related crime. People will feel safe walking the streets at any time of day. Residents and business owners will know each other and engage in community gatherings. Every young person will graduate from high school and there will be many employment opportunities.

What a beautiful picture

We viewed a clip from the video "Through A Blue Lens," a documentary about drug addiction made by police officers working in the east end of Vancouver, British Columbia. The film follows the lives of some street-involved drug addicts over a one year period. It also shows the police officers meeting with high school students to raise their awareness of the suffering associated with addiction. The teens share their ideas, opinions, and experiences quite candidly. I believe that this video should be viewed by everyone over the age of eleven, as it is very effective at depicting the damage caused by drug and alcohol abuse. It also demonstrates the humanity of people with addictions.

In closing, Dean Peter Wall asked participants to commit to gathering together again on the 10th of January 2008 to form teams that will undertake actions required to overcome some of the hurdles that were identified at this first PACT meeting.

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For registration and information, please contact:

Christyn Perkons

Consultant in Children's and Family Ministries

905-527-1316 (ext. 460)

christyn.perkons@niagara.anglican.ca

Reflections on closing St. Philip's, Burlington



SUSAN WELLS
PAST INTERIM RECTOR - ST. PHILIP'S, BURLINGTON

This is the last of a three part article on St. Philip the Apostle Anglican Church in Burlington which was decommissioned and deconsecrated on April 29, 2007.

"The beginning of a journey to new life"

It has taken longer than I expected to write this article. When St. Philip's closed most parishioners experienced it as they would a death and felt a profound sense of loss. This sense of loss and grief has been accentuated by the death of six parishioners this year including two youth.

When asked how it felt when the parish closed, one parishioner, Gary Hillier, put it this way, "I was sad and disheartened, but at the same time relieved of a heavy burden being lifted. Parishioners were tired of always fighting to try and stay afloat." Nancy Wood reflects on the vote to disestablish, "Having to write 'yes' on a piece of paper was one of the hardest things I have ever had to do. It felt like I was pulling the plug on a beloved family member. It was incredibly sad."

When a parish closes, often parishioners will go *en masse* to another parish, sometimes the people just move and other times there is an amalgamation. However, it became obvious as St. Philip's began to talk about deconsecration that the parishioners would not go as a group to any one parish but would scatter. The congregation was a diverse group which had become a family. They held varied theological beliefs and came from a diverse geographic area (from across Burlington, Stoney Creek, Oakville, Hamilton

and Lowville.) What bound them together was a shared experience of music and contemporary worship and commitment to outreach, ministry and each other.

The story of new life begins after the vote was taken, the final service was held, the altar was stripped and the church was left empty and in darkness. It was like looking at the cross after the body of Christ had been removed and then moving into that time of darkness as Christ lay in the tomb, waiting for resurrection. Waiting, trusting, hoping that God would somehow, someway breathe life back into the lifeless body of St. Philip's. The Church would rise again but not as a parish but as seeds cast far and wide. New life came in three forms:

- New life for the memorials and assets of the parish.
- New life for the building and land.
- New life for the parishioners.

New life for the memorials and possessions of the parish

When the parish closed, we took inventory of all the things that made up the parish and checked the records to determine what items had been donated as memorials. Wherever possible we discussed with the families possible disposition of memorial gifts.

The process for the dispositions of the assets is to give them away to other congregations. It is amazing just what a church owns—everything from "Holy Hardware", fair altar linens, burse and veils, altar frontals, through multiple copies of BAS's, BCP's, Common Praise and older hymnals, to desks, computer, sound system and office supplies! The (former) altar and pews in the (former) sanctuary were packed with goodies as priests and parishioners from other congregations came "Shopping". Niagara parishes, including the Lutherans, especially those where our former parishioners planned to settle, had priority. Numerous parishes who

received items talked about how much the items they received would mean to the parish, how they really needed the gifts they received but could not afford to by them. Many of the parishes also wrote letters of thanks to St Philip's outlining how the items would be used and how they have, in little ways, brought a new energy to the congregation. Other organizations who benefited included parishes of former St Philip's parishioners, the Mission to Seafarers, Love and Learn (a Christian Day Care), Mitre House for Refugees in Hamilton, Creekway LTC facility in Burlington and Holy Cross Lutheran also in Burlington. Some hymn books travelled as far as St Paul's, Churchill, Manitoba and items that didn't find a home in Canada were sent overseas, through the Christian Salvage mission.

New life for the building

By early June it started to become obvious that there were various groups interested in purchasing the building, with some wanting to purchase some of the accoutrements as well. So, it was decided that the building should be listed for sale and that once a sale was completed a decision could be made as to what assets would be sold with the Church. The Church was bought by the Hamilton Christadelphians; included in the offer were the pews, the organ and much of the kitchen equipment. If you would like more information on the Christadelphians and their beliefs check out the website www.christadelphian.org.uk.

The Christadelphians came from a wide geographic area in and around Hamilton and Halton. Their former facility was cramped and handicapped accessible, as they had been meeting in an upstairs hall in Hamilton. They were excited about having a new building that was not only totally accessible but offered more room for bible study classes and other programs. They were anxious to begin a new life and the new

journey in this place. I had an occasion to visit the former St. Philip's building and hardly recognized it. The roof had been repaired; the entire inside of the building had been refurbished and repainted. It looked like a new vibrant place to begin worship, study and ministry.

Below is a sampling of the comments received by the former parishioners of St. Philip's to the question, "Was it helpful to know that the building was sold to another church?"

- "Yes, although I have to wonder how they will be able to make a better go of it than we did if location was truly our biggest problem."
- "Yes. I was glad to see this happen and two of the neighbours that I spoke to were also happy."
- "Yes, but it was hard to see the steeple and the cross removed."
- "No, it doesn't help."

New life for the parishioners

It has been a difficult journey for many of the parishioners. So far about 50 % of the parishioners have officially found new places to worship although others are close to making a decision. Donna Zukiwsky sums it up this way, "Yes I have found a new church, St. John's, Nelson. I felt very welcomed on Sundays. The people here have shown St. Philip people friendship. I felt God present in the church and in the people." Another parishioner says "It is hard to get the energy to search, hard to start over, not sure what I am looking for, hoping something will tell me when it is right."

Some from the parish are ready to begin a new life and have moved on, forming new relationships in new congregations and taking on new ministries. Many have accepted the need to settle elsewhere and are working hard to adjust. Others continue the search for a new place to call home, a place where they are loved, accepted, valued and can begin to explore new aspects of their faith. Still others are not ready

to move on. Starting over is difficult. It has only been eight months, but the winter snows are beginning to melt and sprouts are beginning to protrude from the cold dark ground. There are subtle signs of new life.

It has been comforting to know that throughout these traumatic events that God has been ever faithful in the lives of the people as they struggle to deal with their anger, their pain, their grief and their profound sense of loss. God has been instrumental in their healing and in calling them to new parishes and new ministries.

Here are some of the responses that parishioners gave to the question, "How has the closing of St. Philip's affected your relationship with God?"

- "My relationship with God has always been and still is my strength and my help."
 - "I will never lose my relationship with God, but my commitment level has definitely weakened. I have begun to have meaningful prayer time but I cannot seem to read the bible."
 - "The relationship that I have with God that grew through St. Philip's will guide me in all I do wherever I am and in whatever I am involved in."
 - "I just talk to God more on a daily basis hoping I will find what I am looking for, knowing/having faith it will come in time."
 - "Part of me believes that it was God's will for us to close and the parishioners to scatter. Perhaps God wants us all to bloom where we are planted – just somewhere else."
 - "There is a brokenness but God will see us through it."
 - "Have tried not to let it affect my relationship with God, still read my bible and pray."
- It has been a blessed but difficult experience, sharing the depth of emotion which occurs when a parish closes. It is somehow akin to losing the matriarch of a family.

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Down the up escalator



MARNI NANCEKIVELL
DIRECTOR OF TRANSITIONAL MINISTRY

It seems like only yesterday (well, perhaps it *is* only yesterday) that I was regaling the *Niagara Anglican's* readers with the tale of my accidental summer excursion over a waterfall, from which I emerged with only a few bumps and bruises. However, as I write this article, I am lying in the hospital bed which has temporarily become the focal point in my living room. It has happened again. I have had another fall.

This time, I fell *down* the "up" escalator at Lester B. Pearson International Airport. I now sport staples in my head, a large brace on my left leg, bruises and "escalator" scrapes on my back, shoulder and right knee. This is not a look that is particularly flattering. And I feel rather silly that I have had another accident in relatively short order.

This is an interesting phenomenon, really. I don't think of myself as being particularly accident prone. My driving record, after all, is virtually spotless, given over three decades of driving. I have never seriously burnt myself, or cut myself in any way that has required stitches. Over the years, I have only broken one bone, my collar bone, in a fall down the stairs. So, having one tumble after another seems at first glance to be rather coincidental. At least that was what I thought

until a friend pointed out that I have had in fact, four falls in the past two years, with three of them in the past year.

Many of the stories of these falls can be presented humourously, like the icy winter day when I presented myself with severe and immediate bruising at the local walk-in clinic. There, the assumption was that I had fallen on treacherous ice. In fact, I had lost my balance while rushing to put my slacks on in my bedroom on my way to work. Another fall was connected to a birthday celebration with some of my wild woman friends one Sunday after the Archdeacon had paid a visit—except that I fell on my way *into* the restaurant. As I entered the establishment, my glasses askew with blood streaming down my face, one of my friends deadpanned: "Gee, looks like it was a tough visit with the Archdeacon!"

This fall, however has my attention. Coping with crutches, reaching assists and other temporary accoutrements, I recognize that I need to attend to whatever I need to learn from these frequent falls.

There are some issues that need to be ruled out, such as physical causes. There are, however some spiritual issues that must be attended to for health and well-being. I share them with you, because perhaps you might see your own life reflected in mine.

The common denominator that I can see in all of my recent falls is that I tend to be constantly in a rush. Juggling a calling with many dimensions, meetings within the Diocesan Resource Centre and away from it, multi-tasking between Fresh Start, Interim work and Safe



Church issues means that for me, on an average day, I feel like my standard care, constantly gearing up and gearing down. There is email to attend to, projects to execute. I love my work and feel a deep sense of calling, but it is busy. There is also my personal life—my family at home (a husband and a teenager), two cats, a puppy, and my wider family including my Mother and Aunt seniors in a retirement home, but for whom I have sole responsibility. There are the daily tasks familiar to us all: errands, such as buying gas, groceries, and seeing to medical and dental appointments

for all and sundry. As I reflect on the total package of my life, I am aware that too often; I careen around the corners of my day in high gear, and too often lose my "center" or my "grounding". It is a direct result of my lurching lifestyle, I think, that I stumble and fall.

There are, I discover over fifty references to stumbling in the Bible, and over fifteen references to "stumbling and falling". Those statistics confirm my inner hunch that this is a spiritual issue as well as a physical issue at work here.

So as the New Year rounds the corner, my resolution is not to

stumble and fall *less* as much as it is to stay "grounded" in the ultimate wisdom of God *more*. For me, that means being fully present, fully attentive and focused in the moment. It is about losing the preoccupation with my 'doing', and focussing instead on my human 'be-ing'. It is about being fully present in any moment. And, when you think about it, that really isn't a bad resolution.

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Canon Marni Nancekivell, Director of Transitional Ministry, can be reached through Niagara's Diocesan Resource Centre, 905-527-1316 (ext. 390).

Are Christians hypocrites?



JOHN BOTHWELL
RETIRED ARCHBISHOP OF NIAGARA

Lots of people think we Christians are a just a bunch of hypocrites! And the month of January, when our New Year resolutions are still fresh in our minds, is a good time to reflect on whether this is true. It could be, because our Christian ideals are so lofty, we are bound to fall short sometimes. After all, Jesus did say, "Be perfect, as your Father in Heaven is perfect," which is quite a challenge!

Most of us would like to be perfect, but life is complex, even overwhelming, and we just don't make it. Saint Paul got it right when he wrote "There is no one who is righteous, all have turned away from God..." So here are the facts; Jesus told us to be perfect, but St.

Paul declared that no one is perfect; therefore we Christians are indeed hypocrites, just like all other humans. What does this mean for our resolutions and aspirations as we begin a new year?

To begin, let's take another look at Christian ideals. Our Faith affirms seven cardinal virtues: prudence and courage, temperance and justice, faith, hope and love. Ideally, we need all seven, and if we all lived all of them perfectly, the church and indeed, the whole world would be much better, and so would we.

However, it's hard enough even to remember that list of virtues, let alone trying to live them consistently. For practicing virtue is a lot like learning to play the piano; it requires practice, timing, posture, and a lot of other factors. And even if we master all the mechanics, the music may still not sound right, because there are the "intangibles" too; pianists need to "catch the spirit" of the music! And that is true also when we try to live out our Christian ideals

too, we need to "catch the Spirit", God's Spirit!

A journey of even a thousand miles begins with one step

The first three Gospels in the New Testament all record Jesus' saying "those who are well have no need for a physician, but those who are sick. I have come to call not the righteous but sinners". In other words, if people were perfect, they would not need our faith, and therefore the church is not "a holy club", but "a hospital" for needy folks who want to be better, folks like all of us! That is why a parish visitor responded to a chronic complainer about the church being filled with hypocrites by saying, "Why don't you come along anyway, there's always room for one more!"

For we all have to be realistic about the limitations of even our best efforts. An article in the Hamilton Spectator a couple of years ago reported a visiting lecturer at McMaster University who pointed out that human genius is not just a gift, it requires a lot of personal ef-

fort and commitment as well. The famous pianist Ignace Paderewski reminded us of this in his famous reply to an effusive admirer: he said, "I have practiced ten hours a day for thirty years, but you still call me a natural genius!"

In seeking success, there is no way we can discount the importance of personal commitment and effort, in the church, and all other communities of human, fallible people, these factors are essential. Yet we Christians believe also, that in facing most of life's challenges even the greatest human effort is not enough. We need "to catch the Spirit" too—the Spirit of God. For we live in a broken, ever-changing world, and Christians are as vulnerable as any other people.

There is nothing wrong with mistakes, if we don't respond with encores

Years ago, an alcoholic from "skid row" just a few blocks away, staggered into a downtown church when the congregation was reciting the Prayer Book's general confes-

sion during Evensong. He listened quietly as they said in unison, "We have erred and strayed from Thy ways like lost sheep, we have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts, we have offended against Thy holy laws, we have done those things which we ought not to have done... At this point he exclaimed, "Hey, you guys are my kind of people!" And indeed they were, and so are we. The familiar words of that Prayer Book confession are true of us all, even though we often repeat them thoughtlessly, by rote.

So despite all our good intentions, we Christians like all humans are indeed hypocrites. We admit it openly every time we confess our shortcomings in church. And even if we do it by rote sometimes, our great God is forgiving and generous, understands our forgetfulness and other failings, and keeps offering us the grace and courage to try again.

So Happy New Year fellow hypocrites, by the Grace of God, may we try more seriously in 2008!

GOD'S SPIRIT MOVES OUR SYNOD NOVEMBER 2007



"It is time for us to say to our gay and lesbian members that they too are honoured, that they too are valued, that they too are children of God, that they too have a baptismal ministry like the rest of us."

"I feel the hand of a black bishop (Desmond Tutu) on my shoulder saying 'Courage, bishop. Courage'"

Ralph Spence, Bishop of Niagara (Charge to synod)

Whereas the Diocese of Niagara wishes to express to the House of Bishops and the Council of General Synod the conviction that we believe that God is calling us to move forward now; to wait before the faithful relationships of our gay and lesbian members are blessed by the Church would be unloving and cause further pain and suffering.

Whereas the Diocese of Niagara respects and honours those within our Diocese who, because of their theological position or as a matter of conscience, cannot agree with the blessings of same sex unions.

Be it resolved

That this Synod request the Bishop to allow clergy, whose conscience permits, to bless the duly solemnized and registered civil marriages between same-sex couples, where at least one party is baptized, and to authorize rites for such blessings.

PASSED



That each parish in the diocese identify the current levels of green house gas emissions and reduce them by 15% over the next year and asks that achievements be reported both to the annual vestry meeting of each parish and to the synod

That this synod further request our bishop to appoint a committee to support this work by developing a green parish accreditation program along the lines of that in New Westminster and that each parish form a committee to work to this end in that parish.

PASSED



Diocesan Budget as presented by the Diocesan Treasurer

PASSED



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

HOLLIS HISCOCK
RETIRED PRIEST - BURLINGTON

SHOOT - The photograph

This 'open hand' photograph was taken during the summer at the Royal Botanical Gardens in Hamilton/Burlington. It is one of over 300 stone sculptures comprising ZIMSCULPT, an exhibit from Zimbabwe.

This huge open hand captured my attention as I associated it with the 'hand of God'. In the same way that an artist 'sees' a potential image within the stone and chips away until the finished sculpture appears, so God 'sees' our potential and removes the 'unnecessary' until our lives reflect what God wants us to be. (Read Jeremiah 18:1-6 where God is described as a potter moulding the lives of people.)

READY - Words behind the photo

Two applications of the 'hand of God'. On December 31, 2006, ten people gathered around a blazing fire in our cozy living room sipping libations, laughing, listening to Christmas music and waiting for the 10 second countdown ending the 'old year'.

Earlier we wrote our predictions for 2007. I volunteered to be the keeper of the predictions. As I write this article they are sitting, secured with a red elastic band, on my desk waiting to be opened on December 31, 2007. Some will have to be mailed because the writers are celebrating elsewhere, but most will gather in our new house by a blazing fire in our cozy den, sipping libations, laughing, listening to Christmas music and waiting for the 10 second countdown ending 2007.

Looking ahead every year seems daunting, filled with uncharted waters, unknown adventures and uncertain circumstances.

Looking back at the end of any year, our perceptions are different. We now know what the year brought, and we have survived, and

on occasions, thrived.

Poet Minnie Louise Haskins (1875-1957) penned words of advice and assurance to people approaching a new year. Since every day or even every second is the beginning of another year, it could be recited constantly. She wrote:

I said to the man
who stood at the gate of the year,
'Give me a light that I may
tread safely
into the unknown.'
And he replied,
'Go into the darkness
and put your hand into the
hand of God.
That shall be to you
better than light
and safer than a known way!'
So I went forth
and finding the Hand of God,
trod gladly into the night .
And he led me towards the hills
and the breaking of day in
the lone East.'

(I have kept the words in the original even though today the poet probably would have used more inclusive language.)

The second application of the 'open hand' ZIMSCULPT masterpiece centers upon the manner in which we receive the Holy Communion.

In my confirmation class many years ago, I was taught to place one hand on top of the other, forming an open hand in which to receive the bread or 'body of Christ'. I have remembered that advice and followed that practice faithfully throughout the years.

One Christmas as I read Luke's account of the shepherds visiting the stable and seeing Jesus in the manger or cradle, these two concepts connected for me. Each time I extended my hands to receive the 'bread of Christ', I was forming my 'cradle' in which to receive Jesus

Christ as my Saviour.

In my sermon that Christmas Eve I said, 'I hope you can feel the Birth of Jesus tonight. When Jesus was born in Bethlehem, we were there... tonight Christ is reborn 'to you' in the cradle of your heart. Later in this worship you will form your hands into a CRADLE, and once more, God will be reborn to you and in you.'

The words 'cradle of your heart' intrigued song writer Gerald Flemming and he penned the lyrics of the song 'My Heart Is The Manger'

There's a star above the town
every winter,
Three wise men pressing on
through the sand,
And we light a candle preparing
for the child,
Placed here every year by
God's hand.

Our hearts open themselves to
the story,
And our prayers purify that place.
He lays the child gently inside us all,
The pure one, his son, God's Grace!

My Heart is The Manger,
A soft warm place for the
child tonight
My Heart Is The Manger
Awaiting the gift, and the hope,
and the light...
Awaiting the gift, and the hope,
and the light

We make a wish on that star
every year,
And whisper the name of our king,
We dream of that beautiful sunrise,
A bright light, ends the night and
we sing!

I close my eyes and feel the child
awake inside of me,
I touch my heart, bow my head
and pray gratefully.

AIM - Questions and actions for you
■ Read several times throughout



the day the words of poet Minnie Haskins and songwriter Gerald Flemming.

■ While reading your newspaper, see where the 'hand of God' is shaping events at the local, national and international levels today.

■ Reflect upon the life of Jesus Christ and how the life of the Church in 2008 mirrors the Gospel preached by Jesus.

■ When you next receive the Holy Communion, think of your hand

and your heart as the cradle (manger) in your stable (life) receiving God and renewing your personal relationship and commitment.

■ Hollis would appreciate your feedback on this series. Contact him at 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.

Looking for leaders in all the wrong places

A new look at freaks, losers and morons



JOSHUA MORRISON
CHURCH OF THE ASCENSION, HAMILTON

I'd like to tell about my friends in high school. I didn't fit in with them. My friends were 'those ones'. They took almost entirely workplace and college level courses. They had attendance issues, behaviour issues, emotional issues, disciplinary issues, bullying issues and most other types of issues you can think of. They were unpopular, uncool, unchic, uncouth. I didn't fit in with them because I was in all university classes, I had the highest average in my grade, I was well liked by the teachers, I got along with most of the popular and moderately popular crowds, and I had one pretty

squeaky clean record. But I loved my friends, even though there was constant drama, and I wouldn't have left them for the world.

When I entered high school, I was coming out of a period in my life where I had been double-crossed and backstabbed by people who I thought were one thing and turned out to be another as only grade eights can. I was tired of people being fake; giving one impression to everyone, but turning into something totally different in those emotional moments when all the truth comes out. So, when I looked around the cafeteria in those first months of school, I knew only one thing. I wanted to hang out with the people I saw who didn't put on a mask, or at least didn't wear much of a mask. And I quickly realized that all the people that everyone calls freaks, losers, emo's, morons, idiots, retards, weirdos, and any other term you can think of, were just those who showed them-

selves to the world in an environment where it was expected to wear a mask for society's sake.

So, for four years I stayed with that group. I left once for a few months in grade 11, and realized that I had made a mistake, then came back home to my freaky friends. And as I got to know these social misfits, I realized that though they are troubled, and many of those troubles come from the outside world, they have depth greater than in any other people I've ever known. One of them found a passion for music in high school and has found her niche in the recording arts and popular music. Another has a passion for psychology that I've never seen, and brings her own unique experiences with those in the field from her childhood to her future studies. One more is a spectacular artist who can capture a person's soul in one of her Japanese-anime style art.

Great depth, great pain

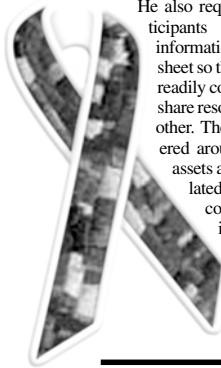
Along with all this depth though, there was also great pain. Being social outcasts constantly looked down on by your peers and put through hell at school causes great emotional anguish. Many of my friends were spiritual, but had no way to express it. They wanted to find acceptance in a place where they wouldn't have to be on the defensive like they did at school. They wanted something more, and no one was there to offer it.

So why aren't we reaching out to these people? Why isn't the church looking for these people; actively seeking them out to see if we can offer the something more they need? But there's more to it than that. We need to reach out, but then we need to provide the something more they're looking for. In school their social situation means that they generally don't get the opportunity to be a leader; to put their often strange

and unique passions to use in a commanding way. I have seen myself that the passion in the downtrodden and bullied is often so strong that there is a lot of untapped leadership potential. So let's take the calls that we need youth in the church, and go for a new demographic. But to do it, we need to back up all we're saying with opportunities to help these 'losers' develop as people, spiritual individuals, and leaders.

And there is precedent for this kind of outreach. The apostles and so many of Jesus' followers were losers. So let's go out there and find the losers. It isn't easy to get to know them, to get inside the walls they need to survive, but our work is never easy, and people like this are one of the brightest hopes we have to continue to grow as people of God and have dynamic future leaders, whose passion will drive us forward while bringing in new people.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7 » Community transformation



He also requested that participants complete an information collection sheet so that we can more readily communicate and share resources with each other. The material gathered around community assets and addiction related hurdles will be compiled, organized, and sent to

all participants and other interested community members.

Paint yourself in

At the January meeting we will hear about successful cases of Asset-Based Community Development. We will briefly discuss the hurdles that have been identified to ensure that we all understand the issues. Participants will be asked to com-

mit to working with others to overcome one of the hurdles. A coordinating team will be created. The role of this group of individuals will be to encourage and support the other teams and to facilitate communication among PACT participants.

Paint yourself into this picture, and together we will transform this neighbourhood and every neighbourhood.

▲ The NAAW Ribbon was developed to raise awareness of addictions. The different sized squares in the ribbon represent the many forms of addiction. The different colours symbolize that addictions do not discriminate. They affect all races, genders, and ages. www.naaw.net

Did God say...



SUSAN WESTALL
ALL SAINTS, HAMILTON

In the beginning... We have been taking Genesis too literally. Ancient legends are often allegory and the stories of Genesis must be treated as such. Again, Genesis was written by a people whose knowledge of the world in which they lived was, by our standards, very limited. It probably went no further than what we today know as the Middle East, including Egypt, possibly as far south as Asswan, and Persia as far east as Ecbatana. They had no idea that there were other civilizations far to the east, in the Indus valley and in China. They could have no idea that God was equally interested in His Creation so far away as he was with their own particular little neck of the woods. We must not, therefore, always be thinking of Genesis as being all-encompassing.

At the beginning of the 21st century we have much greater knowledge of the Creation with which we are blessed than had the ancient Hebrews. Until less than two hundred years ago little was known of the history of ancient Egypt, nor of the Tigris-Euphrates valley. Archaeology is a modern science. So is Geology. Until the early nineteenth century no one had thought that history could be read in the rocks. It is also significant that, when early archaeologists and geologists started digging around in the earth, it was to prove the truth of the Hebrew Bible that their studies were directed. Such questions as "Was there really a flood?", "Where was the Garden of Eden?", "Did the walls of Jericho really fall down?" and "Who was the Pharaoh of the Exodus?" were on the minds of archaeologists. It is just about two hundred years since we learned the secret of the Rosetta Stone and Egyptian hieroglyphs. The question of the origin of mankind is still a source of debate among some religious believers.

Not sex, but the apple

Much attention has been given to the gift of freewill, but I suggest

that God gave us other faculties that might help us in our efforts to follow His plans. One of these was *curiosity*. Eve's curiosity was not intrinsically bad. She saw the tree in the garden and asked herself "why?" How is humankind to discover what are God's plans unless they ask questions? The very first question in the Bible is a question about God: the serpent asks "Did God say..." and another of God's gifts became obvious. Eve's *conscience* began to work, but she decided to exercise her curiosity as men and women have done ever since. She did what God had forbidden, and her conscience condemned her. When Adam had fallen for her temptation—not sex, but the "apple"—they both hid themselves. They ran away from God.

The Bible indicates that the first humans were vegetarians, but anthropology shows us that the simplest societies are those of hunters and gatherers. Curiosity led humankind to wonder what it was that animals enjoyed in their prey, so man became a hunter. Women became gatherers as was Eve. People are a peculiarly competitive beings and must outdo their neighbour. They could only show this by their success in activities, especially hunting. They still do it. People became possessive as a result needing to show off our trophies.

Self-interest has deflected us

For well over five thousand years the world has known the simple societies of hunters and gatherers. Such societies have depended upon God in nature for their very existence. In the 21st. century such societies are becoming extinct and our Garden of Eden is now threatened with extinction. Humanity's self-interest and greed threatens to produce a catastrophe far greater than the ancient Flood. Genesis 6:5 tells us that God saw the wickedness of humanity upon the earth and "that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continuously". It is significant that we are not told that Satan was involved; it was *the thoughts of his heart*. Humankind's self-interest was at fault as it still is today.

Let us consider the allegory told in Genesis and apply it today. Environmental studies have told us that we are misusing the Earth - the

whole planet upon which we live, our today's Garden of Eden. We cannot pretend that we have not been warned. Two thousand years ago there lived a Man from God who taught us how to reform our ways. Christians believe that Jesus was unique, but other faiths in other parts of the world have had similar messengers to lead them into God's way—*The Way* of the first followers of Jesus. Self-interest has deflected us from the True Paths with resulting jealousy, lack of trust and warfare.

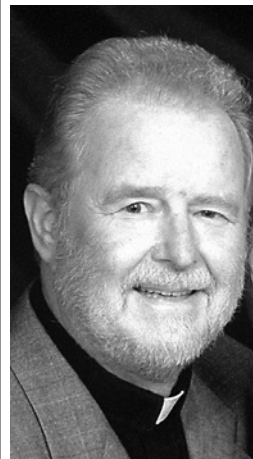
Audacity to pray "forgive us"

Jesus taught his disciples to pray—a prayer that those who profess and call themselves Christians use every Sunday. The first part of that prayer deals with our relationship with God and asks that *Thy will may be done on earth*. The trouble is that we expect God to do all the work. We already live in God's Realm, our Garden of Eden, but we cannot enjoy it until we learn to accept the Laws of God's Kingdom. It's like being a New Canadian without knowing the laws of Canada; we'll never become citizens if we don't know and obey the rules.

In the hearts of most of us, we know the rules, but we find them most difficult to follow. The second part of the Lord's Prayer deals with our inter-personal relations and there's a most difficult part of God's Law that we must learn to follow. "Give us today our daily bread and forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us." In a country where we can produce more food than we could eat ourselves we still have malnutrition. Worse still, we allow half the world to go to bed hungry each night. We will not give our surplus away to those who can use it, because we must not lose any financial gain that we consider to be ours by right. We live in a society where we cannot give anything away for nothing, and then we have the audacity to pray "forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us". Those who "sin against us" do so because we are depriving them of food and comforts we take for granted but, because they do not comply with our standards, we go to war against them. It's no good saying "God helps us!" because God is already giving us plenty of warnings.

The first question in the Bible is "Did God say..."

This is my story



ROB ROI
DEACON - ST. JAMES, DUNDAS

My faith journey began on Christmas Eve, six weeks after my birth, when I was baptized a Lutheran in an Anglican chapel in Woodstock Ontario. This Bethany Lutheran Community soon purchased a house, which was converted into a worship space complete with a small pump organ. I was blessed with a singing voice and as a youngster was placed on a chair so I could be heard and seen. I sang into my teenage years with that old pump organ.

On a warm day in May Pastor Schweitzer in front of the congregation, before confirming us, examined our confirmation class—what an experience that was for a fourteen year old in a tweed suit—I almost passed out. We had a great youth group, as I recall we were champion crokinole players, challenging all youth groups within shooting range.

In high school I met the love of my life—Margaret Woodall. In order to see her more frequently during the week I joined the Anglican Church choir where she sang—Old St. Paul's. We were married in that church over 52 years ago, with the Lutheran pastor and the Anglican priest presiding.

Life in Hamilton

We moved to west Hamilton to begin our new life together and somehow I ended up as guest soloist in the choir at Delta United Church Hamilton. We moved to Dundas when I began my teaching career where we began to attend St. James Church. It wasn't long before the rector, Canon Allen Hill came knocking at our door and asked me to join the choir. Singing in the choir was a pleasure. However, after a few years I felt the need to take a more active role in the liturgy, so I approached our new rector the Rev. John Bothwell and asked if I could become a lay reader. He informed me that in order to become a lay reader I would need to be confirmed an Anglican. Well at least I didn't have to wear a tweed suit and be examined in front of the congregation. One Sunday Rev. Bothwell had to be away and asked me if I would deliver the sermon—what an exciting experience that was for me, I'm not so sure it was for the congregation (the first of many).

Our whole family took part in church life; my wife in a variety of activities and each of our three daughters; Margot, Kathy, and Micheline became servers. Being educated as a visual artist I was able to create designs for bulletin covers, altar frontals and banners. In 1978 our church building was gutted by fire. We rebuilt with the intent that the arts would be part of our liturgy. My wife and I took on the mission of bringing visual art into our worship space. Area artists display their creations for one month, giving us eight displays a year—this is our fifteenth year. This also gives me a venue to show my work every two years, and the themes are often religious in nature. Someone once said that today's artists are today's prophets. My wife and I also have the privilege of taking communion to the shut-ins, which we have done for many years. We often wonder if we feel more spiritually uplifted than those we visit.

Vocational Deacon

About two years ago our rector, Archdeacon Jim Sandilands, asked me if I would be the parish deacon. In the late 1970's our rector the Rev. Jo Fricker asked me the same question. However, he also asked Art Capper to be Deacon as well. Our Bishop would only allow one Deacon. Since Art had been a member of the parish longer than me—he was ordained. I consider it an honour and a privilege being the vocational Deacon for my Faith Community. The Rector asked me how I felt about the ordination service. I'm still not sure how I felt about the service since I was so focused on what I was doing—I don't process and sing at the same time that well, would I be able to kneel in front of the Bishop and get up without falling over? All of these things were rushing through my head. However, to see the smiling faces of the members of St. James as they came to receive communion from me, made me realize what an extraordinary thing had just transpired.

Questioning is healthy

About twenty years ago I developed questions about my faith, not about God, God has always been there for me, whether I was in need or not. I'm fond of the saying by an Islamic Mystic who wrote "I have seen my Lord with the eye of my heart, I said to him 'who are you', and he said you". My questions were mostly about the Gospels and the Epistles—they all contain metaphors, myths, history, with ancient customs and seem to contradict one another. What were the authors telling people 2000 years ago, and what do they mean for us today? I began to search for answers outside of the Bible. I read books written by Biblical scholars, theologians, archaeologists and historians. Slowly, very slowly I'm beginning to understand who the historical Jesus was, how Christianity began to evolve, and how customs and race played an important role. With each book I read another piece of the puzzle gets put into place.

» CONTINUED ON PAGE 19

Bronte induction celebrates hope



ALAN L. HAYES
THE ITINERANT CHURCHGOER

Recently I was privileged to be with the congregation of the Church of the Epiphany, Bronte, for the induction of its new rector.

In Canadian Anglicanism, the rector is the senior parish priest, responsible for "spirituality," such as preaching, worship, pastoral care, and Christian education. (That's quite different from the historic English rector, who didn't need to come to church, and didn't need to be a priest.)

Typically, when any community receives a new leader, it feels both uncertainty and hope. And when the community is a church, its sense of moving through a historic turning-point reminds it of its dependence on God.

So it's fitting that at the service I attended at Epiphany, Bronte, we looked for God's purpose in this moment of change. We acknowledged our dependence on God, and we celebrated our hope.

Traditional

In our great diversity of worship styles in the diocese of Niagara, the Church of the Epiphany has generally preferred the simple and traditional. This perhaps matches the image of the village of Bronte itself. I'm thinking of its appealing lakeside boardwalk, its quiet

marina, its English pubs, and what town planners call its "pedestrian friendliness" and its "buildings of heritage value."

I spoke to some parishioners who had started out church-shopping, enjoyed the straightforward worship and solid preaching at Epiphany, and stayed. A West Indian couple told me about their first Christmas eve in Canada, years ago, visiting a post-alternative Anglican church where nothing in the liturgical text, ceremonial, music, or ethos was familiar. They sure were relieved a few weeks later when they discovered the Church of the Epiphany.

History

The church has a most interesting history. Like most of our parishes, it starts, unfortunately, with the displacement of First Nations people. In 1820 the Mississauga Indians were forced to sell most of what is now the Oakville lakeshore, and later they were totally evicted.

The colonial government slowly got around to surveying the district, and Bronte village appeared in 1834. It was named to honour the British admiral Horatio Nelson, one of whose titles was duke of Bronte.

In the 1880s a farmer from the English Lake District, John Wilson, moved to the area with his family. He bought 210 acres along the lakeshore, centred on what is now Coronation Park. His ledger-book is on display at the farmhouse at Bronte Provincial Park.

Wilson was a devout Anglican, and he offered his home as a kind of chapel of ease so that Anglicans in Bronte wouldn't have to trek to

St. Jude's, Oakville. In 1909 the rector of St. Jude's began holding Friday services at the Wilson farm. That arrangement continued until 1927.

According to his great-grandson, writing in the *Hamilton Spectator* in 1995, John Wilson was said to be a headstrong fellow. He didn't smile more than necessary. In winter he made his way to market in Hamilton over the harbour ice, to save money on road tolls. When his son Dan wanted to study for the ministry at Trinity, John told him he was needed on the farm.

Parish status

In 1930 Bronte parish separated amicably from St. Jude's, holding its first vestry meeting just after the feast of the Epiphany—hence the name of the church. John Wilson was the first rector's warden, and Dan was lay delegate to Synod for 25 years.

A gothic-inspired white clapboard church building with wood shingles was erected in 1931. The present church dates from 1956.

In the mid-1980s, the church received an influx of theological refugees from the neighbouring parish. I met several of them at the service of induction.

Should I even be telling you this? But the story is already published, from a different point of view, at the website for St. Hilda's Church (www.sthildaschurch.ca).

In 1980 the then rector of St. Hilda's experienced a charismatic renewal, and with his followers he set about re-designing the church's style of worship and fellowship. "A significant number of parishioners

disagreed with this direction," says the St. Hilda's website.

Healing

One couple I met at the induction gave me a first-hand account. They were so hurt by the experience of being devalued and shunned at St. Hilda's 23 years ago that they stayed away from all churches for three years. Finally they found their way to Epiphany, where they have been happy ever since.

This part of Epiphany's story has no doubt helped reinforce the congregation's conservative inclinations. After all, people there have experienced the damage that change can do when it's administered without pastoral sensitivity or respect.

On the other hand, the church can't avoid change, either. For one thing, Bronte is growing fast. It's the largest community in Oakville, with well over 30,000 people. That gives its Anglican church a big challenge and a big agenda!

So, as with all churches, you can see some values in conflict at Epiphany.

The preacher at the service of induction presented an apt image (which he acknowledged he borrowed). When you stand in a great Gothic medieval cathedral, it feels solid and stable. But any architect or engineer will tell you that in reality it's a complex structure characterized by huge stresses. That's also true of parish life.

In a gothic church, all this stress is resolved overhead in the ceiling. In parish life, too, stresses can be resolved only when we look towards heaven.

Hidden complexity

And so the service of induction at Bronte felt smooth and simple, but actually it was quite complex.

For one thing, it was a celebration of the rector's new ministry. There was certainly much to celebrate in this case, for the new rector is an energetic, warm, prayerful, articulate, wise, and very able priest. Many worshippers were visiting from her last parish, taking a tender opportunity to say fare-thee-well.

It was also a covenanting between the people of the parish and the rector. At one point, representatives of the congregation presented her with symbols of her ministry, and in words given her by the liturgy, she reminded them that they were part of this ministry too.

Third, it was an enactment of the bishop's charge of the parish. The bishop's mandate of induction was read; the bishop's agent, the archdeacon, presided; many diocesan clergy processed.

Of course all this was in the context of Eucharist, since the foundation of all church life is God's word of hope and grace, which is read, preached, sealed, and shared in the eucharist.

So the service put into perspective what is passing and what is changeless.

Yes, with new leadership, there's always change. But at Epiphany it's serving, not subverting, the congregation's sense of identity and mission. And it's pervaded by the rector's radiant love and respect for this wonderful congregation, and theirs, I think, for her.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1 » God, scripture, us and the marginalized

About fifty of us gathered at St. Christopher's, Burlington on December 1 to listen to Dr. Walter Deller, Principal of The College of Emmanuel and St. Chad in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. The advertising teaser that lured me in was "Reading the Bible Again: Why Every Generation Needs to Read with New Eyes". Imagine my surprise and perhaps even dismay, when Walter announced that his intention was to explore Deuteronomy with us. What on earth could rules about millstones have to do with me and my life?

So, imagine my even greater surprise when I found myself totally intrigued by what Walter was saying; flipping my Bible open to read passages to which he was referring, making notes alongside the notes he so thoughtfully provided, and then engaging in a spirited conversation with the other seven participants at my table as we tackled parts of Deuteronomy 24. The morning, which was scheduled to end at noon, finally drew to a reluctant close almost an hour later. And even then, I didn't really want to leave!

What got me so excited? There were two parts of Walter's talk that were particularly gripping for me. The whole notion of Deuteronomy as a radical text, a treatise that "formed the basis of the greatest religious reform of all time" intrigued me. A text that I had formerly ignored as

full of rules that spoke to another time suddenly became a text that speaks clearly to something dear to my heart; social justice—the call of Jesus to embrace the marginalized. While it's true that parts of Deuteronomy are consumed with laws and rules, Walter enabled us to see that embedded deep within this litany is the notion that the rules in and of themselves are *not* sacred; their purpose is to uphold the essence of the faith community's relationship to God and their value lies in how usefully they provide that support.

That essence of the faith community's relationship to God, so clearly described at the end of the first section of Deuteronomy, is this—as God loves the orphans, the widows and the strangers, so, too, must we. The fullness of our relationship with God lies in how we treat the marginalized. The Deuteronomical rules were intended to guide the people of Josiah's time in doing just that; to reorienting their social and religious framework to the care of others rather than the worship of false idols. A people who had gotten caught up in the cultural icons and fears of the dominant culture were exhorted to return to the essentials of their roots. Just as we do today, so the Hebrew people reacted to fear, political anxiety and social chaos by turning to religiosity and to false worship, mistaking

something else for the true God. As with us, they longed for security, and power, and just like us, they needed a new covenant; a reminder that the God of Israel brings about security and wellbeing through the community of justice and mercy; not through the trappings of material success and military strength.

This call to embrace the marginalized as God does, speaks to me about my church today. As it becomes clear that the Church is moving towards the blessing of same gender unions, it seems to me that we must take care that we do not turn to false worship in response to fear, upheaval and insecurity. In times of transition or crisis, we are called to return to our roots, to the essentials of our faith—the constant re-creation of a community of justice, grace and compassion. We are reshaping our rules in order to remain authentic to our identity but we must constantly hold our actions and our decisions up to this light; how do our decisions and actions continue to uphold the faith community's relationship with our God; the God of the marginalized? We are called to "see" the marginalized; they're not just the orphans, widows and strangers but they're also the people in our midst who are feeling on the edges—left out or left behind. We as a faith community are called to embrace all who feel estranged.

As well, Walter's understanding

of Deuteronomy as modeling "...the need for each generation to retell the story it as received to the next generation..." and "that the story has to be retold to each new generation in the context of the future they face, not in the context of the past we have experienced" energized me. I am part of an ongoing conversation in the Diocese of Niagara around new liturgy; alternatives to the Book of Alternative Services. A frequent point in our discussions has been the desire on the part of some in our midst to hold onto our classic Anglican liturgy as an integral part of our identity.

How heartening for me, one of those longing for liturgy more reflective of our world and the voices within it, to hear Walter describe Deuteronomy as teaching "...us that a crucial element of creating and transforming culture has to do with finding rituals and processes that enable both individual members of the community and the community as a whole to rehearse and own their identity on a regular basis". I have been intuitively drawn to liturgy that has been written by my peers, that speaks with a voice that reflects the concerns and issues of my age. In my understanding of liturgy as a work of the people, I celebrate those who write prayers, psalms, affirmations of faith, collects, blessings and dismissals that retell our God story in the vernacular of the

day; this very day in which we live in the sight of God. We are a people who long for renewal and reaffirmation of our purpose and our place—and one of the most profound ways to re-imagine and reinvigorate the faith community is by creating rituals that will both reflect and instill the values of our present-day communities of justice, grace and compassion.

I'm excited about this initial foray into Deuteronomy. I don't pretend to have done more than barely scratch the surface, and I want to be quite clear that although the material quoted is all from Walter Deller's talk at St. Christopher's, I take full responsibility for the interpretation. He might be horrified at the ways in which I've made it part of my own story. I hope he would be pleased though to know that I want more! As a child of the Gospel, someone who claims the Easter story but felt disconnected from the Moses story, I was enchanted to hear the message of Jesus reverberating in the writings of the Old Testament. (For those of you who love, enjoy and have been edified by the Old Testament for years; just forgive my ignorance—remember we're a people of grace!) I feel, more than ever, that the church of today is part of the spiraling cycle of growth and renewal that has gone on for centuries, and in our commitment to authentic faith, will feed the church of tomorrow.

CONT. FROM PAGE 5 » *Leading by serving*

Irene Richards described: "What's next? Well, the steering committee is putting together the ideas that came out of the November 13 community meeting along with our own. The Iroquois Ridge High School students Nicole and Stephen along with their teacher Monique Gazan are heading up the education aspect. They are connecting with the Halton Catholic School Board and private schools along with Halton District School Board to get the message out about HIV/AIDS and the energy from the students themselves will generate donations to the campaign."

Peter Knox acknowledges that a million dollars is a large amount of money for the average person, "However for a community of blessed individuals we need to share our fortunes and not watch while the casualty rates grow exponentially. Our confidence in mankind, passion for the cause and faith will see the implementation and overwhelming success of this small but important expression of love for those in need".

Hosting a high tea

The night of the community meeting in Oakville I sat next to a woman from Munn's United Church. She shared with me her congregation's response to the Aids Pandemic in Africa. She came from a small congregation, probably not unlike mine in Georgetown and I am sure they must have gotten their idea from an Anglican.

Every year near Valentine's Day the parish hosts a high tea with

the proceeds going to the Stephen Lewis Foundation.

While this action counts success by raising hundreds of dollars, not millions, that is not the point.

Even something as simple as that accomplishes so much on so many different levels: it raises awareness of the issue of HIV Aids in Africa, money is raised to build community in Africa while building community in their own church, partnerships are developed with the Stephen Lewis Foundation and through it with the organizations and groups it funds in Africa and it draws in members of the broader community.

The international partner on the national Partners in Mission and Ecojustice Committee, The Reverend Florence Ayban of the Episcopal Diocese of Central Philippines shared with the PMEJ committee what she has adopted as her personal prayer:

*Sent by the Lord am I
My hands are ready now
To make the earth a place
Your kingdom come*

*The angels cannot change
A world of hurt and pain
Into a world of love, of justice and
of peace*

*The task is ours to do
To set it really free*

*O help me to obey
Help me to do your will.*

It's all about doing mission, the mission of Christ. Heed how God is calling you, the task is ours to do.

Continuing our journey



IAN DINGWALL
RETIRED EXECUTIVE ARCHDEACON OF NIAGARA

I don't suppose anyone is happy with the current situation in our beloved Anglican Communion. And the word out of the Anglican Network Conference held recently in Burlington gives fuel to that feeling of dismay. It sounds likely that soon a group of congregations will set out on their own, separate from our Anglican Church of Canada.

Indeed, it's not a happy time, although we have been anticipating such a separation.

And I would guess many are feeling relieved that decisions are being made and resolution near, in spite of the fact that this resolve will see a breakaway, minority group from our Canadian Anglican Community.

At another recent gathering, the Dean of the Anglican Cathedral in San Francisco (Allen Jones) suggested that we ought to recognize that upheaval in human experience is more often a reality of life than is tranquility. In the midst of our present state of affairs that insight has given me a sense of security and hope.

Consider the truth of Jones' statement and think of the 2000

years of Christian history as well as the entire history of our universe.

Every century is marked by conflict

Each century of our Common Era is marked by upheaval in one form or another and, without exaggeration, the word Chaos could also be used in a descriptive way. Sometimes conflict situations are marked by words and threats etc. and at other times words have turned into arms and armies causing violence, pain and death for millions of human beings.

Reflect carefully on two of the foundational truths of Christian Faith—Creation and Incarnation.

In the book of Genesis we learn that Creation (our Cosmos, our earth Planet and all Humanity) was born out of chaos and darkness.

The Story of the New Testament declares that God entered our human experience through the One, Jesus of Nazareth, and that story points to similar upheaval as the earth's foundations are shaken by God. Jesus' words and actions were disturbing to many and his Ministry was marked by considerable disagreement which ended in violence.

Why not just relax?

Why then in our own day are we so surprised when turmoil erupts in our world or in the church? We say that Creation came out of Chaos and we believe Creation is never static but an ongoing reality. So why not view the present "separation" of sisters and brothers as an inevitable, if sor-

rowful, an outcome that we should neither emote or despair about.

The "breach" in our community is not God-given in my view but a reality which we ought to accept and then move on. I know the minority dissent of the Anglican Network Association claims the rest of us are in Schism and the rest of us might reply in kind, saying, "Oh no, THEY are the Schismatics." Neither position in my opinion is helpful.

Why don't we just relax? To relax, you will know, means to "let go". By relaxing we declare that we are not in ultimate control of life—none of us! Only God is God so why not decide to our very best and get on with our lives and the life of our Church?

God will lead us

Divorce is seldom a happy event—there are never "winners", only "losers" and all participants feel the hurt. But we know too that divorce is caused by human frailty which we need to accept, however sadly or reluctantly we feel. And there is no reason to throw around words of condemnation and guilt which will do nothing creative and simply cause further hurt.

For myself, I say to all those who are separating themselves from our Community of Faith, I am sorry that our disagreements have ended this way, but go in Peace and God bless you always.

To the rest of us—bishops, clergy, dioceses and congregations—accept what is and together let us continue our common journey with God wherever S(He) leads.

St. Samaan, the Tanner, or Cobbler



MICHAEL BURSELM
ALL SAINTS' CATHEDRAL, CAIRO

Of all the many sites to be seen in Egypt I think the cave churches of Mokattam are a *must see*. In this essay I shall tell you something of the life of the man to whom they are dedicated, St. Samaan, and in another essay describe, with the help of our new toy, a digital camera, the churches themselves, which are truly magnificent and awe inspiring.

Pope Abram's problem

St. Samaan lived in old Cairo, then known as Babylon, in the 11th Century. However, little is known about him except that he was very short and one eyed and that through his intercession part of the Mokattam Mountain, on the edge of Cairo, was moved. To put this into historical perspective it was after the caliphate of al-Hakim bi-Amr Allah (996-1021) under whom Christians and Jews suffered. He was the caliph who

in 1009 destroyed the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, which sparked the Crusades. However, he disappeared riding his donkey in the Mokattam hills, and was never seen again. His followers, the Druze, still believe that he was hidden away by God, and will return on judgment day. Following him, however, there was a period of enlightenment, especially during the lengthy reign of al-Mustansir (1036-1094) who was a man of great learning, and under him people of all faiths enjoyed a period of tranquility. He enjoyed literary conversation with both Jewish and Christian leaders, but stipulated that there be no acrimony. Once the pontiff, Pope Abram Ibn Zaran, the Syrian, stretched the line a bit by quoting Isaiah 1.3—"The ox knows his owner, and the ass his master's crib; but Israel does not know, my people do not consider"—and suggested that even the animals had greater understanding of God than the Jews. This so infuriated the rabbi that he conceived a plan to retaliate. At their next meeting, he suggested to the caliph that he invite the pope to move Mokattam Mountain because his Lord had said that if he had the faith the size of a mustard seed he could so do

it. This seemed a fair challenge, so the caliph gave him the order to move the eastern part of the mountain, or else to abandon Christianity for Islam. He had after all broken the ground rule that there be no acrimony.

This put such fear into Abram's heart that he asked the caliph for three day's grace. He called the whole church to fast and to pray. On the third night the Virgin appeared to him. Appearances of the Virgin are not uncommon in Egypt. After all she came here on her flight from Herod. She told him to go out into the market place and there he would find a short, one eyed, man carrying a water pot, and that through his prayer the mountain would be moved.

Abram finds Samaan

This he did before anybody else was up, and found Samaan delivering water to the sick and needy. He told him his mission, but Samaan immediately excused himself, saying that he could do no such thing because he was such a sinful man. He told the pope he was only a cobbler; he started his day by taking water to the sick and elderly, who could not go out to fetch water for themselves, and then he worked through the heat of the day, and in the even-

ing he enjoyed a simple meal with his friends. He said that once, when he was making a pair of shoes for a young lady he noted how beautiful she was, and that he desired her very much, so he stuck his awl into his right eye, in response to the Lord's warning: "...if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee," which accounted for his one eye.

Nevertheless he eventually consented to the pope's persuasion, and pope Abram called everyone to the mountain. They all gathered, and Samaan said that he would stand behind the pope, so that nobody would suspect him of performing the miracle. He did so; he prayed, and the miracle happened. The mountain moved. The pope turned around to look for Samaan, but Samaan wasn't there. Caliph al-Mustansir was so impressed by this that he paid out money for major structural repairs to several churches, including the Virgin's church, now known as 'the Hanging Church' in Old Cairo, because it was erected in the 4th. Century, suspended upon old Roman foundations, another *must see*.

Left-handed justice

No one knows anything more of Samaan, but he came to be venerated by Copts. It's not even known when he died or where he was buried. It's assumed that he would have been buried near the Virgin's church. Some centuries later some popes wished to be buried close to him. From this, recently archeologists think they have located his grave, disinterred the remains, and his 'relics' have been placed in three different churches, one of which is in the cave church at Mokattam, where he performed the miracle. Copts revere the relics of their saints.

This story of Samaan the Tanner, or Cobbler, illustrates what Robert Farrar Capon calls 'left-handed justice.' God does things through those who are weak, rather than strong. In contrast pope Abram in taunting the rabbi was exhibiting right handed power. That's not the way God works. To the skeptical North American this may seem all mythical hog-wash, but in Egypt this story of St. Saaman is on a par with the Scriptures. Something happened; faithful Copts believe it to have been a miracle, and they observe a three day fast tacked before the Advent fast to commemorate it. They also take fasting very seriously. The take home lesson is that God does indeed remove mountains if we allow him to do it his way, and not ours.

We are all equal in the sight of God



GRAHAME STAP
ST. ALBAN THE MARTYR, GLEN WILLIAMS

I am a cradle Anglican, born and raised with the idea of an inclusive church—at least that is how I remembered my early church experience. However, when I start to think deeply about what inclusive means, I am not so sure that we have ever been inclusive. The dictionary defines inclusive as: *have as part of contents, comprise; add in; take in; including everything.* Have we ever

included everything? It seems there is always something or someone left out.

My first recollection of church was as a member of the church of The Annunciation in Chislehurst, Kent, England as third boy soprano in an all male choir—no women allowed and of course no women priests.

It wasn't until 1976 that the Anglican Church realized we are all created equal in the sight of God and women were ordained to the priesthood.

Of course exclusion has been around a lot longer than the Anglican Church. It was Augustine in the fourth century that dreamt up purgatory as a place to send those that are not baptized and other sinners and excluded them from the face of God.

In my life time segregation of black and white, in the Anglican churches of North America was common. In the days of slavery the Anglican Church was a keeper of slaves especially in the Caribbean. In Barbados Codrington College, a college where young men went to be trained as Anglican priests, owned many slaves. It was these slaves that helped increase the wealth of the United Kingdom.

Unfortunately there are many examples of our church not being inclusive over the centuries that have passed since the beginning of the Church of England.

Remembering the First Communion Debate

When children no longer had to be

confirmed to receive communion I was an out spoken critic and was a leader against this seemingly ridiculous notion that children could actually understand what was going on. One day in conversation on this matter, I was asked why I went to the altar. I hesitated not really knowing how to answer. I stammered, "I suppose to thank God for doing for me what I cannot do for myself." The response for me was earth shattering. "If that is the case why would you ask anyone else to wait?" I did a complete turn around as I realized not only was I wrong, but also part of the process to exclude others from what I took for granted.

Now as a priest administering communion to children each and

every Sunday I can see in their faces more understanding than I ever thought possible. It would be wonderful if this Christmas we actually welcomed all people to the table of the Lord understanding that God created all things, loves all things and it is not our place to tell God that some of God's work is not worthy.

Let us this Christmas welcome all God's children regardless of race, creed, colour, sex, age, or sexual orientation knowing that God will always do for us all what we cannot do for ourselves.

God lifts us past our brokenness, forgives our sins, and leads us to everlasting life. Who are we to believe we can stand in the way of Gods love and exclude anyone?

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8 » Reflections on closing St. Philip's, Burlington

The Church, even though it was only a building, was in a special way the glue that held people from all walks of life, different ages and different ethnic backgrounds together. The core of St. Philip's, those who took the difficult decision last March to vote to disestablish, was a diverse group of people who, on the surface, may have seemed to have little in common with each other. However, it was their love for Jesus Christ that bound them together and bound them together (although

they did not always agree on many levels) in love, support and prayer. Over the years they had become a family, supporting each other in the changes and chances of their lives. Now when they no longer meet together every Sunday (and each Sunday most of them were there), they feel a sense of profound loss that still six months later is palpable.

For many it has been difficult finding a new parish. It takes energy to find a new parish. It takes an

effort to begin to trust again and to begin to build new relationships in new parishes. Most parishes have been welcoming and inviting, however that was not everyone's experience of every parish. Some felt unwelcome when they visited certain parishes; no one invited them to coffee or spoke to them when they went. As one parishioner writes, "The two Anglican churches that I visited did not welcome me, except for the odd person that I knew. They seemed cold and appeared to

me as going through the motions of the service. I was not invited to their "coffee hour". At Holy Cross (Lutheran) I was welcomed by several of the parishioners and have been readily accepted as a member of the congregation.

Meanwhile, the parishioners still value the love of their St Philip's family. There have been two parishes meetings held since the closing to give people a safe place to share their feelings. In addition the parish has gathered for a picnic,

dinner, a boat cruise and a wine tasting tour. It has been healing to reconnect with each other, to share what has happened in our lives and in our search for a new parish since St. Philip has closed.

The building may be sold, but friendship is more than a building, and the friendships made at St Philip's still go on. As a former parishioner of St Philip's as well as the Interim Pastor, I join with the other parishioners—we truly are and will always be. "Friends for Ever!"

Wealth and possessions

ROGER HARRIS
ANGLICAN FELLOWSHIP OF PRAYER

"Jesus' lesson on the folly of laying up treasure for oneself, and ignoring God" (Luke 12: 16-21).

One of the most difficult things for a Christian to come to terms with is the relationship of wealth to God. Each time we read about this in the bible, Jesus is consistent in His teaching that material wealth is not what is expected by God, and that wealth of the spirit is His requirement of us in His desire for a close relationship with us.

When Adam and Eve were removed from the Garden of Eden, God did not abandon them, but as a loving Father would do for His children, He gave them the knowledge and ability to take care of themselves and to prosper. From these humble beginnings, humanity has learned to take what has been provided and use it to grow in his ability to become self-sufficient. Unfortunately, this self-sufficiency began to provide an alternative to God, and materialism in the form of acquisition became prominent.

All of us to a greater or lesser degree have had thoughts of wealth, and some of us indulge in various ways and means of attaining it, like buying lottery tickets. The value of money though, goes only as far as what it is capable of acquiring, be it from the basic requirements of our existence to decadent opulence

and luxury, or to the means of self-gratification in other ways of life.

Money is neither good nor evil, it is only a means of acquisition. It only becomes a problem when it is abused, used for creating conflict, or when the love for it exceeds that of the use of it. Jesus had no love for money. He acknowledged its use when He told us to, 'Give unto Caesar all that is Caesars', and also when He vented His anger when confronted with its use in the Temple.

Money is the benchmark for wealth, and wealth is the benchmark for materialism. There are two sources of wealth—human-made and God-given. Wealth man made is not the same as wealth God given. Human-made is centered for use on the individual. God given is for the benefit of others. This is the true wealth, encompassed in the gifts and blessings that He bestows upon us. Not only in the blessings of family and friends, food in the stomach, clothes on our body and a roof over our head, but also the gifts of words and actions that we can use in the service of others. How many times in the last decade or two have we seen God's intervention, because those so blessed have used the resources given, for the wrong purposes.

To have wealth does not exclude us from a relationship with God. We distance ourselves from Him by degrees, because of a shift in focus. It does not eliminate us from a place in

His Kingdom; it only makes it more difficult to get there. Jesus has also told us that 'It is more difficult for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of Heaven, than a camel to get through the eye of a needle'. What one does with wealth is proportionate to the amount of access that we have to enter through the 'Narrow Gate'.

In scripture there are numerous references to wealth and possessions, but it is in the New Testament that we must look regarding relevancy to us. There are two that we could focus on as the model that we could aspire to.

"Jesus recommends the rich man to take his wealth and give it to the poor and less fortunate, and follow Him. In so doing he will receive riches in heaven that will far surpass those accumulated on earth" (Mark 10:17-22).

"We find the original example of sharing, in the life of the first believers. All wealth and possessions were put in the common purse, and distributed when and where needed" (1 Timothy 6:17-19).

Whatever our station in life, our paths can only be navigated by a consistent communication with God. The resources that we acquire, provide us with an even greater reason for this, for in prayer, He will tell us how to use them wisely and ultimately more profitably. This will be not only for others, but also for ourselves. For it is here on earth that we lay up treasures for ourselves in heaven.

Bishop's Diploma Course

This program provides an opportunity for lay people to grow in their commitment to Christ and Christ's Church through a deepening of faith. This fall will feature an eight-week course on Ethics. To register, contact the centre nearest you.

Registration fee: \$35 (includes sessions plus text)

Area	Parish
Dunnville	St. Paul's
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For further information contact Jane Wyse by calling 905-527-1316 (ext. 420) or sending an email to jane.wyse@niagara.anglican.ca

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I'm a graduate of the Cathedral



FRANCEAN CAMPBELL-RICH
CHRIST'S CHURCH CATHEDRAL, HAMILTON

I'm a graduate of the Cathedral, but I'm still here. Apologies to Chris Grabiec, graduate of Notre Dame, in the last issue of the *Niagara Anglican*. Chris described an interview with a professor who believed he had identified Chris by his earring. I was reminded of the time I had coffee with the chaplain of a college where I was new student. The chaplain, who was also a professor of economics, asked me where I was from, and then, my church affiliation. Neither Chris nor I, for different reasons, would forget the incidents.

As a newcomer to Hamilton in September of 2001, I asked Sue Nichols where I should go to church. "Go to the Cathedral", she said, "it's near where you live, and the music's good." Our Cathedral is a constant source of learning, of encounter, of discovery, of surprise, and of everything else that the *Preserve to Serve* leaflet says it is. And the music is superb. Quite often I tell myself, and try, to visit other churches in the diocese—but I'm always afraid I'll miss something.

We're missing people

Everybody knows the Cathedral needs a dependable source of new resources in order to continue to do what it is doing now. Great and wonderful things have been initiated over the past few years to increase the image and influence of Christ's Church Cathedral and its many services to the depressed area around it. It has virtually turned itself inside out to become a visible and effective force in the community. But something is missing; something easy to label but hard to define: people.

We know we are not alone—especially among urban churches whose glory days go back to times when there were fewer things to do on a Sunday, when the church was the social and cultural centre of the community, where sidesmen wore morning coats, pews were rented, secrets and scandal abounded (read Katharine Greenfield's stories sometime) and the ladies of the congregation raised the money for an ever expanding church. Long gone are the days when the clergyman could take his time to remonstrate with his flock, warn against transgressions, deliver the Word and announce upcoming events. Rarely does anyone ask anymore what ever happened to the old collect "Stir up, we beseech thee, O Lord..." on the Sunday before Advent, in time to prepare for the Christmas pudding. And women wore hats, always.

We know we are not alone when numbers dwindle; when parishioners pass on and new young faces fail to replace them; when churches amalgamate, or close; when newspaper, television, and radio make little or no room for churches unless it 'makes news', or advertising revenue. Or when there are diminishing numbers to report.

We need to change

I do believe that we are alone where we need not be, and that we need to change. I do not mean change for improvement in seating, or utilities, or programs, or even liturgy, but change along the lines of what is old is new again: visiting, and personal hospitality. This brings me back to college, when the chaplain joined me for coffee. That friendly gesture, and the amiable conversation that followed, invited me into a world from which I had lapsed and which now gradually became central to my life.

Too bad we have no coffee shop in the cathedral—though I see no real reason why something close to it could not be envisioned. As it is, perhaps regretfully, a number of smokers unite under an overhang in the passageway to the parking lot. They appear to be sharing things, having a good time. It's enough to make you wish... but oh no, not that way!

Good things happen when people gather. It's what we mean when we

gather for worship. And it happens when people gather anywhere, especially in our own homes: even more so when someone has made the initial gesture—whether to old friends, new friends, to Sarah across the street who befriended me the day I moved in, and particularly to that newcomer at church. It need not be anything more than coffee somewhere or a ride home after church. We all have stories about someone who came, stayed for a bit, sometimes returned for a service or two, and disappeared. Coffee hour in itself is rarely enough to establish a connection.

Fewer empty pews

But there is another, far more enduring custom that we could well revive—parish visits by clergy. Time was when it was routine, and expected, even counted on. It is still practiced, after a fashion, by clergy—usually to someone in hospital. Not enough. Why not a call ahead, followed by an informal visit? Totally unexpected, personal, and infinitely appreciated. Are clergy convinced that they are just too busy, too professional to observe this ordinary mission? Common sense will shape the parameters. The older, longer termed, familiar the parishioner, the more valued the visit. Confidences are shared, problems resolved—or at least aired, reconciliation (that

beautiful word) begun, jokes exchanged. Fewer misunderstandings. And fewer empty pews.

Synod is past, and with it, the most contentious issue, eased into acceptance by congeniality, good will, and grace beyond measure from our two bishops. Fading away are the memories of tactless, scolding language, verbal and in print—from local sources, media reports and from General Synod. May God be with us through the ensuing actions of protesting churches and individuals, until with time and patience, all is restored to the peace and calm of (most of) our Anglican ways. It's not the first storm we've weathered, though perhaps the most exposed. And when it comes right down to it, where is the ultimate virtue of unity? We've lived with division for centuries, we Christians, as we strive in the present to live with diversity.

Chris Grabiec describes how his alma mater, Notre Dame never lets go, never gives up, on its alumni, to which I say Amen—except that not counting Christ's Church Cathedral, where I continue to learn and to grow, I hope, there are all the others: the Royal Conservatory of Music, two University of Toronto faculties, and Mills College, California—all of whom never let me go—even without a parish visit, a house gathering, or a cup of coffee. Thanks be to God.

That wonderful thing called wonder

JERRY SALLOUM
PAST VICAR - ST GEORGE'S, LOWVILLE

I have a grandson whose name is Stephen. This little guy is the delight of my life. One day, when he was much younger, Stephen crawled up onto my lap as I worked at my computer, wiggled into a position of comfort in front of the screen and stared at the array of colours and shapes appearing be-



Wonder allows us to discover that Great Context in which our lives reside

fore him. Observing his obvious interest, I clicked onto some pictures of our solar system. Stephen's eyes widened as a photograph of a full moon flashed before him. He sat transfixed as additional photos of planets and galaxies faded in and out of his field of vision. As each image took shape, there emerged from deep within him this barely audible expression of delight. Inhaling deeply, then in a soft whisper, he would greet each image with the repeated refrain: "Ooooooh... looka dat!"

More than my appreciation of those snapshots of the heavens was my joy in Stephen's delight. Unaware of anything else around him, he appeared totally captivated by

the pictures. His response was pure exultation, enjoyment of something for what it is. Nobody had ever sat him down to teach him to exult. For him, exultation was something entirely natural and entirely spontaneous, some capacity that had been stamped indelibly deep within him.

One's delight in children arises in part from their capacity to exult, that is, to rejoice. Taking a child for a walk can be frustrating if we assign a greater importance to the destination than to the journey. Journeys are opportunities for rejoicing. This fact was most evident the last time I took Stephen for an outing to a nearby park. The route to the park was a relatively straight path. But to Stephen, this mattered little. His was a wandering path made circuitous by his curiosity. The journey, not merely the destination, was his delight.

A myriad of things strewn along his pathway formed a gallery of attractions. There was that pebble delicately perched on the edge of the sewer grate which when tipped by his finger caused great glee as it went "plunk" in the black abyss below. His appetite to duplicate this funny sound was insatiable. There was the green and yellow dandelion that had to be carefully examined, dissected and appreciated. There was the irresistible mud puddle that beckoned him as flowers beckon bees. He took time

to catch an elusive grasshopper, to rattle a stick against fence boards and to point out the shape of the letter "S" in an overhead cloud. My agenda was getting Stephen to the park to play on large pieces of coloured playground plastic. But his agenda was different. His response to pebbles, flowers, puddles, sticks, grasshoppers and clouds was spontaneous delight. His response was wonder.

Wonder is that precious tool by which we venture beyond knowledge and awareness into the world of mystery. Wonder is that wonderful mental activity which is activated whenever we pass that limit of vision, that mental horizon, beyond which light is replaced by darkness or shadows. To wonder is to stand before something we sense is buried treasure. To wonder is to contemplate something far greater than ourselves and to realize that our knowledge of it is incomplete. To wonder is to open the door to the possibility of surprise. A fully known world is a world that does not require wonder, a dreary world in which there are no surprises.

The natural world abounds in elements that trigger wonder. And the site for each experience of wonder is precisely at the end of our knowledge and our understanding. Recall the story of Job, a guy who could not understand why so much misfortune had come his way. We

are surprised at God's response. Instead of addressing Job's plight, God challenges him with a set of questions all about the Cosmos. One wonders at the tone of God's voice. Was it thunderous? Was it a quiet whisper? One also wonders how long He continued on with His monologue. Did it last as long as it takes us to read about it? Did it last for many years?

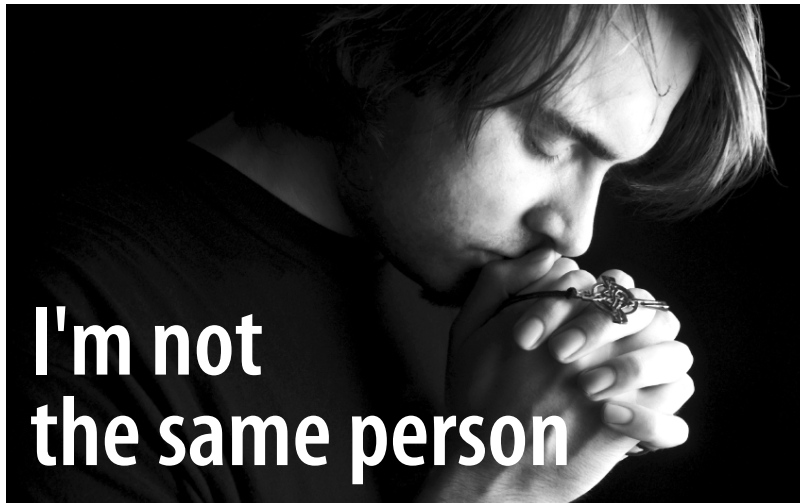
My principal focus of wonder, however, relates to why God chose to take Job on a cosmic wilderness tour of wonder: Wonder about constellations; wonder about storms; wonder about life; wonder about the nature of things. Job's response to God at the end of this remarkable journey of wonder ("Once I heard of you; now I see you") testifies both to the reason for that journey as well as the reason for God's gift to us of wonder: Wonder allows us to discover that Great Context in which our lives reside. And with such discovery, we, like Job, are strangely satisfied. With each question about the Cosmos, God was inviting Job to discover that his life did not merely consist merely of self, boils and property. Each element of the Cosmos was an icon, a window through which Job was permitted to see a Greater Glory beyond himself.

As for me, I have long since stopped wondering about pebbles gong plunk in sewers. Rattling a

stick against a fence no longer excites me as it once did. I don't mind not seeing another grasshopper. But since my vision is still limited and buried treasures still surround me, I am still filled with wonder. I wonder about what happens when atmospheric conditions convert harmless tropical disturbances into violent Category-5 hurricanes. I wonder what guides birds on their long migrations. I wonder how that salmon made it all the way back to its placed of origin in the Alaskan stream. I wonder what it will be like for me in the seconds following my death. I wonder about a god capable of making something out of nothing. I wonder about that moment in the garden when Jesus Christ uttered Mary's name.

Wonder is God's gift that moves us toward making sense out of a world steeped in mystery. Wonder is our attempt "to get it altogether". In mulling over the heavens and the Earth, one wonders. In ruminating over the teachings of Jesus, one wonders. Wonder is what we do whenever we contemplate the truly lovely. And what makes something or someone truly lovely is the degree to which that something or someone testifies to what is beyond, to a greater Glory, a Glory greater than Handel's Messiah, greater than the Cosmos, greater than even my grandson Stephen. Hmm, I wonder. I wonder if wonder is the essence of worship.

EDITORIAL



I'm not the same person

CHRISTOPHER M. GRABIEC
EDITOR

In the journey of every thinking and growing person, there are what I like to call "key faith" experiences. These are moments in which we experience the powerful movement of God's spirit within us or around us. They are life-altering moments that are never forgotten.

Many years ago, before my ordination I chose to spend a month in silent retreat. During this time I prayed my way through the spiritual exercises of St. Ignatius. Believe me; keeping silence for those thirty

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If we put our ear to the proverbial ground... the Word will lead us places that we might rather not be.

days was almost impossible. I was in a convent in Connecticut at the time. Fortunately, every night while I was walking and meditating in the darkened hallways of this massive convent, I would hear a small noise from around the corner in the hallway. "Pssst". I would proceed around the corner and there would be an elderly Sister Lucille with a couple of cookies and a few warm words to break my silence. It was delightful and much appreciated!

As the days progressed during this retreat, I felt that there was a war going on within me. It was almost like a battle between good and evil. I could not determine which was which and

each voice was clear and convincing. The issue was whether or not I was being called to ministry. More specifically, it was about whether I even believed that there was a call and that I wanted to respond.

I remember the day clearly. I was sitting under a tree trying to listen, while at the same time feeling stressed. A decision to give one's life to priesthood via the Roman church is fairly difficult as it comes with a lot of baggage. Is this what I wanted? Is this what God would want for me. Clearly, I remember that at one point I was overcome with a feeling that I have described in words: "I want you to do what you are doing." It wasn't the clear message that I was looking for which would have been "I want you to be a priest in the RC church for the rest of your life." I suppose that message would have truly knocked me off my horse.

It was amazing though, how the stress and anguish left and how I began to feel that what I was doing was in the moment and that was the best that I could do. In the moment, I was journeying toward an ordained ministry and so I continued to walk that path, trying to listen all the more to what the Spirit was saying in my life.

Some 20 years later, I would find myself in crisis and unable to live the life of a priest in the Roman understanding. The key faith experience that I had on that retreat began to haunt me. What was God saying to me? Was I supposed to remain active in the priesthood until my dying moments? "I want you to do what you are doing." I felt so comforted by those words.

You see the whole point of vocation is not about the inflexibility of God and hence the inflexibility of our understanding of fulfillment in life. It's about listening, journeying and responding to the ever changing needs of the world around us. I had given what I was able to give and then things began to change. I couldn't give in the same way. I needed to move on and serve in other ways and my early, and what I believe was a profound sense of vocation, said that that was good.

So now you say, where is he going with all this? As believers in the incarnate Christ, whose Spirit is so alive among us, we know that if we put our ear to the proverbial ground—we will be faced with the Word of God alive in the moment. We will be challenged by that word and it will lead us to places that we might rather not be. We also know that our God has "been there" and will "be there" for us. There is nothing to fear.

Well, some of us fear what is happening to our church these days. We hear talk about our church being broken and severed because different people are hearing God's Word in different ways. I know this: How I was called to respond to God in 1976 was different to how I am called to respond to God today. There will still be "men" called to the priesthood in the Roman Church. Some of them will stay and some will leave. My hope is that they keep their ear to the ground and "do what they are doing" every day. There are men and women called to Anglican Orders and they are each called to minister in different ways—thankfully. Can

you imagine what it would be like if every minister ministered in exactly the same way? How many of us would be left out in the cold?

Some believe that we are called to be a more inclusive church and others feel that we are called to be a more traditional church governed by a particular understanding of the Word. So be it. I, for one, am glad that people are trying to hear how it is that God is calling them to minister.

Over 80% of the Church in Niagara wants to be more inclusive. That same number of people want our church to become more centered on eco-justice. That's how they hear the Word of God today. Did they hear it that way 25 years ago? No. But they do today and that's where their journey will now go. The others feel that God does not want the same kind of inclusivity—it is the blessing of sin. Many others feel that the eco-justice thrust is equally unimportant. I can only trust that they are hearing the call of God in their lives to minister to a particular group in a particular way.

God does not call us to do the same thing for our entire lives. She (he) does not call us all to do it the same way either. We've talked about being a church with a plurality of views. It seems to me that having a plurality of views and approaches is to respect the call of God—who ensures that all people are cared for and ministered to in this very diverse world of ours.

We're all saddened by the fact that some feel that pointing fingers at particular viewpoints and particular people who are trying to listen to the call of the spirit is appropriate. We're equally saddened that conferences are called and venomous attitudes are canonized as the "way of God." Judgment and anger toward one another is clearly not of the Spirit. Understanding as we always have, that God calls each of us and groups of us to understandings that are different, is to believe in the living Word of God.

I really don't care about the power plays involved in creating a new church, with new bishops and new archdeacons. I do care about "doing what I am doing" and knowing that as the days go on, I will hear the gentle voice of God calling me to change and adapt and grow. I'm not the person I was 30 years ago—thanks be to God.

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Editor: Christopher Grabiec

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

Email: chrisg@thedunhamgroup.com

Advertising: Ted Manning

Phone: 905-680-0615

Email: advertising@niagara.anglican.ca

Publishers Advisory Board

Pam Claridge

Phone: 519-941-6804

Email: pclaridge@rogers.com

John Janisse

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

Email: johnj@thedunhamgroup.com

Geoffrey Purdell-Lewis

Phone: 905-628-4176

Email: purdell-lewis@sympatico.ca

Charles Stirling

Phone: 905-383-1088

Email: cstirling@sympatico.ca

Carol Summers

Phone: 905-772-5641

Email: summers@linetap.com

Staff

Design/layout: Kayn Leduc

Proofreading: Bryan Stopps

Submissions

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The Diocese of Niagara

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

Bishop of Niagara: Ralph Spence

Phone: 905-527-1316

Email: bishop@niagara.anglican.ca

Administrative Assistant: Alison D'Atri

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

Email: alison.datri@niagara.anglican.ca

Executive Officer: Marion Vincett

Phone: 905-527-1316

Email: marion.vincett@niagara.anglican.ca

Director of Evangelism: Michael Patterson

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

Email: michael.patterson@niagara.anglican.ca

Children, Youth, Family Min.: Christyn Perkons

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

Email: christyn.perkons@niagara.anglican.ca

Youth Min./Adult Education: Joyce Wilton

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

Email: joyce.wilton@niagara.anglican.ca

Contact the Diocese

Cathedral Place

252 James St. North

Hamilton, ON L8R 2L3

Phone: 905-527-1316

Website: www.niagara.anglican.ca

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

What is unity worth?

Would it be acceptable if Jesus came to us hungry and thirsty and we didn't feed him or give him a drink because someone who professed to believe what we do would be offended? NO!

Would it be acceptable if Jesus came to us as a stranger and we didn't take him in because some-

one is our community would be offended? NO!

Would it be acceptable if Jesus came to us naked and we didn't give him clothes because we were concerned that doing so might cause us to stand out from the crowd? NO!

Would it be acceptable if Jesus came to us a prisoner or sick and we didn't visit him because we were concerned that doing so might strain the unity of our church? NO, NO, NO!

Why then, is it acceptable to deny Jesus when he comes to us as gay and wanting blessing on a loving, committed relationship because someone might be offended, or that the Unity of the Anglican Church might be strained? "That's not the case", you say? He said, "Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me" (Matthew 25: 40).

If the unity of our church is so important that it would force us to deny food, clothing, ministry or blessing to 'one of the least of these his brethren' then it has clearly taken us away from Christ's message and Jesus himself. I, for one, don't want to be 'united' with anyone who would force me to go there. It is time to act. Jesus is waiting!

HAROLD LEECE
St. Catharines

Share the warmth

MELANIE CUMMINGS
NEIGHBOUR TO NEIGHBOUR STAFF

Songs of the winter season cheerfully evoke images of cozy fires and comfortable surroundings.

Thankfully, for 147 households in the city last winter that was the picture too. But it nearly wasn't.

On the brink of losing their heat in sub-zero temperatures, Neighbour to Neighbour Centre's Share-the-Warmth Program stepped in with help.

A total of \$43,781 was distributed to these 147 homes in the chilly winter months of 2006-2007-68 of which were led by one parent, 48 by two-parents and 31 who were living alone.

The figures from the previous years are similar. In the winter of 2005-2006, \$38,834 was stretched to help 134 households facing the same dilemma. The funds kept the 265 children who live in these houses, toasty warm.

In 2005, 134 households (in which 201 children under the age of 16 lived) were assisted with a Share the Warmth subsidy. They had an average income of \$1,046.34 per month. At such a low income level, keeping up with ever-soaring utility prices makes basic needs such as electricity and hot water out of reach luxuries.

Share the Warmth applicants who are threatened with a service disruption because of overdue gas and hydro bills, or who's supply has already been disconnected as a result of these crippling costs, can use the Share the Warmth program three times in their lifetime, but only once per heating season. It entitles applicants to receive a \$400 credit on their gas or hydro bill.

For many of the people who come to the Share the Warmth program seeking help, it's their first introduction to Neighbour to Neighbour Centre and its ample resources.

Over the years, it has become an ideal way to channel clients into other programs that can help stem the problems that have led to this dire situation.

Dedicated and well-informed volunteers in Neighbour to Neighbour's Resource Counselling area meet with Share the Warmth applicants to discuss credit counselling, tenant advocacy or other services that will alleviate the financial dilemmas that led them to the subsidy program.

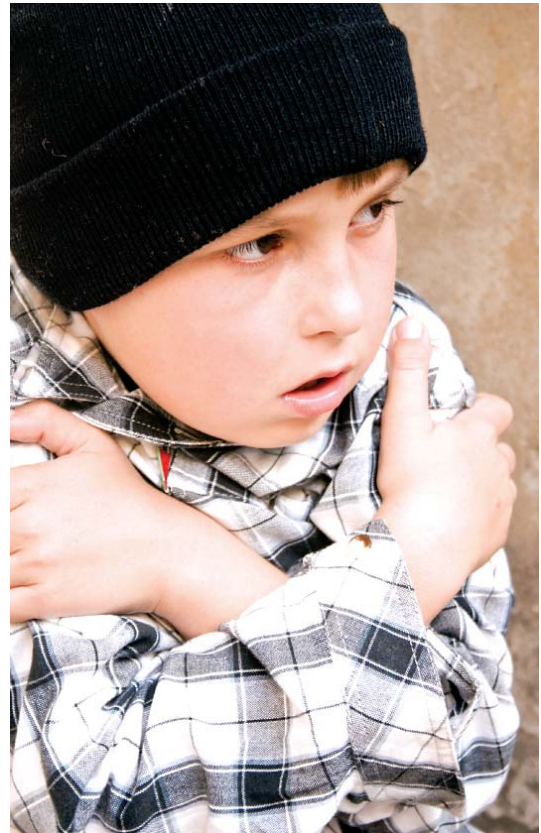
Resource Counsellors at Neighbour to Neighbour Centre are like walking phone books. Their brains are rife with information about

where people can go for help, in finding affordable housing, to speak with a lawyer despite limited incomes or how to enroll in English speaking classes. By helping steer struggling individuals in the right direction a life of self-sufficiency is more likely.

That's the way it was for Darlene. A family tragedy brought her in to speak with a Resource Counsellor. When her husband suddenly died from a heart attack, the 40-year-old Hamilton Mountain resident became a widowed single mom overnight. Not only did her three boys aged 11, 12 and 14 need help grieving, she also faced financial worries.

While the food bank helped carry the family nutritionally, Resource Counsellors gave her emotional support and practical programs in the community that could help her with the issues suddenly foisted upon the family.

Christmas is a time that makes us all think about family and feasting. But even after the hubbub of the season, Neighbour to Neighbour Centre, and all Food banks across the city, continue to rely on donated groceries. Please help us live up to our slogan that says 'Help is Just a Neighbour Away.'



A priest in publishing orders

ALAN COOK
ST. JAMES THE APOSTLE, GUELPH

When I took a break from parish ministry in 2006, I knew that I might not return to a parish, but I definitely wanted to stay in ministry. Working for a Christian publishing company has been an answer to my prayers.

First sales rep for ABC

In September I moved to Guelph, and in November I started as the first field representative with the Anglican Book Centre and Augsburg Fortress Publishers, specifically to deal with the Anglican churches in Canada. Many of you will know that ABC had been losing substantial amounts of money over the last few years. For a time Church House had considered closing the store and just offering a mail-order service. It was a great relief when the announcement came that Augsburg Fortress Canada would assume the mail-order business for ABC and keep the store open in Toronto. Augsburg Fortress Canada is the non-profit ministry of Publishing for Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, our full-communion partners, and a long time friend to Anglicans across the country.

General Synod has retained the role of the publisher for the Anglican Church of Canada, but now ABC/AF will run the store and handle the distribution of resources to our Churches. The transitions of such mergers can be bumpy, but there has been overwhelming support for the efforts. The AF store in Kitchener is now carrying many

more Anglican products previously only found in Toronto, so you can come to either one and find similar selections at the same prices.

Let me help you

This is a brand new position for ABC. Never before have they had someone dedicated to working in the field with our Churches. Augsburg Fortress introduced this position for Lutherans a few years ago in Canada. Some of you will know my colleague Jackie Nunns: she has now visited most of the 600 Lutheran congregations in Canada, to service their requests, listen to their needs, and to build a sense of mutual commitment within the denominational community. She also gives feedback to the editors and publishers to let them know what people need on the front lines in churches and in ministry. I am delighted to be involved in the same ministry efforts for the Anglican Church. I'll come to your church, your clergy gathering; conduct workshops for Sunday school curriculum, Vacation Bible School, meet with the Altar Guild, ACW and book clubs; or come with a book-table display for your events so you can see firsthand what would be best for your Church.

The virtuous circle

I am excited about the potential for ministry in this job. I get to hear about what is needed all through our diverse dioceses, and then find ways to answer those needs. Together, we can accomplish so much more! Just

as we at ABC/AF will support our Churches, so we need your support and your custom. It's a virtuous circle: when you buy your altar supplies and communion wafers, your Bible study and Sunday School materials from us, your money is going back to a not-for-profit company that will plough your money back into our Churches. You'll be helping to develop the next line of products and the new technology support system, or to hire the best writers and artists in the field.

Fast food to forming faith

It's my first time back in 'business' since I left university in 1983 and became a manager for McDonald's. Just as I found it then, it's stimulating and stretching. I'm seeing how my faith and the publishing business can work together for the glory of God. I'm working with a great team of people who are helping me learn how it all works. They are all committed to "Communicating the Gospel, Enhancing Faith and Enriching the Life of the Church" (from the AF mission statement).

So please, call me to place an order, ask a question, and invite me to an event or just to say "hi!" I look forward to seeing you around the diocese. I'm your Anglican Priest in Publishing!

The Reverend Alan Cook is also an honorary assistant and Sunday school teacher at St. James the Apostle, Guelph. Alan can be reached by phone at 1 800 265 6397 (ext. 220) or email cooka@augsbuorg.org.

The work of Christmas

"When the song of the angels is stilled,
When the star in the sky is gone,
When the kings and princes are home,
When the shepherds are back with their flock,
The work of Christmas begins:
To find the lost,
To heal the broken,
To feed the hungry,
To release the prisoner,
To rebuild the nations,
To bring peace among brothers,
To make music in the heart."

Howard Thurman, *The Mood of Christmas*, 23



CONT. FROM PAGE 13 » This is my story

Every one I read helps me understand and appreciate our faith more and more. I've read over 200 books and I'm still reading, because each author can give a different view or a different aspect of Christianity, and also how the other faiths relate to ours.

I recommend that anyone who has questions that need to be answered in order to help them understand the Gospels and their faith a little better go searching—don't throw up your hands and quit! I firmly believe that questioning one's faith is healthy.

I am grateful that my parents Maurice and Bessie made church part of my life—I can't imagine life without it!

I am saddened that in today's society family schedules are so full of activities that there is little time for church. I pray that this will change in the near future, because a Faith Family enriches one's life so greatly.

Searching for servants



MICHAEL THOMPSON
RECTOR - ST. JUDE'S, OAKVILLE

John's baptism of Jesus, at the beginning of Jesus' public ministry, is a baptism across the grain of the religious authorities and practices of

I wonder if that could mean that repentance, much more than simply a state of regret, is instead a dynamic of turning to inhabit the Kingdom, the new creation.

the time. The movement John leads is notably undiplomatic in its assessment of current arrangements, of the tacit arrangements by which power, borrowed from the Roman occupiers, is shared and guarded by palace and temple. The common good is no longer at the heart of the national life of Israel, and God, whose desire it is that all life in earth should flourish, has been trapped within lifeless walls and tedious ritual.

Official religion, that is to say, is bankrupt. But that bankruptcy does

not mean that there is no faithfulness to God and to God's way among the people of Israel. The popular response to John's ministry of repentance and baptism is substantial: "Then the people of Jerusalem and all Judea were going out to him, and all the region along the Jordan... (Matthew 3.5) People knew that something was wrong, and that they were somehow both implicated in the broken trust and called to transformation and the renewal of that trust.

John's ministry is associated with the messianic hope of the people—the hope that One is coming who will mend the torn fabric of the national life. The coming of Messiah will set things right. Such hope echoes the prophetic vision of Isaiah, through whose witness the Holy One promises a future that is not determined by cleverly self-serving use of power, but by servanthood that brings forth justice. (Isaiah 42.1-4)

As Jesus comes to the river, a young man deeply formed by prophetic truth and prophetic hope, he is making a decision. As he presses through the crowd of shoulders, backs and bums, he is on his way to align his life with the dream of God—the dream of servanthood that brings forth justice. He does not flash his credentials to clear a path. He does not invite John to step aside. John is not the halftime show, the warm-up band. John is the servant of the Holy One, whom Jesus also serves.

This movement is not all about John, but it is not all about Jesus either. It is about something Jesus calls "fulfilling all righteousness". John and Jesus are partners in that work, and Jesus' baptism proclaims both partnership and purpose. It is as servant in that partnership and purpose that a Voice identifies Jesus as "my Son, the Beloved".

God's desire for servanthood that brings forth justice finds a willing response in the life of Jesus. His ministry will be, like that of his cousin John, consistently across the grain of official religion and realpolitik. He will both proclaim and inhabit the new creation, the future that God promises, living by its gritty ethic of justice, transformation, and conviviality. Not once will he yield to the idolatrous call of expedience, of "going along to get along", of asserting any authority but the authority of a servant. Just in case we miss that point, the Spirit leads Jesus into the wilderness immediately after his baptism, to be tempted by the adversary. A famished Jesus refuses to turn a stone into bread, to override the purposes of God by which a stone is a stone. He refuses the public credential of angelic rescue. He refuses to claim or receive any authority that is not grounded in the unique capacity of the Holy One, and that One alone, to give life.

I wonder if the consistency with which Jesus chooses the new creation, the Kingdom of God (both

as proclamation and as habitation) could be the basis of our affirmation of him as "without sin". And if it is, I wonder if that could mean that repentance, much more than simply a state of regret, is instead a dynamic of turning to inhabit the Kingdom, the new creation. If that is so, our repentance is infinitely more complex, dangerous and beautiful than the simple avoidance of or regrets about harmful or destructive or proscribed behaviour. It is, instead, an invitation to be a witness to what God is doing in our time and place to offer a new future to the creation—to those (including much or most of the non-human creation) who suffer the consequences of current arrangements, and to those who barter their (our) humanity in order to benefit from them.

Then I wonder how we could so easily miss such clear evidence of the nature and shape of Jesus' faithfulness and of our call. And what comes to mind is the inclination, emerging fairly early in the history of the movement that bears his name, to worship Jesus as a substitute for following him. By deporting Jesus to "the right hand of the Father", are we at risk of embracing an understanding of the divine life as un-engaged, "other-worldly", now inexplicably disinterested in servanthood that "brings forth justice, content to count sins and then forgive them in a parody of repentance and transformation?"

Can the God who speaks through Isaiah and acts through Jesus really be a moral bean-counter with a soft heart? Or is the living God searching still for servants who will bring forth justice, for heirs of the kingdom who will actually move in and inhabit that kingdom as a witness of promise and hope in the midst of this aching creation?

On the Feast of the Baptism of Jesus, we might call to mind these questions as the bread of life is broken and shared. We might wonder if the Spirit we invoke to invite the presence of Jesus in our midst is able to enliven a symbolic meal that has no corresponding expression in our lives in the world. Sharing bread in church binds us to sharing bread in the world. Standing together to receive the presence of Jesus in sharing of Eucharistic bread binds us to follow him in the world, to be where he is. And since he abides, still and eternally, in the Kingdom of God, we are called to inhabit that kingdom ourselves, to be done with the compromises and shortcuts, with the idolatry and dishonesty and greed that seduce us away from our discipleship. And if on that or any other occasion, we stand or kneel to confess our sin and receive God's forgiveness, we might well remember John's baptism of repentance, and take up again our rightful citizenship in a kingdom of servants who bring forth justice.

A new beginning, a new story

RICK JONES
RECTOR - ST. PAUL'S WESTLEALE

January is the first month of 2008 and the beginning of a new story. It is a time for the resolutions and the new resolve that usually dissolves by February. There is a reason February is known as the cruellest month of all. Many see their good intentions leading nowhere. That's the bad news about resolutions and resolve. I like January because it is the beginning of a new story. Stories are different than resolutions. Stories are an invitation to create something new and unknown. Resolutions are usually fixed goals, and as such are very fragile, because they never account for the unforeseen and the unpredictable. Stories thrive on the unforeseen and incorporate these events into the plot!

In our own lives, and in the life of the church community, we are beginning new stories this month. I look forward to seeing what happens. If I look back at our stories from the past I see that they teach us about ourselves. They highlight what was important and how we adapted to the challenges and opportunities that presented themselves. If we look closely we may be able to see the Spirit at work in some of the events of the past, and the way we moved with, or resisted

that Spirit. I would encourage parish leaders to take some time with your Parish Council, Corporation or other group and just tell stories of what happened last year. You might find that in that process you will gain some insights into how things are going with the Spirit.

There is a great story about the African explorer who hired some local tribes people to guide him through the jungle. After walking for several hours the natives all stopped and sat down, talking with one another. The explorer approached the leader and demanded to know why the group had stopped. The answer came, "We have walked far and we need to stop and let our spirits catch up with our bodies!"

If we stop long enough and talk about it, we may just find that we will discern the Spirit catching up with us, and trying to lead us into new territory. I guess I just think that stories are important and interesting. I do know that if you, or your parish, is feeling happy or sad, motivated or depressed, in joy or grief, you could do a lot worse than just talking about it. Forget the resolutions, embrace the ongoing story, and try and understand what it is teaching. Who knows, maybe the Spirit working in us and our story, can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine!

PEOPLE IN THE NEWS

■ The Reverend Alan Cook and Dr. William Bothwell were appointed honorary assistants at St. James the Apostle, Guelph, effective November 9.

■ Bishop Michael Bird has appointed the Reverend Jean Archbell and the Reverend Robert Hurkmans as his Domestic Chaplains.

■ Sympathy is extended to Gerry Hopkins, and family (Archdeacon Steve Hopkins and family) on the death of his wife, Norma. Norma was a faithful member of St. John's, Ancaster. The service was held from

her parish church on November 9.

■ Canon Linda Nicolls, Coordinator for Dialogue at the National Church, was elected Suffragan Bishop for the Diocese of Toronto. The Consecration Service is scheduled for February 2, 2008.

■ Sympathy to the Wyatt family on the death of Mrs. Ellen Wyatt, widow of Canon Murray Wyatt, on November 23. Service was from her parish church of St. George's, Guelph on November 28.

■ Congratulations to the Rever-

ends Sue-Ann and Jeff Ward on the birth of their first grandchild: Maya Nicole arrived on November 19 to proud parents Danielle and Wes.

■ Congratulations to Kim Waltmann, Administrator in the Finance Department, and her husband, Tony, on the birth of their first grandchild: Milo Anthony Waltmann arrived on November 26 to proud parents Christopher and Jenn.

■ The Reverend Nancy Rowe has been appointed Deacon in Charge of St. Paul's, Norval, commencing January 1, 2008, on a quarter time basis.

BISHOPS' CALENDAR JANUARY 2008

RS Ralph Spence MB Michael Bird

Day	Time	Location	Event	
4	9:00 PM	Canterbury Hills, Ancaster	Divinity Student Conference	RS MB
6	10:00 AM	Church of the Epiphany, Oakville	Parish Visit	RS
6	4:00 PM	Christ's Church Cathedral	Evensong and Farewell Reception	RS MB
8	9:30 AM	TBA	Meeting with Lincoln Clericus	MB
12	10:00 AM	Cathedral Place	Meeting of the Candidates Committee	MB
13	TBA	St. Thomas, St. Catharines	Parish Visit	RS
27	10:30 AM	St. James, Dundas	Dedication Service	RS
27	3:00 PM	St. Paul's Church, Dunnville	Service of Confirmation for Mohawk & Undermount	RS MB
29	1:30 PM	Cathedral Place	Meeting of the Candidates Committee	MB