



A section of the Anglican Journal



# Niagara Anglican

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

## Diocesan Youth Synod 2008



**CHRISTYN PERKONS**  
DIOCESAN RESOURCE CENTRE

Youth Synod is a complex and intense process that results each year in a transformative experience for delegates, parishes, volunteers and the diocese. Preparations for the upcoming Youth Synod actually begin before the ongoing Youth Synod has even begun with a search for the next year's host. Immediately following Youth Synod, the team that planned the event meets to debrief as does Youth Synod Council whose members developed the motions. After a summer recess, both groups are back at work again; Youth Synod Council to follow up on the motions passed at the previous Youth Synod and to begin generating motions for the upcoming Youth Synod, and the Youth Synod planning team to begin working with the parish site coordinator on the event itself. Youth Synod Council begins work on new motions in December while the planning team is recruiting small group leaders, young adult mentors and parish volunteers. Training volunteers and meeting to nail down the details of the event is ongoing throughout the winter and spring, and Youth Synod Council meets monthly to flesh out motions and



Delegates vote at Youth Synod, held from May 1-3 at St. Christopher's in Burlington.

develop supporting fact sheets. Delegates' names begin to stream into the Synod Office as parishes submit their online vestry forms, and then suddenly it's the first weekend in May and Youth Synod is transforming lives.

Among other things, delegates have committed to:

- Volunteering with their parishes 1000 hours over the next year to assist people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

- Advocating for the establishment of greening groups in their parishes, and reducing their own personal carbon footprint.

- Joining the "I am Coming" campaign against human trafficking and praying daily for an end to the selling of men, women and children and the safe return and recovery of the victims.

- Increasing their meatless meals they eat by three per week.

- Advocating to the parish to have one

major church meal follow the hundred mile diet principles.

- Maintaining relationships with past Youth Synod delegates from the three Network parishes in Niagara, and inviting youth from those parishes to The Gathering (quarterly worship services by and for youth) and subsequent Youth Synods.

» FOR PERSPECTIVES ON YOUTH SYNOD 2008, SEE PAGE 3

## Freedom is about choice

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

One of the shared values across cultures and nations throughout the globe is "freedom". Inside every individual there appears to be a knowing of when freedom is being curtailed and when it is being allowed to flourish and expand. Freedom is a value that has many "mind made" beliefs, ideologies and dogma surrounding it and yet this intrinsic understanding inside us remains constant.

When we are open and receptive each of us agrees that freedom to live in peace, freedom to vote, freedom to earn a decent living, freedom to get an education, freedom to live fully, freedom to express, are all rights we wish for one another.

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## Oprah's church doesn't quite help me

**ALAN L. HAYES**  
THE TITENANT CHURCHGOER

Recently I iterated into the largest church in the world—depending on how you define "church," "largest," and maybe "world." It's a webcast led by Oprah Winfrey.

Oprah is one of today's pre-eminent religious leaders. That's the view, at least, of books like Marcia Z. Nelson's "The Gospel According to Oprah," newspaper articles by writers like Eugene Robinson of "The Washington Post," and a hostile video called "The Church of Oprah Exposed," which has garnered six million hits on YouTube.

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## Dedication and change, a must for the church



**CHARLES STIRLING**  
RETIRED, CANON OF CHRIST'S CHURCH CATHEDRAL

I am at that stage in life when I look back more than I look forward and the older I get, the more I begin think I have, in my life, devoted too much time to the official Church. I now understand my failure was not setting

aside time for family and other things along with my role in the Church. This is a profound statement for a priest to make, yet I now know that I am right. But let me say to all of you, there remains a tremendous need to work very hard for the Church, all of us people and priests alike, and yet somehow we need to balance that need with a sense of reality and set aside a little time, that in its own interests, is quite apart from the life of the Church. We need to go one step further, and that is we need a strong sense of living life wholly in the

Reign of Christ. There is no question these three things are hard to accomplish, and it remains a challenge for us to do all of them, but we must try. I am convinced we all might be able to come up with a more healthful and a more purposeful existence as Christian people.

### The good, the bad, and the ugly

A lifelong member, I love the Anglican Church for a multitude of good reasons. I have seen the Church as a reformed Catholic institution that has and can still contribute much

to the world. Indeed we have had some truly wonderful moments from Crammer and Gardiner to Tutu. Yet the same Church annoys me for its failure to always speak in truth, in its failure to endeavour to move its entire people to greater ministry, rather than to a life of old language and outdated liturgy plus a profound ambition to not do very much at all. I am looking to the Church to bring change and to grow in richness, grace and in love.

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## Time for a Christian Truce

**Christopher M. Grabiec**  
Editor

Arius was a Christian theologian who lived in the 3rd Century and taught in Egypt and Alexandria. Undoubtedly a good man and a man of God, this theologian had a very different understanding of the nature of God. Without getting into too many details about Arius, he believed that Jesus was a created being and hence in some ways inferior to God the Creator (Father).

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## 2008 CHILDREN'S FESTIVAL

### Greater Wellington



## Appreciating the diversity of God's creation

**MATT ADAMS AND  
JUDY-ANNE CHAPMAN**  
ST. JOHN'S ELORA

Greater Wellington celebrated the 2008 Festival, "Me?" at St. James, Fergus as part of the year long 150th anniversary of the parish. Gwen Orr and a group of St. James parishioners welcomed the Children's Festival warmly with decorations, helped in activities, served snacks through the day, and oversaw lunch in front of the Veggie Tale Minnesota Cuke.

Matt and Laura Adams were back with guitar, fun-action songs games for music sessions, leading the parade through downtown Fergus and music portion of the interactive service at the end of the day. Matt reports "Music at the Children's Festival, as always (!), was a blast! We had a lot of great kids out who were able to learn songs quickly and participate with full enthusiasm and vibrancy! We are also blessed to have a number of Children's Festival veterans who were able to lead the way in our songs.

Our theme song, "The Butterfly Song" by Brian M. Howard, spoke of the various animals in this world and how God made each of them in their own unique way. In the same way that a crocodile can be proud of their "great big smile", or an octopus thankful for their "good looks", so we as children of God can be thankful to God for making "me... me!" The theme song of the festival spoke directly to the theme of the festival, "me", and taught children how to appreciate the

diversity of God's creation and how we as unique persons and individuals can be thankful for our own diversity too. The children at the festival had tons of fun making all sorts of actions, singing together and praising God because, as the chorus of the theme song goes, "(God)... you gave me a heart, you gave me a smile, you gave me Jesus and you made me your child and I just thank you Father for making me... me!"

We also sang a song used in crafts to make flags for the parade:

Will You Come and Follow Me?  
Will you come and follow me if I but  
call your name?  
Will you go where you don't know  
and never be the same?  
Will you let My Love be shown,  
will you let My Name be known,  
will you let My Life be grown in you  
and you in Me?  
Lord, Your summons echoes true  
when You but call my name.  
Let me turn and follow You and never  
be the same.  
In Your Company I'll go,  
where Your Love and Footsteps show,  
Thus I'll move and live and grow in  
You and You in me.

Andy Stimpson and Erik Eastmure ably led games, which are always a Festival highlight, especially as they are liberally endowed with candies to refresh and energize. It is a must visit activity for all, including leaders of other groups. Peter deGroot from

Rockwood also got right into this activity when his age group visited.

Crafts this year were assisted by Calee Stimpson and Erin Eastmure who made the beautiful festival banner and Lisa Bender helped on the day. We made a wall-hanging/doorknob-hanger illustrating the beauty of each person's life hidden in Christ (top layer on heavy dining room table protector clear plastic is a cross with brightness spreading out from cross-beams, over hologram foil covered layer with mirror that child can see their face in, hanger was fancy ribbon or gold twist cord); personalized rock (in Revelation 2:17, it says that each of us will be given a rock with a name on it that only God and the recipient will know. Each child decorated a rock putting a word that they think God would use to describe them on the bottom. Parents of these children may have done this popular craft in the past.); a membership in God's family Festival bracelet (string of coloured beads or intertwining of thick sparkly, fuzzy, or soft lumpy wool with metallic pipe-cleaner); and signed the Festival banner which will stay in Fergus.

Steve Witcher welcomed us to St. James, visited during the day, and talked to the youth about the rock symbolism in Revelation, passing around a white rock with the word "Jesus", reminding us that Peter is the rock that the Church is built on, and that we are each to be living rocks used to build up the Church, the Body of Christ. The day was cohesive and enjoyed by all!

### Hamilton



## A tasty treat!

**SUSAN LITTLE**  
ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST, HAMILTON

Me? I Am Not Forgotten; God Knows My Name.

Around the diocese, many children's events around Easter featured the new kitchen treat using dough around a marshmallow, sprinkled with cinnamon and sugar, baked and then, voila, the centre disappears and resembles the resurrection. So, "Resurrection Rocks" this year found their way to the Hamilton Children's Festival... and a real-life chef supervised this tastiest Festival, ever!

Since this was part of the Craft activity, children had to figure out first how this fit together with the theme, "Me?"

When over 200 children and adults got together on April 26th in Hamilton to celebrate at the Children's Festival held at St. John the Evangelist, they sang out these words loudly and clearly: I am not forgotten... God knows my name"

"Created in God's image," the MC for the day began, "each of us is meant to know God and how to live our lives to God's glory."

"So where do we begin?" she asked the lively children. Then from the audience came the answer: "In the Bible!" From that point onward, the children heard how God uses the abilities of different people throughout human history. People like Daniel, Elizabeth, Zaccheus, Esther, Samuel, Mary and David we looked at as examples of people who had responded to God's call to action for the benefit of the world around them. Looking at such people from the Bible emphasized the ways in which we can practise such things as courage, faithfulness, generosity, cleverness, obedience, love and boldness to better respond to God when He calls us by name into a special relationship to him.

For the rest of the morning, children went to Crafts, Games and Drama. It was in Crafts where children made Resurrection Rocks, real doughy and edible treats, with the help of a chef. As they prepared their batch, they could munch on another batch prepared by a previous group. This reminds us of how often what we do is connected to the people who have gone before us, and will be important to those coming after us.

Popular with the 8 to 12 year-olds was painting stain glass window hangings, decorating treasure boxes, and assembling beaded crosses. For

the younger ones, making door knob hangars, and decorating crosses with mirrors were fun as well as the all-time favourite of face painting!

For games, children loved playing the Olympic torch relay or practising team work by walking on long skis together as a team. Active and quiet games helped to give a good pace to the day long series of activities.

In Drama, children squealed when an 8x3x4 foot FISH crashed through the doors, swallowing Jonah. When the gigantic fish later spewed out Jonah as well as some 'innards' (a.k.a. 'guts'), the children cheered! Later, they participated in the Jonah story as well as attending in Pharaoh's court with Moses. They experienced how total trust in God will see them safely out of trouble. Tasty treats helped to wind up each session in Drama, too.

In Singing, the children clapped and the played rhythm instruments; they sang their favourite and familiar action songs like Pharaoh, Pharaoh, and the Veggie Tales favourite, The Forgiveness Song. When they learned the theme song, "I am not forgotten, God knows my name", they also learned how to use sign language to express the words of the song. As the children wiped their foreheads, the sign for 'forgotten', it was interesting to observe that their action looked like one of relief, wiping their brow.

Reflecting on their actions, the children have shown an incredible insight. Perhaps that motion says how relieved they feel because they know that God knows them by name: all fears of insecurity and uncertainty can disappear by having God close by.

In our world of busy days and fast lives, we don't have to worry about being forgotten or lost or lonely. "I will never forget you my people; I have carved you on the palm of my hand" (Isaiah 49).

Reassured and confident, the children and adults left Children's Festival full of energy and confidence, that God loves them, even "ME?", and will care for them, calling each person by name into a special relationship, asking us to do whatever it takes to create the kingdom on Earth.

In the meantime, philosophical questions aside, the tasty "Resurrection Rocks" reminded us that God cares for us, and each of us has a place in caring for one another's well being. Each is important. Even "Me?"

### Lincoln and Brock

## Come out and pray with me

**BETH KERLEY**  
CONVENOR

"ME? What does this mean to children 5 to 12 years? If asked, they would say their own name. What message do we as planners want the children to take home?"

On Saturday, April 26, 2008, one hundred and twenty five children, adult volunteers and activity planners came to St. John's Anglican Church, Niagara Falls for the Lincoln and Brock Children's Festival.

During the opening service the children were asked what the theme

was for the festival. They replied, ME? The question was asked "What does the theme mean to you?" During the day you will go through different activities to find out that, WE are all gifts of the spirit that we need all the talents and gifts of all to become one.

The theme song for the festival was introduced, Come out and Pray with me, written by Dorothy Brown. We were blessed to have many guests to the festival, one being our Bishop Michael Bird, second Joyce Wilton Youth Ministry Consultant with the Diocese and last we had Christyn

Perkons, Children's and Family Ministry consultant with the Diocese. But the most important guest were all the children who came to the festival.

Bishop Michael Bird, after we sang our theme song, sent the children off to their activities with a blessing. Children rotated throughout the day in music, crafts, storytelling/drama and games. In crafts the children made their own backpacks, treasure boxes, decorated their own tee shirts and made Friendship Faith zipper or backpack pulls.

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# Perspectives on Youth Synod 2008

**The Reverend Matthew Griffin  
(Youth Synod Council Coordinator)**

The dozen people on Youth Synod Council work hard each year. They have two major tasks: to help the delegates to the previous Youth Synod follow up on the work to which they committed themselves, and to craft motions for the upcoming Youth Synod that are relevant, challenging, and ask delegates to reflect on their faith, their lives, and the world which we are called to tend. This year's YSC did a fabulous job, and its members were greatly rewarded by spirited debate on challenging motions. It was a great privilege for me as the Youth Synod Council Coordinator to help YSC with their follow-up, and with the difficult work of creating motions that inspired the delegates to speak with such care and passion. Even more exciting for me was watching the joy of the YSC members realize that their work has made a major impact on more than a hundred youth—and through them, the world.

**The Reverend Bill Mous (Chair)**

Youth Synod 2008 continued its tradition of tackling challenging social justice issues from a faith perspective. From homelessness to food justice, human trafficking to maintain friendships with those in network parishes, the delegates to Youth Synod wrestled over the course of the weekend to find God's voice amidst the most challenging issues of our day. And once again, they demonstrated superb leadership, an amazing capacity to work through the synodical process, and a willingness to listen attentively to each other and our faith tradition.

With each passing year, Youth Synod empowers and equips leaders for our diocese. Having been part of that process as a teenager, it is wonderful to now sit at the head table and watch as our young adults rise to speak at a microphone for the first time or move a motion, or raise a question on the floor. Not only does Youth Synod provide an important voice for our diocese, but it also is an investment in the leadership of our church.

**Emma Smith, St Christopher's,  
Burlington (Co-MC)**

I am really excited about the issues we debate and take action on like food justice and affordable housing. I went to school on Monday and told my teacher what we had done on the weekend and I was talking about the motion about using recycled paper. My teacher told me that I should talk to the school principal and the president of student council about our school making a commitment to using recycled paper. It's so cool to make a decision that could impact a hundred parishes and then see that commitment spread to my school.

I also think that Youth Synod does so much to make people grow. When you come for the first time, you're all scared and nervous about talking about motions and you wouldn't dream of going to the mic, and then you realize that Youth Synod is a safe place to express your opinions. You know that people are going to respect your perspective about some issue; that you can talk about God and people will support you, not mock you. Youth find their voice at Youth Synod and get the courage to talk about issues and stand up for things in the other parts of their lives.

And it's great that we can do the serious stuff and then have fun at the Saturday night social. We had an instructor who was so good at showing us all the steps and movements, and then he made everyone feel okay about choosing partners and moving from partner to partner. Everyone could dance without feeling self-conscious and no one got left out. In a funny way, the social is like what we're saying in our Synod Proper sessions; there's a place for everyone, we should work at including everyone and no one should be or feel left out.

**Justin Michael St. Matthias, Guelph  
(Co-MC)**

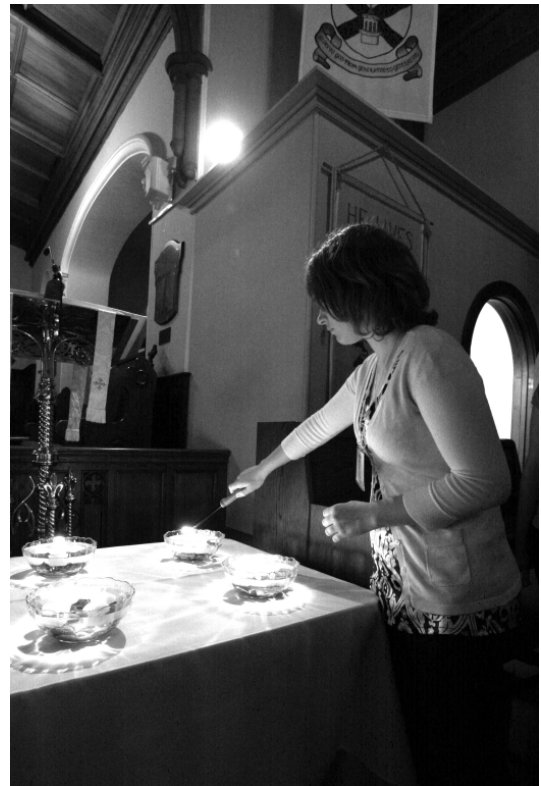
This weekend was the twentieth Youth Synod and it truly did show its maturity. The spread of motions this year was not only purposeful, but diverse. Issues ranged from pressuring the government to tackle underground criminal movements, to the highly publicized

issues surrounding the world's rising food prices. They ranged from environmental issues of carbon dioxide emissions that threaten the world at large to making peace in regards to issues in our own backyard. No matter which way you look at it; you see a group of dedicated youth, working with their peers to spark positive change.

The most striking, powerful and ultimately inspiring thing about the weekend came on Saturday afternoon in between the two sessions of discussion and debate. One of my peers approached me because he had written his idea for a possible motion and he wanted me to take a look at it. For this person, it was his first year at Youth Synod and he was still somewhat uncertain about the synod process. When I took the piece of lined paper into my hand, I discovered a strong, meaningful and concisely worded motion that could be the basis for quite a strong debate at Youth Synod 2009. The reason that this meant so much to me is that it was truly a testament to the continuing nature of the event. Youth Synod and all of the other Youth Ministry programs that go with it create this supportive, affirming environment where this sort of shining potential is brought out of people that might not otherwise have come forward. In fact, it's just that kind of evolution and progression for individuals, for the synod community and for the diocese as a whole that really demonstrates to me the tremendous effect of Youth Synod.

**The Venerable Dr. Stephen Hopkins  
(Chancellor) in his closing remarks**

We need to make informed, rooted, faithful choices about where our personal life story and our personal passion engages the story of God's love and God's transforming work in the world. You don't have to do it all but you need to find out where that powerful connection point is for you; find your personal place and then pursue it with all that you have. Wherever that connection is for you, that is where mission happens. That's where ministry happens and it's what will change the world. If you do only a fraction of the things



we set out to do today, your parish will never be the same, and the world will not be the same and you will not be the same. That's why we say "glory to God whose power working in us can do far more than we can ask and imagine". God is changing the world in love and justice and you get to be part of it.

**The Right Reverend Michael Bird in  
his closing remarks**

What you have done today is spoken on behalf of our whole church and you have done so quite wonderfully. You have spoken and proclaimed the hope and the love of the risen Christ

to people who live in poverty, who are victimized—who often live without hope. You have, as Anglican Christians, proclaimed words of hope and love on behalf of the whole Diocese of Niagara. One more thing you have done that is very, very important in the life of the church at this moment: through one of the motions and by how you have conducted yourselves today, you have shown us all how we can live together in the church even when we don't agree with one another. I hope that's a lesson we can all learn as we move forward together as this great family of ours in the Diocese of Niagara.

# Those who seek God shall never go wanting



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

As of May the 1st I will be retired. I will no longer be a full time rector of a parish church. As you can imagine this is both a time of excitement and concern. I am excited about the future and all it holds and at the same time concerned about the people and community of St. Alban in Glen Williams.

I know the future is uncertain in regards to health and ability to do all the things I would like to do. My mind is still 30 years old but my body is not. I know I can't do all the things I used to do but I can still dream and so the possibilities are endless.

My wife Ina and I are moving to our summer house 50 km north of North Bay. I can hear most of you saying, "Are you nuts? Why would you move so far north?" Well my wife is from New Liskeard which is another 150k north, so to Ina where we are going is south. Also most people do not realize North Bay gets less snow than Muskoka and most of the time is not as cold in the winter.

We are lucky enough to be right on the water and the fishing is great. The stars at night feel so close you could reach out and touch them and the air is pure and clean. We are also going, God willing, to spend the first three months of each year in Portugal. Hey! I said it was not as cold, I did not say we were going to be there.

There is a possibility of my helping out at St. Simons, a small church in Temagami. So I hope I will still get to preach and celebrate from time to time.

As you can see the future looks exciting and full of promise. However, all of this will not stop the concern. Concern for the Anglican Church in general and concern for St. Alban in particular. Who will be the interim? Who will be the new priest? Will St. Alban continue to grow? I don't know the answers to any of these questions so I am concerned.

The past five years we have all worked very hard to try and understand what our church is about. We have spent a lot of money on our buildings. We have redone the hall and the Alban House, increased the Sunday attendance and doubled the givings; but I still wonder if we really know what the church is about. Are we and many other churches still sitting in our comfortable pew?

I guess I am as guilty as most of us and I forget the power of God working within us is what the church is about.

I forget that all we have accomplished was guided by the hand of God. The Holy Spirit who lives in all our hearts gives us purpose—a reason for being. Of course we are concerned; of course we are afraid to take risks; of course we do not want change and of course we want to make sure we have money in the bank in case something unforeseen happens. We are after all human beings so we are concerned.

We forget nothing can trouble, nothing can frighten. Those who seek God shall never go wanting. (Hymn 568 cp) It is our nature to worry, to be concerned, but I am going to try and put my concerns in the hands of God knowing the people and parish of St. Alban will be OK provided they and the Diocese allow God to do God's will.

I would like to say to the people of the Church in the Glen thanks for your love and your support during the

past five years. Together with God we have come a long way. Thank you for taking risks for leaving your comfortable pew and for allowing me to be your priest. May God always bless you and hold you in the palm of his hand forever.

You have not heard the last of me. God willing I will still write for the Niagara Anglican. My point of view may be more relaxed and tales of large fish may appear from time to time but be assured we are not nuts just off to the next adventure.

.....  
Editor's Note: Many thanks to Grahame for his terrific contributions to our paper while he was Rector of St. Alban's. Grahame has just written a book: *It's not complicated God loves us (but this is only my opinion)*, available at [www.lulu.com](http://www.lulu.com). We look forward to his future contributions to our paper!

# Knowing God and understanding self

COLIN C. M. CAMPBELL  
DIOCESE OF NIAGARA

In the ancient world, both Hebrew and Greek thinkers developed models for understanding human nature and its behaviour. Old Testament writers used the concept of the “nephesh” and Greek philosophers, such as Plato and Aristotle, referred to the “psyche.” English translates both terms by the same word—“soul.” Yet, the models are quite different. This has resulted in pagan, Greek ideas adulterating the Biblical concept, which we inherited from Judaism. For us to be authentically Christian, we must return to our Jewish roots. Yet, Plato’s insights are true nonetheless and agree with modern neuroscience. They explain our capacity for wickedness and shed light on the controversies surrounding the doctrine of original sin, as formulated by Augustine, and as re-expressed

“Original perfection then becomes the capacity to live life in all its fullness... where graced action makes responsibility and adventure possible...”

at the time of the Reformation. Our scientific findings have invalidated the particular view of human origins, which was normative for both Protestants and Catholics for almost two thousand years. To dismiss it, however, creates a fundamental problem: If God created everything and “saw that it was good,” what was the nature of this original perfection? Plato’s idea of the soul, with some help from Irenaeus, provides an alternative solution to a problem, which continues to divide Christians.

For Plato, a human being was a dualistic compound of an immortal, rational soul, trapped in a mortal, corruptible (and corrupting) body; the spirit or “pneuma” was part of the soul. By comparison, in Hebrew thought, a human being was a psychosomatic unity or “nephesh.” God breathed his Spirit or “ruach” into the nephesh and it became “a living soul.” However, God gave the spirit only for a time, after which the person became a dead nephesh—a contradiction in terms to Plato, who regarded the soul as immortal. Jesus words “What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?” are better translated by replacing the word “soul” with “self.”

The Hebrew idea of self, as a psychosomatic whole, completely agrees with the findings of modern science, whereas Plato’s idea of a compound self does not.

As well as differing over the idea of the soul, Greek and Hebrew thinkers had a different understanding of truth. For Plato, truth consisted of living by propositions—moral precepts imparting the wisdom necessary to live a life of temperance, courage and justice. The intellect formulated propositional truth and passion was its enemy. By contrast, Jesus never advocated reason as a way of discovering truth and he frequently expressed strong feelings. He commented, “By their fruit shall you know them.” His epistemology based truth on kind actions, not on rational argument. Isaac Newton was known to have smiled only once in his life—when someone asked him what the value of algebra was. He is never known to have laughed, entertained a guest, or even to have had a friend. As a Christ-like person, he was a pathetic failure, yet no one has ever questioned his intelligence. Similarly, compassion is incomprehensible to a psychopath, yet psychopaths are quite rational. They fully realize the consequences of their actions but they do not care. Whereas Plato derived truth from intellectual ability, Jesus’ truth lay in the desire for action, which the Spirit of God imparted through the spirit of the animated nephesh. Jesus based his fruit on religious experience, not on intellectual struggle.

Faced with the task of communicating Hebrew concepts in the Greek language, Paul borrowed the Greek words, pneuma, psyche, and soma, and loaded them with Hebrew freight. The psyche and the soma make up the psychosomatic self of flesh, which is weak. The Holy Spirit, acting on the pneumatized self strengthens it by imparting charisms, which communicate both an idea to the mind and an emotion to the heart. It should be noted that Paul did not fall into an error of Gnosticism, which held that the religious spirit was an entity, superadded to the natural soul after religious initiation, just as we no longer believe (if we ever did) that God’s Holy Spirit is only given after baptism. True to his Jewish roots, Paul knew that every human being has the spiritual capacity for God’s love to touch her (or him) from the moment of conception.

Jesus and Paul’s emphasis on charismatic Judaism does not negate the need for theology or deny the value of

the Early Fathers’ reflections. Just as the constructs of elementary particle theorists enable us to understand the nature of quarks, so our creeds enable us to describe our faith. However, these descriptions do not constitute prima facie evidence for the existence of God or quarks. Jesus did not use such proofs. Thomas Aquinas arrived at his belief, no doubt, by faith but reflected on how God could be providential. His solution was to hypothesize a causal chain, with God as its endpoint. As a scientist and a Christian, this idea appeals to me. However, it did not convince a philosopher of my acquaintance. He pointed out that another possibility was infinite regression. A Western-born, aspiring Buddhist was equally unimpressed. He said that, in Buddhism (I do not know if he is correct), the endpoint of every causal chain is illusion, and so everything before the endpoint is illusion. Both times, I wanted to cry, “Aagh!” at the utter futility of using philosophy to convince anyone of religious truth. Jesus was right. No one can doubt the truth of a kind deed. “By their fruit...” Good fruit is the sacrament through which the Holy Spirit acts. Jesus reveals what good fruit is. However, the Fathers show us that this revelation is also reasonable.

Propositional truth has enabled us to control and master our world. Plato believed that human beings are divided in their selves, between the promptings of the appetites and the aspirations of the spirit and that the arbiter is reason. He imagined that reason controls the appetites and the spirit, in the way that a charioteer controls two horses. Modern neuroscience confirms Plato’s trichotomy but mitigates the self-division. The reptilian brain, which regulates our involuntary processes, makes up three-quarters of the brain’s total size. The limbic system or mammalian brain censors anti-social impulses and the intellect or neocortex implements the others. When the parts of the brain operate correctly, no charioteer is necessary. An individual, with a correctly developed limbic system, will be able to know life’s joys and adventures and recover from its pains and sorrows.

These insights shed light on the controversy between Pelagius and Augustine regarding original sin. Pelagius believed that it was possible to be sinless. Human beings are essentially good. Bad habits cause sin and bad habits can be broken. Cicero once remarked, “For gold, lands, and all the blessings of life, we have to return thanks to the gods; but

no one ever returned thanks to God for virtue.” Pelagius agreed. Virtue was our business, not God’s. The semi-Pelagians also regarded human beings as essentially good but badly conditioned. They believed that people still had the capacity to make moral choices. Choosing to receive God’s grace would re-condition them. Against these notions, John Calvin, following Augustine, taught the doctrine of total depravity. Original sin was not an acquired habit or an impairment, which left us free to recognize grace and our healing. It is an inherent state, which has left us spiritually and morally blind. Articles 9 and 10 of our Anglican Articles of Religion state this doctrine. The Catholic Church condemned it at the Council of Trent. Neuroscience helps us find a way out of the controversy.

When God created, “he saw that it was good.” He created human beings with a three-part brain and the capacity for spiritual relationships. As long as the limbic system is operating correctly, harmful impulses can be filtered out and problems tackled by the neocortex. Human beings require nurturing in their early years. At first, their instincts and limbic systems rule their lives and they are dependent on their mothers for their happiness. As their neocortex develops, they learn to be independent, if their parents allow it. Faulty development occurs when the child does not employ all three centres properly. Overly controlling parents develop dependent adults. Afraid to think for themselves, they try to live using only their instincts and limbic systems. Their basic sin is fear. Overly indulgent parents develop overly independent adults. Used to getting their own way, they use their neocortex to indulge their instincts. Their basic sin is greed. Overly ambitious parents develop overly self-critical adults. They withdraw and are afraid to act, unless their action is perfect. Their basic sin is pride. Fear, greed, and pride are the three deadly sins. How these lead to the nine (not seven) deadly sins of tradition is a subject for a later article. The three deadly sins all correspond to a neglect of one of the three centres of the brain. If fear, greed, and pride are the three deadly sins, the three cardinal virtues are courage, generosity and humility. The Christ-like life is the result of the practice of these virtues. It is clear that these cardinal virtues are quite different from those of Plato. Courage is common to both. It frees our mind from fear and allows us to think. It would not have occurred to Plato that generosity and humility were virtues. After all, he

enjoyed the time to think only because he lived in a slave society. Generosity and humility would have interfered with that.

Calvin was correct. Our inability to love our neighbour (particularly if that neighbour is an enemy) as ourselves is an inherent state. In our ungraced state, we are unable to obey the Two Great Commandments, and so it follows that we are unable to please God. Paul comments (sort of), “In my [limbic system], I delight in the law of God, but I perceive that there is in my [reptilian brain] a different law, fighting against the law that my [neocortex] approves of, making me a prisoner of sin.” However, a person, whose reptilian brain dominates his behaviour, is not a reptile. He is still a human being with a desire for affection (since he has a limbic system) and the ability to reason (since he has a neocortex). Such a person lacks both the clarity to train himself to please God (Pelagius was wrong) or to recognize God’s grace (the semi-Pelagians were wrong). It is grace, which makes morality, as it should be. When grace restores correct operation to the three parts of our brain, we recognize it and respond. Grace is not a call to some inner, intact ability; rather it is grace, which makes the inner ability intact, so that it can respond.

Original perfection then becomes the capacity to live life in all its fullness, not in a world free of struggle and pain, but one in which graced action makes responsibility and adventure possible, as well as forgiveness and reconciliation. Sin is our refusal to develop and play our part in the great cause of justice. Since we now know that God created the world this way, this must be a better one than the one, which Western Christians believed for almost two thousand years. The Father, whose views correspond most closely to this, was Irenaeus. Those who follow Irenaeus, in this respect, are not followers of Pelagius. We do require grace, not only to be free of sin, but also to be able to respond to the grace, which frees us. Augustine’s form of original excellence led him to miss the idea of an open future, in which men and women are co-creators with God. If we take the view of Irenaeus, instead of regretting human history and its decline from a Utopian state, we may now see everything from creation to consummation as a sacred vocation, open to our participation. God calls us to make a difference. What a privilege!

## Towards a new, perhaps bearable, lightness of being



PETER WALL  
DEAN - CHRIST'S CHURCH CATHEDRAL

As I write this, we are in Ascension-tide, that brief period in the church year when buoyancy and lightness are characteristics of our life as Church. As we approach the summer, a certain lightness also can become a part of our Sunday worship life as well. Sometimes shortened services, sometimes worship taking place in different

spaces (often because our churches are so hot!), possibly a reduction in the number of services on a Sunday, often a reduction in ‘forces’—choirs having the summer ‘off’, perhaps a break in Church School schedules and other such changes.

It is a time, I hope, in which we might experiment with some different physical space, or altered liturgical choreography, or musical accompaniment, or all of the above. It can also be a time the buoyancy of our faith can take hold—we can laugh a little, even at ourselves! Perhaps ‘coffee hour’ (or whatever we might call the usual time of fellowship which normally follows our principal wor-

ship services) might be a ‘lemonade hour’; maybe in can take place in a garden or other outdoor space—all of these things happen in our parishes and communities.

So, some suggestions from a sometimes old curmudgeon who needs, at least as much as the next guy, some of that ‘lightness of being’ and wonderful buoyancy:

- Consider combining services on Sunday, not for any practical reason other than bringing different congregations together for a few weeks. Many of our parish communities have very distinct ‘early’ and ‘late’ congregations, many of whom don’t know each other very well. By joining the vari-

ous congregations together (unless, of course, you are full to the brim more than once on Sunday morning—a problem not rampant, in my view...) a whole new sense of community can be achieved.

- Encourage the congregation, if the choir is taking a much deserved and well earned rest, to sing lustily and with courage! Learn some new hymns; be daring!

- Take advantage of perhaps smaller crowds and fewer liturgical ‘necessities’ to try some different arrangements of furniture—pews, altar, etc.

- Given that church school might also be less formal for the summer, be creative at including all generations

in worship; encourage children of the parish to read lessons, assist in the administration of communion, maybe even preach!

- If you have suitable and useable outdoor space, worship outside for a Sunday or two—it’s fun! (It also proclaims some important things to the world!)

Mostly, try a little lightness! Church can be pretty serious much of the time—it should be profound, after all. But it also should be enjoyable and, I think, fun. Be creative, live on the edge, walk a little on the wild side. You might be glad you did.

Have a great summer! See you in the fall.

# Getting our priorities straight



**IAN DINGWALL**  
RETIRED ARCHDEACON OF NIAGARA

"Folks, I'm telling you,  
Birthing is hard  
Dying is mean  
So... Get yourselves a little lovin'  
in between."

These are words of Langston Hughes, an Afro-American poet and drama critic who lived in the earlier part of the last century. The words reflect something of his roots: great-grandson of a slave, grandson of a share-cropper, and the child of a poor family who, in growing up, lived in several black ghettos in the USA. However, the words are more than just a personal reflection of time past; in fact they assert several profound thoughts about human life.

I like this short piece of poetry because it speaks in a humorous way of serious matters. Note, though, that humour is often used for more than tit-

illation and fun, but can also be a useful vehicle as we try to understand and communicate ideas of truth.

The truth implicit in Hughes' poem, is that human life is not as simple and painless as some might wish it to be. All of us experience, at least from time to time, something of the hurt and hardship that the poet describes. Sometimes we find that life is not easy to understand and even more difficult to live. Evil of all kinds surrounds us and produces not a few questions about ourselves, other people, and the world. We ought not, therefore, to become "Pollyanna" in our approach to life but instead attempt to work at and exhibit a realism of life in all its variety, both the good and the bad. To love God and all humanity is the Christian invitation and we all know something of the challenge that the invitation involves. Christians should be neither Optimists nor Pessimists, but Realists who face life squarely as it comes.

Langston Hughes attempts to communicate that kind of realism and, as the poem says, the antidote for the "hardship, harshness and mean-ness" that life deals up, is to "get a little lovin' in between".

The Good News of Christ and the

Church is that "God loves the world"—and world implies the entire Cosmos. God's loving nature is absolutely boundless and we do great disservice to the Gospel when we constrict it with triviality instead of celebrating the power and extent of real love.

The Gospel Truth calls for us to reject 'cheap grace' and easy solutions along with pettiness and exclusiveness. Instead, it proclaims Liberty, Justice and Inclusive Embrace for all, simply because that is what God is about. We are often urged, "to get out of the box". The box is anything, or any person, or any church, or any ideology that would deny the Universality of Love.

When Augustine said, "Love God and do what you like", he was not issuing a license to be irresponsible. Rather, his was a call to examine and live our lives within the orbit of the only absolute of life which is found in God and the Divine Love.

So much of the time our energy (as individual Christians as well as the corporate church) is absorbed by structural and secondary matters. The call today, surely, is to get our priorities straight. That would mean for all of us: Love God and the world, and the rest will follow.

## Press Release

# Sacrilegious thieves target houses of worship

Submitted by David Ricketts, St. James Dundas

With over 100 break-ins over the past several months, congregants in many South-western Ontario faith communities feel helpless and violated. Buildings that were considered sanctuaries, no longer feel safe. Thieves have discovered that houses of worship, especially in rural locations, are easy targets: often vacant, unlocked, and with minimal or no security in place. Stolen items have included small amounts of cash, non-perishable items collected for food banks, laptops and audio equipment. These minor thefts are often the start of an escalating pattern of crime that can end in a tragedy—such as the destruction of a faith community through arson. Fortunately, there are measures faith communities can implement not only to protect themselves, but also to change the perception that they are meek targets for unscrupulous thieves. In addition to the checklist provided below, visit our website, [www.ecclesiastical.ca](http://www.ecclesiastical.ca) (Press Release area) to hear Chris Eden, one of Ecclesiastical Risk Control Specialists, being interviewed by Bryan Allen, host of The Talk Show, of CKNX AM radio station (out of Wingham, Ontario) regarding the rash of church thefts in Southern Ontario.

1. Establish a church security policy defining who is responsible for facility security. Conduct a risk assessment and produce a written policy outlining procedures and how risks will be managed. The local police department can assist in this regard.
2. Protect the premises with a centrally monitored intrusion alarm.
3. Implement a Church-watch or similar program. Buildings that are empty for significant periods during the week are attractive targets for vandalism, break and enter, and potentially, arson. A Church-watch program utilizes volunteers to pass by and monitor the building(s) on a regular schedule. A congregant living near the facility acts as the designated contact for the program and would liaise with the local police department, advising them of the program and its purpose. It is important that congregants do not confront suspicious people on the premises. The Church-watch leader or police should be contacted instead. Ideally, the police would assist with program protocols, and advise how incidents should be handled.
4. Keep only a minimal amount of cash on the premises and lock away securely. Post signs stating "No Cash on Premises." All valuables, including

audio equipment, should be securely locked away and kept out of sight.

5. Lock the vestry and church office when not in use.
6. Computer Hard Drives should be encrypted and password protected.
7. Monitor and restrict entry—the fewer access points into the building, the safer it is. Preferably, only one door should be used during the week. Keep all doors and windows in good repair and securely locked when the building is not in use. If a door is left open, there should be someone on the premises. Never hide keys or leave them on the premises. Restrict the number of keys printed.
8. Protect accessible windows with bars, screens or a film such as 3M Scotchshield, which makes a window almost unbreakable. Doors should be equipped with hardened dead-bolts with at least a 1 inch throw. Multiple locking points and hardened door frames are best.
9. The area surrounding the building(s) should be well lit. Exterior flood and/or motion sensor lighting can be an effective deterrent, as is keeping interior lights on timers.
10. Good housekeeping sends a strong message that the building is not an easy target. Clean up graffiti, empty beer bottles, cigarette butts, garbage, etc., and discourage loitering around the premises.
11. Ensure that sheds and other out-buildings are locked. In addition to items that might be attractive to thieves, sheds hold tools that thieves can use to break into the main building.
12. Create an "End of Day" checklist to confirm that no unauthorized person is left in the building; that windows and doors are locked; that interior and exterior lights are turned on as necessary; and alarms are engaged.

### Other Risk Management Issues

For more information on risk management issues, visit [www.niagara.anglican.ca](http://www.niagara.anglican.ca). The clergy area has more ideas in the Diocese's Risk Management Handbook.

### About Ecclesiastical Insurance

The company was established in the United Kingdom in 1887 and opened in Canada in 1972. Ecclesiastical is owned by a charitable trust and is committed to serving the needs of its customers and the larger community. Group profits (other than funds required for business operations) are redistributed for the benefit of faith and charitable initiatives. Ecclesiastical is rated "A" by A.M. Best, and "A-" by Standard and Poor's.

# St. James Fergus celebrates 150 years of history

**LINDA AUSTIN**  
ST. JAMES FERGUS

St. James the Apostle Anglican Church is celebrating its 150th Anniversary in 2008. The original church was located on the corner of St. Patrick Street and Bredalbane Street in 1858. A new church was built in 1895 at the corner of Tower and St. Patrick Street, the present location of Guelph-Wellington Association for Community Living. The present church building, on Queen Street (behind the old swimming pool) was built in 1948 and has had a series of additions and renovations throughout its history of 60 years.

The 150th Anniversary Committee, chaired by Lorraine Manning has planned four events to celebrate this year. The first was a very successful Valentine Dance held on February 15 at the Fergus Legion.

Last Saturday, May 10, the parish welcomed Right Reverend Michael Bird, the newly elected Bishop of Niagara for the first time at St. James. Bishop Bird celebrated Evensong with the parishioners and guests. During the service, several memor-

ials were blessed by the Bishop. A stained glass window was presented by Fred and Olive Robins in grateful thanks. A 150th Anniversary Banner was created and presented by Ruth Sproul. A painting called "The Sea of Galilee" was presented by Dr. and Mrs. Dan Dalton in thanksgiving for 150 years of children's ministry and their dedicated teachers. Processional Torches were presented in loving memory of Walter and Reta Green by their children. After the service, a dinner was held at the Fergus Legion. Bishop Michael, who has played the bag pipes for many years, enjoyed being "piped" in to the Legion just before dinner. Entertainment was provided by Bill Beatty and The Chordspinners.

Other events are planned to celebrate the church's history and accomplishments. The Celebration Feast of St. James will occur on the weekend of July 19 and 20. This weekend is the actual anniversary of St. James. The weekend begins with a Welcome Tea at 2:00 PM at the church. A dinner will follow. On Sunday, there will be

a Worship service at 10:30 AM followed by a brunch. The last event will be a Pork Roast at the church hall on September 20.

St. James Church will also be open to the public at the Doors Open event which is part of Fergus' 175th Anniversary Celebration weekend on June 28. If you haven't had an opportunity to try the food from our Jolly Friar Chip Wagon, this is your chance. You can also have a tour of our most recent addition and our Butterfly Garden behind the church.

A history book is being published, tracing the connections that present and former families have with St. James Church. More than 100 families have told "their story" of involvement at St. James and have searched their photo albums for pictures and memorabilia.

If you are interested in attending any of our events or want more information, contact the church office at 519-843-2141.

You are welcome in our church at any time. Help us celebrate by joining us for one or more of our events.



Join us on the historic grounds of Christ's Church Cathedral on James Street North for our monthly Makers' Market!

Local artists and makers, organic farm-fresh foods, antiques, live music, tours of the Cathedral and much, much, more.

June 21 • July 19 • August 16 • September 20 • October 18

**Niagara Cursillo**  
[www.niagaracursillo.org](http://www.niagaracursillo.org)



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## Time for a Christian truce

For Arius, in fact, there was only one true God and that was the Father.

Many doctoral dissertations have been written in this area of patristic theology, and this summary is but a few words. Arius' arguments are not really what are important here. Let's continue. In 321, Arius was denounced by a synod at Alexandria. In 325, the First Council of Nicaea called by the Emperor Constantine, condemned his doctrine. This would bring about the origin of the Nicene Creed, which many of our parishes continue to use today.

Now skip forward a few hundred years to the 11th century. Most of us have heard of the East-West schism that happened in 1054. Many have felt that the schism was a noble one that occurred because of a disagreement about the "procession" of the Holy Spirit in the Creed. In the west, they said the Holy Spirit proceeded from the Father and the Son, while in the east they said the Holy Spirit proceeded only from the Father. In our world today, the Nicene Creed of Rome is different from the one used by many Anglican and Orthodox churches. Perhaps the greater issue was that in 1054 the leaders of the church of the east (Michael Cerularius, Patriarch of Constantinople) and the west (Pope Leo IX) excommunicated each other—over who had the most authority. A massive break occurred in the life of the Christian church over what can only be regarded as the petty politics of two egocentric rulers.

We could talk about the reformation (16th century) and then the break that occurred between our own parents in faith (Church of England) and the Roman church. Many of us can only look back and wonder about the integrity of most of those involved in this break, and question how prayerfully attached they were to the gospel of Jesus, which called for reconciliation and profound love.

Just a few historical examples (and there are many more) that we need to remember as we think about the issues that now face our church. Bishop Ralph and Archdeacon Marion, Bishop Michael and Archdeacon Michael have spent countless hours and days struggling to build and maintain a church that is founded on faith, hope and love among the members. The great struggle for these servants and leaders has been to help all of us to understand that surely we can walk in unity without agreeing with one another on every issue.

Some will say that the break between the Anglican Network and the Anglican Church of Canada is about the interpretation of scripture. They either will argue that the Anglican Church of Canada is too liberal and or that the Anglican Network is too conservative. There are others who will say that the issue boils down to the blessing of same-gender relationships; some suggesting that this blessing is wrong and opposed in scripture, others saying it is good and there is nothing in scripture to prohibit this blessing. Of course, since it is the modern era, property issues landed us in court. With the judge having made her decision, at least for the time being, many of us understand that we have the right and responsibility to share the use of the buildings in

question. In her judgement she is saying that we should act what we have always preached—that we can live with a diverse understanding.

Let's be honest for a moment. Who knows who was right in the Christological arguments of the 3d century? We know who won, but who really knows who was right? More to the point, does it really matter? Most likely, each of us has a unique understanding of our relationship to Jesus Christ. There's nothing wrong with that. Some of the great mystics of the middle ages expressed an almost sexual-spiritual relationship with Christ, which some of us now might consider perverted! At the end of the day, who are we, or who is anyone to judge these people? And is this not the issue at hand with respect to our interpretation of Scripture today? It has always been the case that two people will understand a scripture passage differently. I remember being in "bible sharing" groups in which I was often shocked by what various people would see and understand about particular passages of scripture. It sure wasn't the way I saw it.

I hate to admit it, but when Archbishop John Bothwell ordained the first women in 1976, I was absolutely sure that he had dealt a death blow to the very life of the church and its future. At that time, I was a young idealistic Roman priest, certain that I was right. Well, the fact is that I was wrong. The archbishop was brave and insightful. He, along with a few other bishops, paved the path for one of the most important justice developments within the church—the full inclusion of women. I have learned my lesson.

It is true; I am in a same-sex union. I can also say that in my prayer life I am confident that my God truly blesses our union. I feel the presence of God and I know God's blessing. No human being from any church can tell me differently. This union has brought me more understanding of God's love than anything else in my faith journey. Having said that, I can live with members of the Network who choose not to understand my union or to see God's blessing in it—even if I feel offended by such a belief. I believe we should still be one Christian community without division. In such a community I can expect a respect for my beliefs, my spirituality, my sexuality and my understanding of God. In turn, I will offer the same respect to others.

None of us wants a repeat of the Christological heresies or the east-west divide or the battles that followed the reformation; nor do we want a repeat of the crusades, the inquisitions and all the other historical embarrassments in which Christians have engaged. Now is the time for us to turn our swords into ploughshares—for the wolf to lie down with the lamb—and for us to take the most important words of Jesus with the utmost of seriousness. Otherwise, our squabbling will mirror our history and we will continue to look foolish in the eyes of the world around us.

We need to live what we preach—that none of us is either wholly saint or completely sinner, that in our humanity God loves each of us unconditionally and that through this unconditional love, we are filled with the Spirit that as Christians, we call Christ.

## A part of the main



**ELEANOR JOHNSTON AND WAYNE FRASER**  
ST. THOMAS CHURCH, ST. CATHARINES

Here's a quiz for Christians. Start by reading this familiar passage: "No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main. If a clod be washed away by the sea, Europe is the less, as well as if a promontory were, as well as if



**If we work together with God, we do not need to fear; we can help 'save' the planet.**

a manor of thy friend's or of thine own were. Any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind, and therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee."

Now the question: if you skipped over one of the three sentences in this excerpt from Meditation XVII, John Donne's most famous sermon, was it the second? Anglicans and other literary folk have, for centuries, focused on the first and third sentences. These provided Ernest Hemingway with a novel title, preachers with an image for a sermon on human interdependence and feminists with an illustration of traditional patriarchal assumptions.

Now, struggling with the current concept of humanity's responsibility for the earth's state of crisis, we are forced to reconsider the second sentence. Instead of reading about Donne's "clod" being washed away as a metaphor of human death, we picture soil erosion and imagine the death of an ecosystem.

We've got the message that the earth is in crisis. David Suzuki and Al Gore have persuaded us that we have a problem. But it's overwhelming. It's relentless. We're not doing enough. What can we realistically do? What's the next step? Will God save us? What has our church to do with ecology? In answering the last two questions constructively, we can perhaps relieve the panic typical of our many other ques-

tions, the panic inherent in the pervasive fear of our time. We can work to restore sanity in our everyday lives.

Christianity has long focused on the individual's salvation in the afterlife. Human life on this earth, this vale of tears, didn't matter. This earth mattered even less; we ignored Donne's "clod." Fundamentalists still think this way: God will take care of the environmental problem, if indeed there is one, by creating "a new heaven and a new earth" in these last days. Such theistic thinking relieves such Christians of responsibility for the poor and the planet that we first-world people have so unwisely and selfishly exploited.

The point is that solving the problem is up to us, but, before we throw up our hands in despair, let's reconsider what is called incarnation theology and see that God is incarnate not only in Jesus but also in all creation, including each human. This belief requires us to be God's hands and arms, to care for creation as something holy, full of original blessings, not original sins. God's "everlasting arms" won't save our world, but Emmanuel, working in and through us, can. Furthermore, we look for Christ incarnate not just in today's Christians but also, by other names, in people of different faith traditions. If we work together with God, we do not need to fear; we can help "save" the planet.

Christianity has been slowly moving toward a focus on social justice, and a logical extension of this is ecojustice. This movement involves justice for the whole earth, for other species as well as other peoples. It asserts that our rich lifestyle has necessitated both the exploitation and degradation of the great majority of the world's creatures and the great majority of the planet's ecosystems. Thinking globally and acting locally aren't enough. If we think spiritually, we may be able to convince political leaders and corporations that the wellbeing of the planet and all its species, including the human, is essential not only to everyone's survival but also to justice and prosperity for all.

The global community has to convert from fear, the basis of its addictions (shopping, drugs, short-term profits, fast foods, gambling), to a spiritual focus on celebration of the Creator, creation and creativity. Most people and most businesses and governments, however, are reluctant or

perhaps unable to change their habits. It is this refusal that we must address and "convert" if we are to succeed in saving Earth for our grandchildren.

Our current global economic exploitation cannot continue because it is predicated on infinite growth on a planet with finite resources. US President Bush keeps telling, even paying, his people to go shopping, but his is a short-term fix. He ignores the difficult (not merely "inconvenient") truth that our culture of greed is built on injustice to the earth and the poor.

Irrespective of the environmental issue, we know that protesting uneven access to the world's resources is part of our calling as Christians. Jesus addressed helping the poor directly, but now we are beginning to see that we can't help the poor without also helping the environment.

The World Council of Churches is one of the global organizations, along with the United Nations and most non-governmental organizations, that are not part of the economic/political problem. The WCC's mandates are "serving human need... seeking justice and peace and upholding the integrity of creation." But the WCC can claim to represent the Creator's creation only if it can expand beyond Christianity to become an inter-faith organization. Our Anglican communion can be part of this work to lead the global conversion from fear and addiction to worship of the God of all peoples.

Worried to find itself paralyzed by irrelevance, isn't this just what our church needs: a compelling motivation, a new gospel for the world? How do we evolve into this new mode? Will this global theology render our Anglican, even our Christian, traditions obsolete? Perhaps, but clinging to the comforts of the past is ineffectual. The movement of the Creative Spirit is towards the future. And, having addressed our basic fears, why wouldn't the Anglican Church survive? And even thrive?

Think spiritually. Act locally and globally. Even if concerned citizens follow all the secular environmentally-friendly advice available, we still won't solve global warming. These problems need a framework and a wisdom beyond practical actions. Only worship of the Creator, the Ground of our Being, can lead to spiritual renewal, incarnational values and "ecosanity" for our world.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2 »

## Come out and pray with me

In storytelling the children heard the story of Joseph, and a story about how important it is to share with others. All the participants had energetic games. The children participated in relay games, one having balloons stuffed in a shirt and a relay using dress up clothes. All games were co-operative games. The laughter, energy and gasping could be heard by all.

For our lunchtime focus we had as our special guest, Andy Asbil who spoke to the children and adults about our theme Me and how important it is that we all work together.

The Banner design consisted of a light green background with a rainbow and a cross on it. The children put their names on colourful paper doll cut outs

and all the people are joining hands or touching with their feet. The theme words ME were placed on the banner with the words WE placed on top. We want the children to know that we are all Gifts of the Spirit and we work together.

In music the children sang all their favorite songs. The use of shakers and musical instruments added to the sounds in the church. Music was fun and lively.

The day closed in the church. The children were asked if they all had a good time—all responded with a joyous yes. The names of all the attendees were placed in age groups for a draw; each age group won a gift to take home as a remembrance of the festi-

val day. We all sang our theme song, "Come Out and Pray with Me," for the last time. The children then admired the finished banner.

Thanks to all who helped out in the festival. This festival could not take place without the support of all the volunteers from Lincoln and Brock Regions and the many churches that sent us the special children.

Thanks also to the parish of St. John's, Niagara Falls for their warm and welcoming hospitality and to all those individuals who helped with making the Lincoln and Brock Children's Festival a really special day for all the children. We are all gifts of the Spirit and we need all the talents and gifts to become one.

# Life's a risk that we can't stop taking



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

A few months ago my daughter Rebekah and I got into a conversation about taking risks. I don't remember the particular instance that provoked this conversation but I do remember suggesting to her that sometimes it is important to take chances. Her response stopped me in my tracks. "You don't," she said. "That's just not true," I returned, but I quickly backed away from this as I considered what she knew of me. Pretty much all the risks I had taken were before I was married, let alone before we had children. In true defensive fashion, I began to list these off to her.

At 18-years-old, just before completing a two-year CEGEP program in Montreal, a good friend and I planned to spend the summer on a kibbutz in Israel before both of us headed off to university. We were to leave at the beginning of May. A month before our departure, my friend backed out on me, which left me with two choices; go on my own or don't go at all. I chose to go on my own. When my parents said good-bye at the airport, I put up a good front for them. When they were out of sight, I burst into tears. I was terrified of going it alone.

The summer of my second year in university, I met a student in the one-year Master of Journalism degree program at an end-of-year party at our house (I shared the apartment with two other journalism students). After a few drinks, he told me he was driving out to Calgary in two days to find a job. "Really," I said. "How would you like some company?" I barely knew this person but I knew him well enough to feel safe about driving out west with him. At that point, I had no summer job in Ottawa so it seemed

to me I might as well look for a job somewhere else, especially in a part of the country to which I had never before been and thought might be exciting to get to know. My mother had conniptions about me going out west with someone I barely knew, let alone going out there without a job.

I gave myself a week to find employment because that was about as much money as I had before I knew I would run out. While I was job-hunting, I also had about the same amount of time to sleep on a friend of a friend's couch. I practically became best buddies with the people at the Canada Manpower Centre (that's what it was called in those days), showing up in their offices first thing in the morning, around noon and finally late afternoon to see if anything had come available. I'm convinced they finally found me a job because they were desperate to see the backside of me. On the last day possible, I showed up in the morning only to discover the people at Manpower were anxiously awaiting my arrival. They had secured an interview for me as a typist and all-around gopher at a Calgary trucking company.

Clearly, it wasn't going to be the most exciting work I had ever done but it was a job which would give me enough cash for a place to live and the opportunity to see the countryside, as I spent my weekends camping, which was the reason for my going out west in the first place. After I landed the job, I found a room almost immediately. As I recall, it was one of the most unusual experiences I had ever had with a roommate—she was tidier and even more neurotic about clutter than I. At no other time in my life have I lived with someone who kept her tin cans in the kitchen cupboard in alphabetical order and cleaned up after me. It was a blissful four-month obsessive compulsive relationship that I will never forget.

Like everyone else in my class, prior to graduating from Carleton University in Journalism I sent

resumes out across Canada trying to convince anyone who would listen that I would be a good person to hire on their newspaper or at their radio station. After many months and many rejections, the Grand Falls Advertiser in Grand Falls, Newfoundland offered me a job. I had never been further east than Montreal and was accustomed to city streets and city lights. In April of my graduating year, I left for this small town. As the plane began descending before landing in Gander, I saw only water and trees beneath me; I pondered over my sanity and what had possessed me to accept a job in a place so far from the familiar. Unlike my stay in Calgary, I wouldn't be returning to school in the fall.

Then, of course, while in Newfoundland, I took the biggest risk of my life, converting from Judaism to Christianity—a painful letting go of one family in order to embrace another—a move I firmly believed to be spirit-led. The tears I shed on the way to Israel were nothing compared to the tears I shed when I converted. I left Grand Falls a year and a half later for England, where I was enrolled in a theological college of 65 men and one woman. Guess who was the one woman? Prior to my arrival, the college had never had a female studying there; spending a year as a mascot was an unusual if not interesting experience. I had never before been to England, I was a foreigner and I was the wrong sex; not much question about the risk involved in this move.

I spent two years in England—the second living in an intentional Christian community and working in a parish—and then returned to Canada to test what others believed was a vocation to the priesthood. In the following four years, I studied theology and met Robin. Under the circumstances, being ordained and getting married seemed almost like a cakewalk compared to the previous 10 years of my life.

Following this defensive diatribe, Rebekah responded, "I guess you

have taken some risks in your life." I quickly realized, however, that the operative words in her response to me were "have taken." No question about it. I "have taken" some risks in my life. However, recent history suggests pretty strongly that these are definitely a thing of the past. Today, I lead a settled, uneventful and fairly predictable life. No small wonder that my daughter regards me as someone who doesn't seek out adventure.

Recently, I have finished the book *The Year of Living Biblically* by A.J. Jacobs, a humorous—although some would say—frivolous attempt by its author to "follow the bible as literally as possible." We have used the book for a study at Transfiguration and it has provoked much conversation about what is actually in the bible, how the material is interpreted by an assortment of people and groups, and where that leaves each one of us in terms of what impact its content should or should not have in our lives. Oddly enough, one of the people in the book who most touched me is, of all things, a snake handler.

Says A.J. Jacobs of this man, "Jimmy is the humblest fundamentalist you'll ever meet. Even his slightly stooped posture radiates humility. 'I'm just a mountain man,' he tells me... I just tell the word of God, and people can take it or reject it," says Jimmy. "I've had Mormons here—I treat 'em good. I've had people from Finland here—I treat 'em good. I don't say anything against 'em. Just tell 'em the word of God." Jimmy was saved when he was thirteen. He saw a snake in the road, and the snake tried to bite him, but 'God locked the snake's jaws. So that's when I knew it was true.' Since then, he's amassed what he believes is the largest archive of serpent handling material in the world." (*The Year of Living Biblically*, p. 295) At one point, Jacobs watches Jimmy handle a snake. "He does this for a minute, holding the serpent at eyes level. Then slowly, carefully returns the snake to its box. Jimmy is out of his trance. The weird

thing is that his appearance has completely changed. He looks happier, fuller, transformed from two minutes ago. Maybe that's how Moses glowed when he came down from the mountain." (p. 298).

I am no fundamentalist and certainly no snake handler but I confess to being deeply moved by this man's personal experience of God and his preparedness to take this personal experience and risk his life for it. Further on in the same chapter, Jacobs refers to an essay written by the religion teacher who connected him with Jimmy. In this essay, the teacher says, "serpent handling is a valid mode of worship (which) lets the handler embrace life by conquering death." (p. 299) I daresay some people would say the same thing about bungee jumping. Nonetheless, after reading about Jimmy, I found myself pondering how so many of us avoid the "serpents" in our lives or, like me, start avoiding them as we age. Either we choose never to take risks or we stopped taking them a long time ago, so determined are we to hang onto life. Yet, as we hang onto life, is it possible that we are no longer embracing it and if so, might there be a different and perhaps more costly result to such hanging on?

I don't think we were ever intended to take Mark 16: 18 literally. ("They will pick up snakes in their hands, and if they drink any deadly thing, it will not hurt them; they will lay their hands on the sick, and they will recover.") Yet the idea that Jesus understood life as a risk which we all need to take, is something serious to ponder. There are an infinite number of ways in which each of us as we get older gets too comfortable and too complacent. By the same token, as Christianity has aged and institutionalized, the church's preparedness to take risks seems also to have waned. As individuals and as a community, we would do well to remember and follow the message in Mark 16: 18. Life's a risk that we can't stop taking.

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# Getting to know you

**Karl Distler**

Christ's Church Cathedral

Household Chores in the Household of God

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

Oiling hinges, changing light bulbs, patching plaster, stopping leaks, saving money—regular household chores, right? Apply these jobs to that huge stone building at 252 James Street North in Hamilton, Christ's Church Cathedral, and suddenly those regular household chores attain equally huge proportions!

Hinges, light bulbs, plaster, leaks and more are the domain of Karl Distler, currently working at the Cathedral. At the moment, there is no Property Manager, so Karl, with help from Rose Hunter, Carl O'Hoski, and others, is responsible for the fabric of our treasured Cathedral.

That could be an overwhelming task, but Karl seems to take it all in stride, planning from a list of bookings generated each week by Ruth-Anne Martin, the Receptionist at Cathedral Place. For one spring week alone, that list had four closely-typed pages.

Imagine the amount of waste and recycling generated by the various offices at the Cathedral. When it involves not only office staff but also the daycare and other regular activities, meetings, receptions after funerals, ordinations etc., "putting out the garbage" takes on new meaning. Somebody has to do it, and usually that somebody is Karl. On busy days, it takes about 1.5 hours to collect waste throughout the building. Pop cans are set aside to raise funds for St. Matthew's House.

Then there are the light bulbs in ceiling fixtures and wall sconces. "The worst ones (to change) are the big ones in the ceiling in the Niagara Room." Karl is "trying to get another supplier for those bulbs, because they're very expensive."

## Housecleaning!

And there's cleaning: Ana Maria cleans upstairs, Karl cleans downstairs, including the daycare area. Kathy, who cooks for the daycare, cleans the kitchen, but Karl cleans six big filters in hoods above the stoves: "I vacuum them in the winter, and hose them down outside in the summer." Karl is "looking for more practical, lighter filters."

"I wash the floor in Myler Hall most days, and the Cathedral when needs be." A recent Sunday meant regular morning services and confirm-

ation in the afternoon, with seventy-five confirmands and almost six hundred guests—the Cathedral floor got washed.

Karl explains, "The Cathedral floors are high maintenance." They are vulnerable to "black scuff marks, and have a lot of gouges, especially from filming. The floors were installed in the early 1970s, and are already starting to look pretty bad"—though thirty to forty years of high traffic will wear down even the best flooring.

In summer, Karl strips all the floors, including the chancel's marble, washes them, and applies two coats of wax. "We scrape the floors to get wax dripped from candles, (and) hire help to move all the pews and other heavy stuff. It takes four people to move some of those altars—they weigh a ton!"

Carpets are vacuumed, and "we just had them steam-cleaned this year, but it doesn't look like it now, because it picks up so much dust." Dust has to be cleaned from window-sills, and windows have to be cleaned, even stained glass ones.

Karl maintains orders for paper towels, soap and other cleaning supplies, always trying to keep costs down.

## Organisation is essential

For monthly meetings of Synod Council, which guides the Diocese between gatherings of the Diocesan Synod, Karl sets up "tables and chairs in a specific pattern. That's the way Karen wants them!" (Karen Nowicki is Administrative Assistant to the Secretary of Synod, which includes Synod Council and the annual meeting of Synod.) For this gathering, and others, Karl organizes tea and coffee, flip charts, chairs and tables, and ensures that the water dispensers are full.

To put his hand to any of the tasks that arise in an old building, Karl keeps his office clean and organized. Screws, washers, nuts, bolts, and more bits and pieces than most of us could identify are sorted in a many-drawer cabinet, and Karl is "gradually purchasing what's needed (to equip) the Cathedral (with tools). Sometimes I go to the hardware store next door," he grins, "but Canadian Tire has good sales sometimes!"

Another challenge is "trying to find switches for everything in the Cathedral! Certain switches have to

stay on all the time. None of them are labeled, so you have to do trial and error."

## Constant Learning

Karl grins, "There's always something to do around here: the odd bit of painting, fixing loose door handles, odd jobs like that. I've been here two years, and I'm still discovering things. There's never a dull moment, and it doesn't hurt to learn new things. I helped... put up drywall in the choir room. I'd never done that before, so it was a new chore for me. One side is a sound break for Brent's office (Brent Field, the Cathedral's Director of Music), and on the other it's an art gallery for the daycare.

"The front desk was all new to me when I started, the phones and the answering system, making sure all the doors are locked at night and the security system is working." (Karl appreciates the help of Carl O'Hoski, who "comes in at 4:30 PM, for the night shift, till at least the daycare is finished around 6 or later depending on evening functions.")

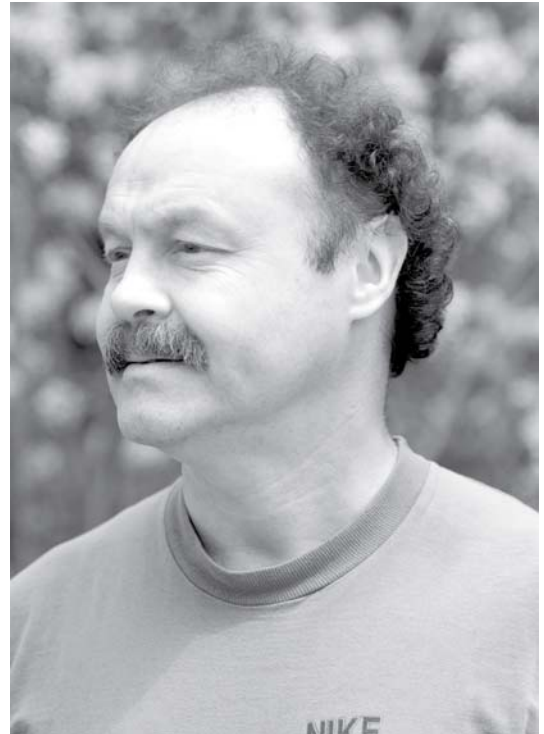
Karl occasionally works on weekends, helping out on the front desk, letting people in and out, setting up tables for card parties and taking "the ladies (of the Anglican Business-women's Association) up and down in the elevator for their meetings in the Geddes Room."

Summer brings other duties, especially making sure the flower gardens are watered. "We do have a watering system. It's on a timer, (but) somehow kids walking through the property like to kick off the sprinkler system heads and break them."

Karl also makes sure the property is cleared of garbage, and directs traffic in the parking lot for large functions: "We got a lot of complaints when we used to put three lines of cars down the middle, that there was not enough room to get out. So now there's a yellow line, and we ask (drivers) to straddle it; that should leave more room."

## Growing up in Canada

Born in Nuremberg, Germany, Karl immigrated to Hamilton when he was four. After student years at Ryerson, Westdale and Sir John A. MacDonal High Schools, Karl took a six-month course in stationary engineering at Mohawk College. He worked for six years at the IGA on James Street as



manager of the frozen food and dairy sections, before moving to Stelco. "I was there for six months when the strike started and that was the end of me!" Then came a job at CAMCO, "on the assembly line making fridges. You've got to keep up the pace. If you start getting behind you're really in trouble! We made 440 fridges a day, in two shifts—that's 880 fridges!" Quietly, Karl explains, "Free trade killed us. We were exporting one hundred thousand fridges a year to the U.S., then the numbers dwindled down because jobs went offshore." After twenty-one years at CAMCO, Karl's job disappeared when it closed and McMaster bought the property for a research centre.

Karl explains that, over the next two years, he had a "few part-time jobs, but nothing substantial." Niagara's former Executive Archdeacon, the Venerable Marion Vincet, suggested to Karl's wife, the Reverend Dianne Distler, Rector of St. Alban's Church, Hamilton, that Karl speak with David Murray, then Property Manager at the Cathedral. "I got the job," smiles Karl. "I began part-time, and I still am, working 9:30 to 3:30 from Monday to Friday, and some Saturdays. I'll be staying here!"

## Family and fun

Married to Dianne for twenty-four years, and proud father of their daughter Danielle, a student in the Early Childhood Education Program at

Mohawk College, Karl is also a reader and greeter at St. Alban's. He remembers the challenges when Dianne was studying towards ordination: "She was with the Bank for twenty years, the last five commuting to Toronto, which meant twelve hour days for her. Then she started the calling. It meant lots of nights for her, doing papers. I was still working shifts, and it's hard to get into a sleep pattern." He firmly supports Dianne in her ministry now. The household includes their 14-year-old mini poodle, Sasha, and three gerbils. To relax, Karl enjoys computer games, sports on television, and watching movies with his family, "comedies and tear-jerkers, but I like action movies myself."

## "I'm just here to help..."

Quiet, gentle, and with a wonderful smile and chuckle, Karl says, "I get along with pretty well everybody around here. Communication is half the battle. I help the office staff unload their cars, carry stuff in. I carry coffee for Kim Johnson (the Cathedral's Hospitality Coordinator and Head Greeter)—she helps me, I help her! I'm just here to help anybody that needs help."

Karl's quiet, capable presence and readiness to tackle the myriad duties that arise in this great historical building will ensure that Christ's Church Cathedral is carefully maintained for future generations of Anglicans in the Diocese of Niagara.

## We'd love to hear your opinion

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Shoot Ready Aim

# A tale of a whale

**HOLLIS HISCOCK**  
 RETIRED PRIEST - BURLINGTON

**SHOOT - The photograph**

Glover's Harbour, a small quiet Central Newfoundland community, displays the replica of the largest 'giant squid' ever captured, so local authorities claim.

On November 2, 1878, a 'giant squid', measuring 55 feet and weighing over 2 tonnes, was found washed up on the community's rocky beach. The squid's body was 6.1 metres (20 feet) long and its tentacles stretched to 10.7 metres (35 feet). The inhabitants who first stumbled upon this colossal sea monster must have been awed and frightened by their early morning discovery.

Their existence has been rumoured for thousands of years, but solid scientific evidence has been woefully lacking. In the early 1960's, a biologist from the Newfoundland Marine Research Centre spellbound us university students with his slides and tales about these great gentle creatures inhabiting the deep.

In May 2008, *Newsweek* magazine published an article about a 'Monster of the Deep' caught a year earlier by fisherfolk in the Antarctic Ocean. Apparently, the squid had wrapped itself around a live fish hooked on a trawl line, and was pulled onto the boat by these hardy mariners. The 33 foot male squid, weighing half a ton, is being examined by scientists in New Zealand.

Several years ago, Glover's Harbour officials commissioned a life size replica, 'complete with sprawling tentacles and gigantic torso on a platform not far from where that giant squid was found' over 130 years ago. Their annual three day Giant Squid Festival has become quite a drawing card for both local and visiting tourists.

I photographed the giant squid when we visited Glover's Harbour to see the 'monster from the deep' for ourselves.

**READY - Words behind the photo**

During the winter, I showed this photograph to a retired men's club and asked what Bible story came to mind. The name JONAH echoed around the room.

The Old Testament story of Jonah (4 chapters only) was written approximately 2,768 years ago (give or take a century), in a book bearing the author's name.

God asked Jonah to deliver a message to those living in the mighty city of Nineveh. Jonah became upset that God was willing to forgive people and give them a second chance. So he sailed in a ship going in the opposite direction. Well, God did not take kindly to Jonah going back on his word, and caused the 'perfect storm', which persuaded the frightened crew to toss Jonah overboard into the raging rough seas.

Just before Jonah saw his life flashing before his eyes, he was swallowed by a 'great fish' (the species is not described, so it could be a giant squid or a whale, we just don't know).

After 3 days in the fish's stinky belly, Jonah had a change of heart (a conversion one might add), prayed earnestly to God to forgive him and promised that, if his transportation predicament could be rectified, he would deliver God's message to Nineveh. God arranged for the giant fish to 'vomit' Jonah onto a beach, not far from the city.

That is the last we hear of the giant fish, unless one believes it was cast upon a beach in Newfoundland or caught by a fishing boat in the Antarctic Ocean.

Jonah gave the people of Nineveh their options, and they chose to repent and change their ways. Even the king jumped on the bandwagon, proclaiming a 40 day fast and ordering every living creature, including the cattle, to be attired in sackcloth. That



must have been an amazing and amusing sight.

It worked. They prayed to God, they changed their ways and the city was spared.

God wanted to teach Jonah one more life lesson. Jonah selected an elevated spot to watch what people in the city would do. Being very, very hot, he built himself a shelter. Ever the practical joker, God arranged for a huge vine to sprout up quickly and protect Jonah from the devastating heat. Jonah truly loved and appreciated God's gift, and settled back, in comfort, to watch the Nineveh extravaganza.

Then God sent a little old worm to

bite that vine, and the vine withered. In response, Jonah became very upset and upbraided God for taking away his treasured shelter.

So God asked Jonah, 'what is more important, a vine which grew up overnight and died just as quickly, or 120,000 people who 'cannot tell their right hand from their left?'

The book ends with God posing this question: 'should I not be concerned about that great city?'. No answer is given. I believe it is the only book in the Bible which ends with a question.

**AIM - Questions and actions for you**  
 ■ What would your reaction be to

God's behaviour and question at the end of the book?

■ How do the 40 days spent praying, fasting and dressing in penitential clothing foreshadow the Christian's Lent?

■ Three days in the belly of the great fish compares with Jesus' three days in the tomb—what does it say to us?

■ Hollis would appreciate your feedback on this series.

.....  
 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.

## What's hot in books?



**ALAN COOK**  
 ANGLICAN BOOK CENTRE AND  
 AUGSBURG FORTRESS PUBLISHERS

I was visiting a parish in Mississauga recently to talk to the staff about the services that ABC and Augsburg Fortress could offer their ministry team. As the priest was browsing our new catalogue he asked: "so, what's hot these days?" It was a good question and one that I thought others might be asking, too.

My first answer was not what he was expecting: "Splash!" I said. "What's that?" Well, 'Splash!' is a new programme produced by AF to help families fulfill their baptismal promises once the baptism is over. The church (or maybe a godparent or sponsor) purchases a magazine-

style booklet that comes apart into 12 monthly sheets. Every sheet is attractively laid out with articles that help parents understand their children developmentally and spiritually and to help them to know and love God. There are short theological reflections for the parents, then a prayer to say, a song to sing, a game to play and a craft to make with the child; connections are suggested to link the child to other family members and to the church. And there is always a humorous cartoon. All the church or sponsor has to do is fold it and mail it. It's so easy and so helpful: it's been flying off the shelves at our Kitchener warehouse. I was at a clergy meeting in Hamilton and one priest piped up after my presentation: "I'll take 20!" There is one booklet for each of the child's first three years. It's hot!

What the priest really meant of course was: what authors are selling well? For enduring popularity, you cannot top Herbert O'Driscoll. He is far and away the best selling Canadian

Anglican writer today. His 'Prayer among friends' (\$16.95) has so far this year surpassed sales of Anglican hymn books!

On the Lutheran side, Walter Brueggemann is always hot. His latest, 'The Word militant' (\$38 hardback) is a great book for preachers and thoughtful lay people. He focuses on the "subversive task of the sermon", subverting our lazy and secularized view of the world and helping us to re-vision the world as that of a "ceaselessly interesting God". From Scotland, John Bell is coming to speak this month in Niagara and Huron. A member of the Iona community in Scotland, he brings Iona's voice of Celtic wholeness to the church through passionate preaching, story-telling, drama, hymns and liturgy. Anything by Bell is well worth buying, using and singing.

In the more cutting edge world of 'emergent theology', Brian McLaren's name stands out. (You can tell that from the number of publishers that

get him to do a review!) In 'Everything must change', McLaren calls for the church in the west to address issues of major concern: the prosperity crisis, the equity crisis and the security crisis—the prospect of increasing wars and conflicts due to these disparities. Of course, these surface a spirituality crisis which calls society to a spiritual renewal and the church to greater relevance. He writes well with clarity and encouraging passion for a lay audience and for theologically trained readers. At the level of popular piety, Herbert Brokering sells vast numbers of his prayer books based on observing his pets. 'Cat Psalms' and 'Dog Psalms' (about \$10 each) and their sequels disappear very quickly from the book tables at synods and events to which I travel.

Summer gives us a bit more time to read, so do come to the stores or visit us online ([www.afcanada.com](http://www.afcanada.com)) to see which of these 'hot' authors (or any of the hundreds of others we stock) takes your fancy and feeds your faith.

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## PARISH NEWS



**ROAD HOCKEY SUNDAY (EASTER VI)** Some parishioners at St. Cuthbert's, Oakville, welcomed spring recently with an all ages road hockey game and pizza lunch after the Eucharist. They took over the church parking lot and had three games underway with adults, children and youth playing alongside each other. About once per month the parish gathers for inter-generational community building events and Sundays immediately after worship have been the best time to gather.

### A show of wedding fashions from 1884-2007



Two young ladies, Megan and Sarah, enjoying the afternoon tea which followed the fashion show.



Courtney Evers and Bill Mous rehearse for their summer wedding.



**SERVICE FOR DEACONS** Vocational Deacons from the Dioceses of Niagara, Toronto and Huron met for a 3-day retreat near Orangeville and then attended St. Mark's Anglican Church, Orangeville, on the Sunday morning. Pictured here are some of the deacons with the Rector, the Reverend Canon Peter Scott and the newly appointed Director of Deacons, the Reverend Richard Beaudoin.

## Bridal Memories

**ANN WASHINGTON**  
ST. JAMES, DUNDAS

A few hours of nostalgia was shared by an admiring audience at St. James' Church, Dundas on April 19th, as approximately fifty wedding fashions, dating from 1884 to 2007 were modelled by elegant ladies of the congregation as they walked the aisles of the church on the arm of a formally attired escort.

Stunning wedding gowns, mother of the bride and bridesmaids dresses, on loan largely from members of the congregation, received looks of approval as they stirred memories of the era in which they were originally worn.

Ensembles included a high necked white, satin gown overlaid with lace and bedecked with pearls; a long, velvet dress trimmed with feathers; a couple of softly coloured ankle length creations with matching hats and purses; two tight bodiced peau de soie creations with fingertip sleeves and dozens of covered buttons down the back; some strapless creations with veils and trains; and two ivory gowns imitative of the one worn by Princess Diana when she married Prince Charles. Mother of the bride outfits included vibrant pink, and soft blue ensembles contrasting with a later era when an ivory suit of silk and black outfit was chosen, perhaps with a view that

these could be worn on other occasions.

Although many of the original brides and mothers of the bride had outgrown their dresses over the years, five of the ladies of the parish were able to wear their own ensembles. Lorna Janitz, Beth Capper, Sara Chappel, Margaret Koblyk and Audrey Nicol looked just as lovely as they walked the aisles during, "Bridal Memories" as they did when they originally wore their dresses.

Members of the audience were delighted to see a daughter modelling her mother's gown, being escorted by her father. Similarly, as the engaged couple of model, Courtney Evers and escort Bill Mous, Ministry Assistant at St. James, walked down the aisle together several times, the fashion commentator for the event, Lynn Morrow, quipped to the delight of all assembled, that this couple was practising for their upcoming wedding in July. Does that mean they would not need a wedding rehearsal?

The oldest gown displayed in, "Bridal Memories", was worn by Grace Petry when she married Abraham Hugill in 1884. The dress was kindly loaned and displayed by the Dundas Museum. Four other vintage dresses, Florence Guy's dated 1922, Lily McGinley's dated 1935, Marnie Doran's dated 1939 and Nora Sandi-

lands dated 1942 were too small for even the slim models of St. James' to wear. Those ladies must have had tiny waistslines or were well corseted! These dresses were displayed in the church together with an Alfred Sung floor length designer gown in white satin, adorned with beads and jewels with a long train worn by Marlene Sarjeant in 1991. All were exquisite. Fine examples of the art of the dressmaker!

Piano and organ music was played throughout the show by Douglas Brownlee, Director of Music at St. James' Church and Paul Chappel, Composer and Hymn Writer. The lovely voice of Sara Chappel opened the event by singing, "Ave Maria". A most romantic tone was set, when Sara stood close to her husband, Paul and sang, "There is Love" as he accompanied her on the piano.

To complete a most pleasant occasion, afternoon tea was served.

Thanks to many people who helped but especially to Susan Linn and Audrey Nicol who conceived of the idea, and directed this memorable event. The goal of, "Bridal Memories" was to have fun, show off beautiful wedding apparel and raise some funds for greening St. James. After the show, it was clear that the goal had been accomplished.



**30 HOUR FAMINE** Members of the Youth Group from St. Mark's Anglican Church, Orangeville, took part in the 30-hour Famine, raising nearly \$1,000 for the cause. Pictured here are group leaders Rev. Bahman Kalantari, Trish Kalantari and Kathy Wilson with some of the participants working on crafts which they sold after service the next day.





The "soup-er" ladies of the Health Cabinet at St. Michael's Hamilton

## Soup's on at St. Michael's

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

A number of years ago St. Michael's was blessed with a very dynamic Parish Nurse by the name of Jan Pearce. The Health Cabinet was created to support and assist Jan in her role. Sadly, Jan is no longer at our church nor do we have a Parish Nurse BUT the Health Cabinet is still vibrant.

One of the best ideas that was developed by the Health Cabinet is our monthly Soup lunches which are held on the last Thursday of the month. The idea of providing opportunities to socialize over a meal evolved during the early days of the Health Cabinet with the first lunch served in January of 2004. The lunch is free-will offering only—so basically free to anyone in the community who wishes to lunch with us. This is just another one of our many Outreach Projects in the immediate community that we sponsor. In fact students from the local High School, Sherwood, often drop in for lunch. Their numbers increase

tenfold the day we serve hot dogs! Even they (the students) drop change into the basket. And if they don't... well, one of their friends will nudge them and make sure they do.

Numbers range from 40-70 at the lunches. One hotdog day we served over 200 people (mostly students). Fresh rolls, crackers, tea, coffee, juice or water, cookies and squares accompany the "Soup of the Month". This is not a profit making venture. The proceeds from the free-will offering often more than cover the costs and any excess we take in over the costs are put back into our Outreach Fund. Many parishioners see this as an opportunity to eat out at lunch. They often bring non-parishioner friends. People from the neighbourhood, who are non-parishioners, also attend. This is the whole point of the project: to invite the community into our church, to socialize and prove we are welcoming to all.

I believe the Mountain Ministries has even decided to meet on a regular

basis at St. Michael's because of the soup lunch. They are either served by the ladies in the Fireside Room or the clergy join us in the main hall to eat after their meeting.

On several occasions a speaker of interest is added to the "menu". This past month Joe Rocchi, a retired lawyer, gave an extremely interesting talk on Wills and Powers of Attorney. The talk usually lasts no more than half an hour with a question period following. Other topics and speakers have been Chiropractic services, Organ donation, Frauds and Scams. A small honorarium is given to the speaker but usually they receive the amount back to the church.

Why don't you join us next time you are in the neighbourhood on the last Thursday of the month? (except June, July and August) You will be heartily welcomed and I guarantee the soup will be hot and tasty and you will enjoy some great fellowship! Next lunch will be Hot Dogs on Thursday May 29. See you in the Fall, maybe?



St. Luke's Hamilton celebrates Earth Week with an outdoor procession. PHOTO BY ED DEEB

## Earth Week with tradition

**WALTER RAYBOULD**  
ST. LUKE'S, HAMILTON

In the centre of Hamilton's North-End the completely urban Saint Luke's Hamilton honoured Earth Week by sticking to their traditional Rogation Festival and literally "Beat the Bounds" as if they were out in the country. There were changes this year though as Katherine Tringer and David Nusko, the two cantors on duty that Sunday, were appointed official

"beaters" instead of the usual wardens. Never have the "bounds" been subject to such a thrashing.

During the five Processions the clergy and people read out the Rogation liturgy, which reminds us that this world is a gift from God who has bestowed it upon us and our duty is to protect and give stewardship. It proved a contemplative experience for the partakers despite all the action.

In the meantime and on a lighter

note, the young boys of the parish who being wary of the other infamous rogation tradition of the beating any wayward lad in the vicinity, (now observed mainly in the breech) were well hidden in the parish hall and seen sampling the Rogation Feast set there.

Later the well-fed and sated congregation was sent off home with their own colourful wooden cross to plant in their garden as a reminder of the day and its significance.

## Garden blessing



Bishop Michael blesses the new garden project at St. James Merriton on April 20, 2008.

## A learning experience with good food, fellowship and worship



Some of the Christ Church Youth Group who planned and participated in our Maundy Thursday Experience. From left: Kirk Blackadar, Julia Volkov, Laura Jackson, Janine Jackson, Monica Volkov, Brayden Swire.

**BARRY RANDLE**  
RECTOR - CHRIST CHURCH, FLAMBOROUGH

The Youth Group at Christ Church Flamborough added a special flavour to this year's Maundy Thursday observance. Their youth worship committee planned an evening of food, fellowship and worship. Everyone was invited to share a pot-luck dinner, commemorating the final meal Jesus shared with the disciples. Over the course of the meal, various aspects of the Passover Seder were included.

As decorative candles were lit, a member of the youth group offered a prayer, traditionally offered by the mother of the family. At the head table, near the candles, stood the cup of Elijah, filled with wine, in expectation of the prophet's return to announce the coming of the Messiah. Then a Passover blessing of the abundant and delicious food our guests had provided was used to begin the meal.

From time to time, as we ate, a bell would ring. This drew our attention away from our overflowing plates to an explanation of some of the symbolic foods of a Passover meal.

We learned that *karpas*, a green herb (we used parsley) was a reminder of the spring harvest. It was dipped

in salt water as a sign of the tears of slavery. *Matzoh* is the unleavened bread the Hebrews carried with them on their journey to freedom. *Charoseth* is a wonderful mixture of apples, cinnamon, raisins and nuts, representing the mortar the Israelites used in Pharaoh's building projects. *Maror*, a bitter herb (horseradish) tells us the Egyptians made the lives of the Hebrew people bitter through hard labour. A famous rabbi, Hillel, put bitter herb and charoseth between two pieces of matzoh, connecting the symbol of freedom with the signs of slavery. This is known as a Hillel sandwich.

As our meal ended, we headed for the church. On the way each of us paused to wash our hands and thought of Jesus washing the feet of his disciples, teaching them about servanthood. The Eucharist followed, using a rite from the Iona community. Our bread was matzoh, our wine came from the Elijah cup. The evening ended as the youth group helped strip the sanctuary to prepare for Good Friday.

Good food, good fellowship, good worship—along with a wonderful learning experience—all thanks to our Youth Group.





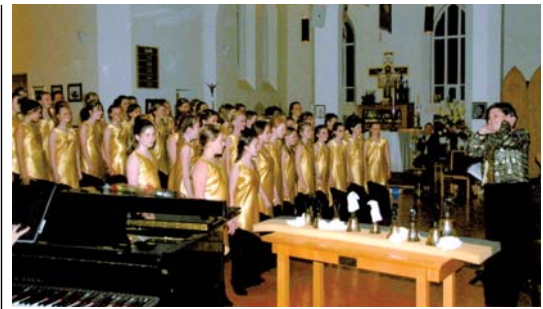
## Growing together in Christ

On Sunday May 11, 2008, in the midst of our Pentecost Celebrations, St. Paul's Shelburne welcomed eight new and returning families to the congregation. Each family was given a small plant as a sign of their growth in Christ and of St. Paul's desire to share with them on this part of the journey of faith. The welcoming rite include this acknowledgment of our past and future journeys of faith: "We

know that on the day of your baptism, you were received into the household of God; you were welcomed as a member of Christ's body which is the Church of God. St. Paul's may not have been the parish church in which you were baptized and we give thanks to God for those who walked with you at that time. By God's grace you have now been given the opportunity

to walk with you as you continue on this part of your journey of faith. We give thanks to God for your presence among us and for the opportunity to grow in faith together."

This was a tangible and real way to show God's grace is active in Shelburne and that despite our mass media's reports to the contrary, there are new people coming to church and making a commitment to faith.



## 80th Birthday Celebration

**JOHN AND JEAN WHEELER**  
ST. JAMES, DUNDAS

Eightieth Birthdays, so we have been told, only happen once in a lifetime. And since we were both born in the Spring of 1928, which is just this side of the first quarter of the last century... well, we thought it only appropriate to do something to mark the event. And since, it would seem, we have lived our lives within the relative calm of the eye of a hurricane, while all around us there is and has been conflict and suffering, we thought it only right that we should acknowledge, in some way, our extreme good fortune. Winston Churchill was an exponent of Esperanto, an artificial language invented in 1887 for universal use. But Jean and I believe that music is the transcendent language that reaches both the soul and the intellect. So music it must be. And there really was no dithering; the Hamilton Children's Choir was choice number one.

When one approaches the maturity of old age the Past has a way of crowding into the Present. And Change, in

all its forms can at times be uncomfortable but for one exception. And that exception resonates in the voices of the young. Too often the elderly are isolated in a chronic atmosphere devoid of youthful energy and laughter. As the British sitcom puts it, "Waiting for God". And the Past can become lonely and meaningless without juxtaposition with the Future.

Jean and I were born at a time of renewal when the Phoenix of Spring is reborn from the ashes of Yesterday. And if, as doubting Thomas's, our Spiritual needs require the reality of a physical world, then what better symbol of rebirth than the colour, sounds and life of Spring. And the Hamilton Children's Choir, for us, is its embodiment. But there is a cautionary note to be played and that is why we need to acknowledge the ongoing work of Amnesty International. Jean and I want to thank all those who were so generous in their contributions. And while we rejoice in the voices of youth may we be forever mindful of those so very much less fortunate.

## Mount Carmel Spiritual Centre

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Anne Mulvaney, Ed.D. July 27-31

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Fr. Jim Schexnayder August 15-17  
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• **SUMMER STILLNESS - A RETREAT FOR WOMEN**  
Kathryn McMorrow August 17-22

• **12-STEP SPIRITUALITY FROM A WOMAN'S PERSPECTIVE**  
Kathryn McMorrow August 22-24

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# The gift of new sight

St. John's in Burlington and Rockwood use pocket change to provide reading glasses to Central America

**NIGEL BUNCE**  
ST. JOHN'S BURLINGTON

It's amazing what pocket change can add up to! Last summer, St. John's Burlington ran a project to buy reading glasses for people in Central America with the proceeds of pocket change. Over six weeks, the "change jar" at the back of the church raised just over \$500. Thanks to efforts of a parishioner and the generosity of a local pharmacy that donated reading glasses at their cost, 500 pairs of reading glasses were sent to El Salvador. St. John's contacts for the project were Marion Willms of St. John's Rockwood and the Reverend Lucy Reid, formerly the Ecumenical Campus minister for the University of Guelph, who joined St. John's Burlington at Sunday service on November 18 to dedicate the glasses. Lucy explained how the rural people of these Central American countries live on only \$1 a day, so that even a couple of dollars for eyeglasses is beyond their reach. As coordinator of the El Salvador project, Marion arranged for the glasses to reach El Salvador, where they were provided to people in the mountainous part of El Salvador by nurse Carol Keith, R.N., C.E.B.T., C.Neph. (C). Carol's letter of thanks to the parish is reproduced below:

"I would like to take this opportunity to express my profound gratitude to the members of the Church for the gift of reading glasses donated for the El Salvador project. 500 pairs of reading glasses were carefully packed away and safely transported to the mountainous regions in El Salvador. With the help of a translator and using the eye chart designed for individuals who have difficulty reading, over 500 people were screened for short distance vision difficulties. The priority was to screen women because they need to see to be able to sew for their families and earn a few pennies. Senior citizens were screened because age and sun damage can cause vision problems.



Carol Keith screening the eyeglass recipients.

"As well, school children were done to enhance their abilities to continue to learn by seeing better. Men were last to be screened because most of their work does not require such visual acuity such as planting and harvesting. 468 pairs of reading glasses, and 97 pairs of sunglasses were dispensed in 8 clinics over the two weeks. The remaining glasses were left with Clinica Santa Maria to be dispensed later.

"Your donation of reading glasses was magical! People hugged us when they finally could see close work clearly. Some cried tears of joy. The most profound and stirring statement came from a woman who told us "I am reborn now that I can see!" One older man told us he could read his Bible again before he died. Words like that stir the soul and made us so excited and grateful for your gift.

"Your gift has changed the lives of 500 people and the people they come in contact with. You have enhanced the quality of their lives by giving them the gift of sight. In the song

'Amazing Grace' the words 'I was blind, but now I see' kept coming to mind as glasses after glasses were fitted. Not everyone who was tested could be helped because of other complex medical issues. They were given sunglasses to provide a degree of comfort and protection for their eyes.

"Your gift of 500 reading glasses was the most practical and valuable gift that could ever be given. Your church members should feel pride and joy knowing you have truly changed a small corner in our world and filled the hearts of strangers with gratitude and love.

"Thank You is such a small word that fails to truly express my deepest gratitude for your generous gift of reading glasses but please know it is said with deep emotion.

"I don't wish to be perceived as being bold, but I respectfully ask you to consider making a similar donation for future missions to El Salvador. Vision is truly a priceless gift measured in smiles and hugs."

Also the day of the church picnic, the youth will again take an active role in the service.

It is heart-warming to watch our youth take the word of the Lord and express it in their own way. However, when the congregation not only accepts it, but embraces it, the church becomes a whole. It is exciting and rewarding to have this alive at St. John's Church.

.....  
Brenda McConnell has been volunteering in youth ministry at St. John's Ancaster for approximately ten years. She is dedicated and has a heart for youth. It is a blessing to have her as part of our ministry team. Cathy Main also dedicates her Tuesday evenings to the senior youth. Working with both Brenda and Cathy has enriched my life as well as the lives of the youth.

# What are the Youth at St. John's Ancaster up to?

**BRENDA MCCONNELL**  
ST. JOHN'S ANCASTER

The youth at St. John's Anglican Church in Ancaster makes the future of the world look bright. They are enthusiastic, selfless and very spiritual.

The youth have served the community by baking for "Out of the Cold," as well as gathering hats, scarves, socks and mittens for the same benefit.

They have brightened the rooms, as well as the faces of patients at McMaster Children's Hospital by making Christmas trees out of coat hangers, garland and lights with them.

St. Matthews House was blessed when our youth raised money with a raffle so they could purchase gifts for some of their less fortunate peers.

The Ancaster Food Drive was a worthy cause for the youth to dedicate their time to.

The congregation was touched by

the Christmas Eve Barn Service, The Christmas Pageant, Holy Humour Sunday, and the Earth Day services that our youth made very special with their puppetry, skits, and intercessory prayers. A Eucharistic prayer was also created by our Priest David Pickett and the group jointly.

The Senior Youth Group participated in a Lenten Study based on the teachings of Jean Vanier. Belonging and social justice were the basis of this study. This has inspired the youth to encourage the church to use Fair Trade Coffee.

They walked the Labyrinth with deep meditation and respect for this faithful journey.

The junior youth and senior youth are looking forward to their upcoming retreat at Canterbury Hills with great enthusiasm and going "Off the Grid" to help reduce their carbon footprint.

# The new life



**MICHAEL BURSLEM**  
ST. GEORGE'S GUELPH

In my last essay I stated that I considered Muslims to be sheep who didn't know their shepherd, yet, but I considered them none the less our brothers and sisters in Christ. I think that some qualification is necessary. It so happened that Good Friday this year was the first Good Friday in my life that I did not go to some service of worship. We had friends coming to visit after supper, and we needed some gateaux (sticky cakes) to serve them. So we walked to the finest pastry shop in Maadi, called Sweet Corner, about two miles from home, in the fore noon sun, taking rest stops for a sip of water under the shade of trees, as the temperature was already in the mid 30's. Just before we arrived at the Sweet Corner we noted that the roadway had been covered with a green carpet, and traffic diverted, as men, no ladies, were assembling for noon day prayer. As the ladies were choosing the delicacies for the evening I sat in a sofa on the sidewalk (yes, there was a sofa on the sidewalk outside the shop) and listened to, not one sermon, but two, both together amplified through loudspeakers. There was no escaping the cacophony, like that of a couple of TV evangelists preaching simultaneously. Not understanding either message, I can only say that in the noise there was no sound of rejoicing. I felt very sad for them and for their listeners, for having no resurrection they had nothing to rejoice about.

## **Crucified and raised with Christ**

The Saturday Easter Eucharist at St. John's, Maadi, was such a marked contrast. In his sermon Paul-Gordon Chandler, the rector, said that Jesus' resurrection was God's way to get our attention; that we no longer needed to live our lives in fear, as we have the new resurrected life before we die, not after. He said at the close that when he opened the door in the last verse of the final hymn, *Thine be the glory, risen conquering Son...*, he wanted the whole world to know that Christ was alive. We didn't need amplifiers.

The Easter morning service at All Saints' Cathedral was similar. Bishop Mounreer Anis preached also on the resurrected life. It couldn't be attained by pilgrimages to the sepulcher in Jerusalem, nor by any religious ceremony; but only by seeking Jesus among those things above and setting our affections on them, not on earthly things, as Paul tells us in the Epistle to the Colossians. To those who really seek Him God reveals himself. However, he warned us that knowing him and the power of his resurrection brought with it also the fellowship of his sufferings. We have been crucified with Christ, but now are raised with him. We again concluded with *Thine be the glory...*

## **Being brothers and sisters to one another**

As he was preaching my mind went back to my professor of Comparative

Religion at King's College, Halifax, years ago, Dr. Frank Uhlir. He had taught at Charles University, Prague, and had been Minister of Education in the pre-war Czech government and vice-president in the wartime and post-war governments, before Czechoslovakia fell to the Communists in 1948, when he was imprisoned. He was freed miraculously and later came to Canada. He had suffered from the hands of both the Nazis and the Communists, and yet he loved them.

One Saturday afternoon we saw *Sound of Music*, and I couldn't help but notice that as the German troops marched into Vienna he was weeping. Afterwards he told us how it was when the Germans marched into Prague, and he felt betrayed by Mr. Chamberlain, and yet he had no animosity toward anyone. In his lectures he compared every religion, not with Christianity, but with Christ, his teaching, and especially his life, death and resurrection. Jesus, he claimed, had significantly changed the world. Even Christianity in all its forms fell far short of what he had taught and did. Dr. Uhlir to me demonstrated the resurrected life. *The New Life* was the title of the monthly paper he and his wife, Joan, published. At his death in September 1980 a few of us gathered at Temple Pastures in the Gatineau, their retreat centre and home, for a service of thanksgiving for one who had truly known the resurrected Jesus and experienced the fellowship of his sufferings, and had so powerfully impacted our lives.

The fellowship of Christ's suffering is what is missing in Islam, as it is in Christianity since Constantine. We are all so addicted to 'things,' here below, that suffering of any kind is anathema. Embracing the fellowship of his sufferings is an unpopular message to the world. It will be immediately rejected if people do not see our living out the resurrected life. Quarrelling with one another is the opposite of this. I think that as Christians we need to be more vulnerable; not ashamed to show our weaknesses. This necessitates our opening up to Muslims, and to others, to admit that we may be wrong about many things. Because Christ died for them, as he did for us, and we are as great sinners as they, I don't see anything wrong in considering them brothers and sisters in Christ; but first we need to be a brother, or sister, in Christ to those around us, who also need our love.

On Friday in Easter week, the Friday after Good Friday, I was in Canterbury, where I went to Evensong at the cathedral. One hundred years ago, my grandfather was precursor there, long before I ever knew him. However, his arm on my shoulder was almost palpable. The sermon was the heavenly music, and once again we concluded with *Thine be the glory...* I was never more proud to be an Anglican. However, I learned this time that God was his own Evangelist. He has already saved the world; and doesn't need our help. Instead, he has commissioned us to make disciples, not so much by word of mouth (our tongues so often seem to get us into trouble), but by our lives being witnesses to his resurrection through our bearing up under the fellowship of his suffering.

## EVENTS

### Mums for Sale

Holy Trinity, Fonthill  
By popular demand, we will again be offering Mums through a local grower. Order forms are available through the church. Pick-up your flowers in August. June 1, 2008

### Sounds of a Summer Night

St. Matthew on-the-Plains, Burlington  
Symphony Hamilton will be performing along with an exhibition from Marybeth Leis Drury's Contemplative Works of Art on display. Ticket prices increased by \$3.00 per person if purchased at the door so order in advance!  
Cost: \$25.00 General, \$12.00 Students/Seniors, \$5.00 Children  
June 1, 3:00 PM

### Chicken Barbecue

Church of the Nativity, Hamilton  
Church of the Nativity's 7th Annual Barbecue Chicken Dinner. Dinner includes barbecued chicken, salad, roll, dessert and beverage. No tickets at the door.

Please call the Church Office at 905-549-4335 to purchase your tickets.  
Cost: \$15.00 Adult, \$7.00 Children  
June 6, 6:00 PM

### Silent Movie Night

St. James, Dundas  
Join us for our annual silent movie night, as William O'Meara, Guest Organist provides music for Keaton's Seven Chances.  
June 6, 8:00 PM

### Ernie Hopping Memorial Golf Tournament

St. George, Guelph  
Join us for 18 holes at Victoria Park Golf Club West in Guelph. Beginners, intermediates, and experts are all welcome. Closest to the pin and longest drive contests. Roast beef dinner. To register, call the church office at 519-822-1366 or pick up a registration form in the cloister.  
Cost: \$100.00 Golf and Dinner, \$30.00 Dinner Only  
June 7, 1:00 PM

### Habitat for Humanity Build

St. Cuthbert's, Oakville  
As part of our 50th Anniversary Celebrations, St. Cuthbert's is participating in a Habitat for Humanity Build. Our way of giving back to the community, just as we celebrate our own!  
June 7, 9:00 AM

### 140th Anniversary Celebration

St. John's, St. Catharines  
To celebrate the laying of our cornerstone we'll be having a catered dinner with activities for children. Honoured guest Bishop Michael Bird will be attending.  
June 14, 5:00 pm

### Steak Barbecue

St. George's, Niagara-on-the-Lake  
Dinner includes steak which you season and cook on huge charcoal barbecue, baked potato, baked beans, dessert, and refreshments. Wine and beer will also be available.  
Cost: \$12.00 per person  
June 14, 6:00 PM

### Tail-Gate Flea Market

St. David's Parish, Welland  
Giant yard sale in the church parking lot. Bake goods and refreshments will be available.  
June 14, 8:00 AM-12:00 PM

### Garage, Plant and Bake Sale

St. John the Evangelist, Winona  
This is an opportunity for you to buy perennials that have been locally grown. We also have a garage sale and bake sale.  
June 14, 9:00 AM-1:00 PM

### 50th Celebration

St. Cuthbert's, Oakville  
Come celebrate with us as we give thanks for 50 years at our current location and as an independent parish. Bishop Michael Bird is our preacher and presider.  
June 15, 10:00 AM

### Anniversary Service

St. John's, St. Catharines  
To celebrate the 140th anniversary of

the laying of our cornerstone, we'll have a Victorian Tea, and Basket Auction.  
June 22, 10:00 AM

### Parish Picnic

St. Matthew on-the-Plains, Burlington  
Join us for our annual Parish Picnic at LaSalle Park in Burlington.  
June 22, 12:00 PM

### Special Lecture

St. Mark, Niagara-on-the-Lake  
Professor Barrie Wilson, York University and author of How Jesus Became Christian will be giving a lecture at St. Mark's Addison Hall.  
Cost: \$10.00 per person  
June 23, 7:00 PM

### Citizenship Court

St. Paul's, Fort Erie  
Citizenship court will be held here at St. Paul's, Fort Erie on June 27, 2008. New Canadians will be sworn.  
June 27

# Un-hitching our horses



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

*And the seasons, they go 'round and 'round, and the painted ponies, they go up and down; we're captive on the carousel of time...*

Joni Mitchell, "The Circle Game"

I can imagine Abram and Sarai humming along with Joni Mitchell on a humid summer afternoon in Haran. Suspended between seedtime and harvest, waiting on the cereal god and the sun god to determine the success of the harvest, traveling the circuit of



...some read scripture as if it were a pharmaceutical index and not an event of Word and Spirit calling us into God's freedom.

rest and labour, birth and death, from solstice to solstice. On one hand, a profound sense of inevitability, that things are what they are and nothing can change them. And on the other, a precarious sense that everything could change in a heartbeat, that the capriciousness of weather or pestilence could turn against the little community huddled together in the face of great power beyond their influence.

"You can't stop, you can only look behind from where you came, and go 'round and 'round and 'round in the circle game." And then, all of a sudden, out of the blue, comes news of another way. It turns out that you can get off the carousel and onto the journey, that the 'round and 'round and up and down captivity is not all there is.

All the same, there's something safe about the carousel, something tame and contained. It's not all bad that the horses don't set out on their own. And if the horses don't go anywhere, at least they don't go there safely. When Abram and Sarai detach their horses from the carousel, they are taking an enormous risk. Everything will not turn out all right.

In every generation of freedom there is peril. The banishing of Hagar and Ishmael sets them squarely in harm's way. Isaac is tied to the kindling and the knife is raised before God speaks new Truth with a new Voice. Jacob trembles with apprehension as he prepares to meet Esau, from who he once fled for his life. Joseph falls from favourite to slave to prisoner. In this world of human freedom, nothing is certain.

But there is something about this freedom, about becoming agents, picking up threads of time and space and circumstance, and choosing how to weave them. There is something about a future that is not just the whimsy of the gods, but an artifact of hope and freedom. And there's something, as the Spirit blows across the texts of Abraham and Sarah, of Isaac and Rebekah, of Jacob and Leah and Rachel, of Joseph and his brothers, something that speaks—or sings—against a tired sameness taking hold of our souls and our world.

Like Abraham and Sarah, we might be transformed. They begin as children of the inevitable, inheriting rhythms and patterns, cycles and seasons, as the deep basis for their lives. They become the parents of the impossible, servants of the God who makes things new, who equips us to participate in that transforming work.

Like Jacob we might wrestle through the night and limp away with a new name and a blessing. Like Joseph, we might find a way ahead in dreams, a way ahead for us and for the people in the midst of whom we dwell.

We might do all those things, but often don't. There are lots of reasons why we don't, just as there were lots of reasons to stay put in Haran—and most

sensible people found them. We are tired, or afraid, or uncertain; it's not so bad here, "better the devil you know..."

But the one reason that just won't stand up is that God wants us rooted in Haran. It may seem that way, looking at some churches with their near-fanatical obsession with "the way we've always done it." It may seem that way when disciples of Jesus reduce the fearful, hopeful, holy Way to "timeless truths". It may seem that way when some read scripture as if it were a pharmaceutical index and not an event of Word and Spirit calling us into God's freedom. But just because some churches, some disciples, some readers act as if God is incapable of a new thing, that doesn't make it so. Idols, on the other hand, don't do anything at all. There is no sun god, no cereal god, no rain god to whose favour we might profitably turn our attention. Midrash tells us that Terah, Abram's father, had a little idol business—"carving and sales"—in Haran, and that before he set out on God's adventure, Abram smashed the idols in his father's shop.

The Hebrew Scriptures this summer speak of pilgrimage, risk, and freedom. They call us away from our passivity in the face of idols, into activity for the sake of the world, into partnership with a God who is busy making all things new. These stories make no claim about safety; the destinations are often uncertain, departures and arrivals unpredictable. The Spirit breathes across them and delivers them, live and enlivening, into a church that has sometimes been more about safety than freedom. Like Abram and Sarai, we can sing along with Joni Mitchell, 'round and 'round, up and down in Haran. Or we can hear what the Spirit is saying to the church across the witness of our ancestors, through the stories they tell us of freedom, hope and risk.

What would it take for our churches to un-tether our horses from the carousel? What would it look like if we did? What would change around us? What would change among us? What would change within us?

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# Times Change



**MARNI NANCEKIVELL**  
PRIEST, DIRECTOR OF TRANSITIONAL MINISTRY

It is now three years since I left St. Aidan's, Oakville, a parish and a community that I served for twelve years. In the three years that have followed, I have served the Diocesan family as Director of Transitional Ministry. Also in that time, I have worked as Interim with five congregations, large and small, traditional and "cutting-edge".

Although working in a Diocesan role at the same time that I work several days per week with a congregation is enough to make me grateful for the multi-tasking skills that I have developed as a wife, mother, daughter and professional—it is helpful in other ways too. For me, being an Interim Pastor puts flesh on the learning that I have done as a member of the Interim Ministry Network. It keeps me in touch with the realities of life in a congregation when a permanent incumbent leaves, as the parish embarks on the (for some) daunting journey of "Interim time".

### It is an anxious time

If there is one common denominator that I have encountered in each of the Interim situations in which I have served, it is the initial anxiety of having to become accustomed to a new priest, who will be with that congregation for an indeterminate period of time. Frequently (although not always) still in the quicksand of grief that accompanies losing an incumbent to a move or retirement; the parish now finds itself in a situation which is usually not of their choosing. Now some congregations are more adept than others at dealing with Incumbents who move. In some parishes, the Rector "moving on" seems to happen every three years like clockwork. For other congregations where an Incumbent has been in place for 10, 15, 20 or more years, the Rector's departure may feel like an earthquake in the congregation's life.

One Sunday, Canon "X" is in place, leading worship. The next Sunday, a complete stranger is there. Inevitably this "stranger" leads worship a little differently than the departed cleric. The changes are usually subtle. Perhaps the Interim Pastor may stand at different places or for different times during parts of the liturgy. They may greet people either at the back of the church or perhaps in the Narthex, and

that may be a change to what has gone on before. Some of these changes may be accidental, and other changes may be intentional. But one thing I am sure of is that these small changes bring mounting anxiety.

### Change brings uncertainty, but that isn't necessarily a bad thing

One of the first things that Wardens frequently ask Interims is, "What do you want to change?" Now, once upon a time, long, long ago, people who were Interims who were more like "placeholders" in between Incumbencies. One rule of thumb was: "Don't make any changes" while you're there. The current rule of thumb is that some changes should happen during Interim time. But a wise and discerning Interim knows what changes to make, and what changes should not be made during transition time.

To make no changes whatsoever lulls a congregation into a false sense of security. People may begin to believe that which they wish: that "things will go on as they always have". In a fragile time, that is an understandable hope. But it is not a realistic expectation. One role of the Interim is to help a congregation in transition learn how to deal healthily with change. A wise Interim Pastor doesn't tweak this or change that simply at whim. A wise Interim helps the community realize what might need change; and why... and ushers the congregation through the process with love.

In some way, these changes help the congregation "practise" their skills at adaptation and growth, easing them out of what may have become a "comfortable pew". Let me give you an example of what I mean.

### The Interim Pastor has changed our Sunday bulletin!

Soon after I arrived in one parish, I recognized that in my opinion, the Sunday bulletin left much to be desired. There was a very spare outline of service, which changed week to week in little other than the hymn numbers. I felt that it was important to move into a more different form of bulletin that reflected more fully the congregation's vitality. So, after discussion with the Wardens and the Parish Council—and with a bit of warning to those in the pews, we made a change, not only in form, but in format. The tone changed, and began to reflect the realities of that warm and wonderful congregation. Certainly, not everyone was enamoured with the change.

A few of the sides persons didn't like the different pattern of folding, as we had moved to a "tri-fold" format.

Several times, in the next months, I checked in with people giving them lots of opportunity to voice what they were thinking or feeling to this change. Opinions (both pro and con) were honoured. People began to adapt to the change. After I left that parish, the new Incumbent made another change, to a "whole service" format where everything from the first hymn through the announcements were printed in one self contained unit. This form of bulletin is particularly user friendly for visitors, or those who are unfamiliar with that congregation's usual pattern of worship.

My changing the long-standing bulletin pattern paved the way for the new Incumbent to make changes upon their arrival. However, I would suggest to you that had the new Incumbent simply changed what had been a long standing tradition in that parish, that it would have been a far more traumatic thing. My work as Interim had helped them to "practise" adapting to change, and had equipped the community with tools to voice their opinions and concerns in healthy ways.

### New times mean new challenges

After years of an incumbency, predictable patterns emerge. Archdeacon "Y" or Canon "Z" may do things following a particular pattern. Indeed an entire parish may function in certain ways which reflect a specific world view. That world view is based on how the congregation sees itself, and how they understand the call to serve the community in which they are located. These patterns are likely rather cozy and familiar. And they make things feel rather safe. However if we are to honour God's call to be a Pilgrim People, it means not staying where we are. To be people of an active, living faith, we need to reflect on whether we are being faithful to *where* we are and *who* we are at this moment in time. A trained Interim Pastor should be able to accompany a community of people in this act of discernment. Yes, there will be changes, but rarely will those changes be changes "simply for the sake of change".

Some of the changes that Interim time brings to a parish is the experience of an opportunity to grow, both inside and out. Think of it as a time to stretch. This stretching gives a time to work the kinks out, to send fresh oxygen coursing through the system in preparation for greater fitness and health. Jesus frequently told his followers: "Do not be afraid". Have you ever noticed that usually he said that when something "big" was happening? In Interim time, therefore: "Do not be afraid", for God is indeed with you.

# Custodians of creation

**BILL MOUS**  
DEACON, ST. JAMES, DUNDAS

Just the other day shortly after submitting my thesis—the final requirement for my Honours Master of Divinity degree—I racked my brain to remember the words of a rhyme which I had recounted almost every June in my childhood. With the help of some people nearby, I was able to reconstruct these ritualistic and cathartic words: "No more pencils, no more books, no more teachers' dirty looks!" To this I would add lyrics from Alice Cooper's catchy tune: "School's out for summer, school's out forever!"

While I, along with countless other students from across our diocese, are perhaps a bit too excited to be finished school, everyone can surely appreciate the impending return of summer! Summer is a wonderful season of rest, relaxation, catching up with friends and family! It also offers us a wonderful opportunity to cultivate our relationship with creation.

### Holy in memory and experience

At St. James' Earth Hour Vigil we heard a passage from Chief Seattle, a Native American Chief who wrote to then President George Washington. The letter is profound to this day, speaking of creation not as an object to be used and manipulated for gain, but as a subject; one with whom all of humanity can relate:

"Every part of this Earth is sacred to my people. Every shining pine needle, every sandy shore, every mist in the dark woods, every clearing, and humming insect is holy in the memory and experience of my people. The sap which courses through the trees carries the memories of the red man. The perfumed flowers are our sisters. The deer, the horse, the great eagle, these are our brothers.

Our world rarely views creation as a subject but rather it is seen as an object solely created for humanity's manipulation. Yet our faith implores us to think differently about the world around us; to view creation as a subject.

### Loving creation

That said, our faith tradition has not always held a particularly positive view of our relationship with creation: early translations of Genesis spoke of having "dominion" over creation in order that we might "subdue it." We've moved beyond that interpretation to our current understanding of our relationship as one of stewardship. But this too can be problematic as it implies a business-like or managerial relationship. Thus it seems to me, that to fully appreciate our relationship with creation, we need to understand ourselves as custodians, in the best sense of the word. For the word custodian implies an element of care; one that looks out for the well being of the subject in their care.

What's more, if we view creation as a subject, then Jesus' commandment to love our neighbours as ourselves must be expanded to include creation. This naturally leads to the question: how might I love creation as I love myself? What an interesting question to ponder over the summer months!

A few summers ago I went on a silent eco-spirituality retreat where one of the exercises we were encouraged to try was called Newton's prayer. As it turns out, the prayer is related to Newton's third law, which as you may know holds that for every action, there is an equal yet opposite reaction. Thus, when one prays Newton's Third Law prayer, one focuses on how you are affected by creation around you, but also on how creation is affected by you. Have you ever stopped and pondered, for example, how the actions of our everyday lives—washing our cars in the driveway, leaving the air conditioning on at full blast all day or using fertilizers on our lawns—are affecting creation? Something else to ponder indeed!

### A primary revelation

The understanding that holds humanity as having such a relationship with creation is rooted in our belief that for many of us is at the core of our faith: that our faith is primarily about relationships; with God, with our community and with our world. When we speak of our own relationship with God, you will, as I often do, notice there are things in our lives that bring us closer to God, and things that push us away from God. This also applies to our relationships with each other. If we extend this idea a bit, I wonder what brings you closer to your relationship with creation? And what separates you? I know anytime I get out camping or hiking during the summer months always brings me closer to creation, and thus to God.

You see the great thing about investing in one's relationship with creation, is that it is also an investment in one's relationship with the Creator. Theologians call this primary revelation; that creation reveals to us God's presence in our world.

Perhaps this summer you might also consider cultivating your relationship with creation; stepping outside for a walk instead of staying indoors to watch a movie and pondering Newton's Third law prayer as you do. There are countless ways by which we might live our faith by being better custodians of the creation for which we are all called to care. And so, with summer upon us and empowered by the gift of the Spirit, may we truly absorb the notion of creation as a subject. And as we do, may we walk more gently, care more fully and act more justly in all our relations with the Earth and all creation!

# Atheists can be fundamentalist too

**JOHN BOTHWELL**  
RETIRED ARCHBISHOP OF NIAGARA

"Fundamentalist" is a term first used early in the 20th century to refer to those who believe in the inerrancy of the Bible. In recent times it has been applied also to Muslims with a similar attitude to the Koran, and more generally, to conservative believers of many faiths. But are there "atheist fundamentalists" too? Chris Hedges, the author of *American Fascists*, a critique of fundamentalism published a couple of years ago,

thinks that there are. For his new book, *I Don't Believe in Atheists* (Free Press, New York, \$28.99), has been inspired apparently, by the recent writing of Sam Harris (*The End of Faith*), Christopher Hitchens (*God is Not Great*) and Richard Dawkins (*The God Delusion*).

Hedges argues that both religious fundamentalists, in their certainty that they know and can carry out the will of god, and secular utopians in their own kind of absolute certainty, have forgotten that they have human limitations,

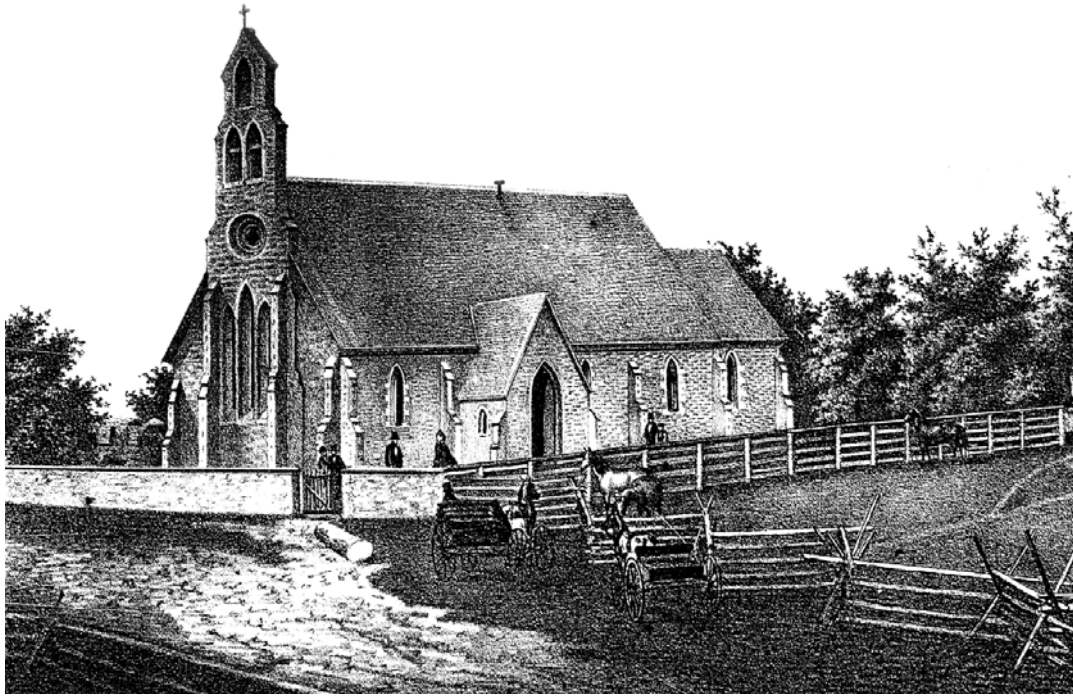
and that they both "peddle absolutes". The "human corruptibility and limitations, explained by both theologian Augustine and psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud, have been forgotten, he says, "and the battle under way now—is not between religion and science—but a battle of religious and secular fundamentalists, two groups intoxicated with the utopian and magical belief that humankind can master its destiny."

Hedges admits that "religion is a flawed and imperfect expression of the

infinite" but insists "the religious impulse addresses something just as concrete as does science or history, "the human need for the sacred" which "propels humans to create myths and stories to express who we are—and our place in the cosmos. The only danger is that we might imagine that the myths we tell about ourselves endow us with divine power."

He points out too, that the language of science and reason, inspired by the 17th Century Enlightenment is used by atheists to express their own sense of

humanity's ancient longings for human perfectibility. And this is positive, for atheists have often "championed human dignity and condemned tyranny". But it is also a curse in "its implication that the universe and human nature could be understood and controlled by the rational mind." Hedges exploration of this topic is thorough, fascinating and offered in an accessible manner, worthy of the attention of both sceptical and serious Christians. Why not include it in your summer reading?



## From the Diocesan Archives

**JOHN RATHBONE**  
DIOCESAN ARCHIVIST

Mohawk Road on Hamilton Mountain follows that old Mohawk Indian trail from Ancaster to Niagara Falls. Between Garth Street and Upper Paradise Road is St. Peter's Cemetery where once stood this fine stone Church building called St. Peter's, Barton (for the Township).

In the year 1811 a small frame church was erected at this site to be used by various denominations and designated the Union Church or Barton Free Church. At the time it was the only church building between Grimsby and Ancaster. During the war with the United States of America 1812-1814, it was used as a military hospital and a military chaplain

occasionally held services there.

Various clergy served in this place until 1836 when it became exclusively Anglican. Many people came up from the lower city to worship until the Reverend J. Gamble Geddes started services in the old log Court House on John Street before Christ's Church was built on James Street North in 1835.

In 1836 Bishop George Jehosaphat Mountain of Quebec consecrated the old Church as we were located in that Diocese then.

The architect of the new stone church was Frank Wills an Englishman from Exeter and Salisbury. He also designed Christ Church Cathedral in Montreal.

By the 1870s the population was diminishing around St. Peter's and

growing quickly to the north east nearer the brow of the mountain, so in 1877 Holy Trinity Church was built at Upper James and Fennell Avenue.

St. Peter's was closed in 1879, reopened in 1898 and permanently closed in 1908. A severe storm on Good Friday 1922 blew off the roof and no attempt was made to replace it. Soon the walls were removed. The stones were taken to St. John's Church, Ancaster where some were used to build an organ chamber on to that building of similar stone.

The area around this old Church is now residential and the cemetery is under the Hamilton Cemetery Board.

Visit this old cemetery sometime and read on the old tomb stones the

names of some of the early pioneers of this community.

When a new Church was proposed in the late 1950's for the rapidly growing west Hamilton Mountain at Garth and Mohawk Road West it was suggested to call it St. Peter's after the memory of this old original mountain church but there already was another St. Peter's Church downtown on Main Street.

Bishop Walter Bagnall (Irish tongue in cheek) suggested "St. Bagnall" as a name for this new church but could not find precedence for this name so he called it St. Bartholomew's which it became and was called until it was amalgamated with St. Timothy's and renamed the Church of the Resurrection.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1 »

## Dedication and change

I am troubled by people who love the BCP and hate the BAS, who oppose female ordination and who also oppose the inclusion of all people in unconditional love and ministry within the Church. These are God sent opportunities given to us to shine and show the way.

### Change is everywhere

Our society changes and the Church must change and must grow with it. I am most willing to admit this is yet another challenge for all of us in finding the right ways to grow and change and still maintain the Church of God as a relevant and living entity. But it is not all loss for we have done some of these things and probably changed much more than we might have imagined. But we must continue to change and to grow. It is absolutely impossible to lock the Church into particular time period. (Whenever that might be!) To hang on, we stand to lose the Church

along with all that makes it alive and relevant to the world.

In my life, I dutifully put the Church first and followed up the rest of life as best I could. I certainly have a strong feeling my wife qualifies for sainthood for my particular dedication. Now, I get a strong sense, in retirement, that I now have more leisure in my life, and can attend to the material needs of my home and my family. I know now that in times past some things were left and others done quickly, but not always efficiently. Now I take time and deal with things in a more detailed way and I must admit it is a good feeling for me. At the same time, not being as able as I once was, it is much more difficult to fill roles and attend meetings, and I know it is time to let some of these things go. I just need to give up the guilt.

### New ministries - New witness

In similar ways, I find my attention is being attracted to things and activities

that seem mostly beyond the realm of Church. I find there are many of these initiatives, often begun by people whom the Church perhaps has failed to recognize. Caught up in the life of the Church, as it was for me, I too have missed observing them and indeed I am now celebrating them. I recently discovered a group of men working for the disadvantaged and immigrant people; a couple who own a building in the diocese that provides homes for immigrants and is planning another such building in Hamilton. A woman heads a group of people who provide clean used wedding dresses for brides in poverty stricken Haiti, while another woman works at specific times in the year among the youth in Columbia.

### Getting back to family

I rather suspect that most of these folk are not Anglicans! But, these few activities are really at the heart of where the whole Church's action

should be. This is the spirit of the Church to which I want to belong. The work of our Anglican Cathedral in providing Jamesville Day Care, as well as breakfast for Roman Catholic children at St Mary's Elementary School, and assisting in the development of programs for the Jamesville Community Centre, at the school, is a wonderful start. I am not interested in tearing the Church apart over mere differences of opinion, but rather in building a strong international family, who like any family do not always agree completely with one another, but continue to strive for the common good.

It is my earnest hope that we all become committed to bringing new people into the Anglican Church and to a new way in the future that is renewed and dedicated to a faith in God, the genuine honesty of truth, of loving service and of keen witness.

I live in these hopes and dare to dream.

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**Editor:** Christopher Grabiec

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

**Advertising:** Colin Jacobs

Phone: 905-526-0154

**Publishers Advisory Board**

Pam Claridge  
Phone: 519-941-6804

Geoffrey Purdell-Lewis  
Phone: 905-628-4176

Charles Stirling  
Phone: 905-383-1088

Carol Summers  
Phone: 905-772-5641

**Staff**

Design/layout: Kayn Leduc  
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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:** Michael A. Bird

Phone: 905-527-1316

**Administrative Assistant:** Alison D'Atri

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

**Executive Officer:** Michael Patterson

Phone: 905-527-1316

**Program Department**

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

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

**Contact the Diocese**

Cathedral Place  
252 James St. North  
Hamilton, ON L8R 2L3  
Phone: 905-527-1316  
Website: www.niagara.anglican.ca



# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## This has been a confusing and difficult time

My wife, Valerie and I have been members of St. Georges, Lowville and it's daughter church in Carlisle for about 15 years and currently worship at St. Georges, Lowville (Diocese of Niagara)—which unfortunately has been exited from the church building and is currently meeting at Lowville United Church.

Up until 2006 we had been very happy with the fellowship, worship and teaching at St. Georges. And, with our strong evangelical background, shared many of their concerns.

But, things began to change. There was a destructive element that disturbed us. When I raised questions, particularly about staying and working within the Anglican Church of Canada (and the Diocese of Niagara), I was clearly told that my questions were not welcome and neither was I. When I went on to ask questions in regard to the financial management of the church, the pressure to leave became overwhelming. It is very difficult to worship in an environment where you are not welcome. Therefore, we left and waited for the Network group to leave St. Georges, as they kept saying they would.

In the meantime, I have found myself supporting a theologically

diverse diocese and becoming friends with the diocese and its leadership. The leadership of the Diocese have told me very clearly that orthodox, conservative Anglicans (yes, even evangelicals) are welcome in the Diocese and are needed to hold the church to a high standard of Scripture.

This has been a confusing and difficult time for me. One of my friends in the diocese laughingly asked me what it felt like to be branded a "liberal" (which is how the Network describes anyone and everyone associated with the Diocese of Niagara). I couldn't answer, other than to say "that's a very good question".

The Network, has since made their move and "sort of" left the Diocese of Niagara. Meaning they no longer consider themselves part of the Diocese or the Anglican Church of Canada but instead of leaving they have insisted on keeping the building that has belonged to the Diocese for 150 years. They stopped paying their missionaries and instead poured funds into the fighting the Diocese for the building. Members of the Network have made it clear that they have a great deal of money and that they will bankrupt the Diocese before this process is finished.

Several members of our congregation filed depositions with the court in support of the Diocese. The Network, through its lawyer, choose to challenge the elderly and vulnerable parishioners who filled affidavits, including two

elderly (86 and 90 years old) members of the congregation while not challenging my deposition. It appeared that the lawyer's role was to make these elderly people feel and look stupid for wanting to stay in the Anglican Church of Canada. These wonderful people have been members of the St. George's for longer than the Reverend Charlie Masters has been alive. The way these people were treated is not an exaggeration. I sat with them for hours before and after the lawyers interrogated them. They were extremely upset by the whole experience.

I have found all of this sad and disturbing and it raises a very difficult question for me—Who am I? I am not liberal but neither can I associate with the Network because, at St. George's in my opinion, their action have been destructive, unbiblical and un-Christ-like.

I know that in spite of the Network's attempt to divide the church, I am still a part of the body of Christ in St. Georges Anglican Church, Diocese of Niagara.

We are small congregation of about 45. Initially we met in an abandoned school house in Lowville Park. We have since moved to the United Church in Lowville, where we gather each week to praise God. It is our prayer that this is only a temporary solution until the court orders that we can return to our building. Our congregation shares wonderful fellowship,

worship and teaching. The Reverend Susan Wells, our priest-in-charge, has helped shepherd us through this difficult time and I am grateful to her.

All are welcome as we worship together as Anglican Christ-followers.  
BRUCE STAM

St. George's, Lowville

## A correction and update

The article *Bridge Building with Our Muslim Neighbours* went to press in the last issue with some major errors, which I should correct.

I wrote that the Copts welcomed the Arab invaders of Egypt, but Jos Strengtholt suggests that they were more indifferent to whoever ruled them. The rule of the Byzantines after the Council of Chalcedon, 451, wasn't at all favorable to the native Christians of Egypt, and in that sense they were liberated by the Arabs. He also says that the Byzantine army was so weakened by warring with Persia that they were defeated by the Bedouin raiders, who certainly did use the sword, but it was not primarily to impose Islam, but just to raid and pilfer. The Islamization of Egypt began about 100 years later.

Secondly, Henrik Hansen, whom I said was a student in theology, is actually a Danish pastor and he's starting a PhD program on dialogue this summer. His youth made me think he was

still a student. In a way he still is, as we all should be.

Thirdly, Kees Hulsman, after reading a draft of the article, asked that his wife, Saw-san, be recognized, since she plays such an important role in Arab-West Report.

As an addendum to our stay in Egypt, I would like to say that for the first time in 40 years some people there are not getting sufficient food, and there were fights breaking out in the long line-ups for the subsidized bread. Unfortunately, there wasn't enough for all who needed it. The Egyptian government has ordered the army to provide sufficient bread, but that's only a stop-gap measure. Living in Maadi we saw nothing of this, but only read about it in *Al Ahram Weekly*, and heard from BBC and *Al Jazeera*. We're learning more about the world wide increase in food prices in the news now. It's very serious in Egypt, as some have been killed in the skirmishes. I felt like Marie Antoinette eating gateaux on Good Friday, quite apart from the fact that if I were a Copt I would be fasting. For those of us who can only pray about this, let us use the versicle and response of the American Prayer Book: "Let not the needy, O Lord, be forgotten; Nor the hope of the poor be taken away."

MICHAEL BURSLEM

St. John the Baptist, Maadi

# In what do we have faith?



SUSAN C. HUXFORD-WESTALL  
ALL SAINTS, HAMILTON

On Thursday, 27 March, at the Munk Centre, University of Toronto, in a forum on *Is Faith Inevitable?*, Steve Paikin of TVO asked the questions: *Are we bound to believe?* and *Are we better for it?* The whole topic of faith



We have a faculty for the spiritual, the sense that there must be some reason for our existence

is apparently considered so important by the European Union that they have initiated a three-year project on the topic of "Faith". TVOntario has planned a five episode programme involving faith topics of which this latest is the third.

This present programme asked a number of questions as a result of those already indicated: *Is Faith good for us? Is it inborn? Is it a neurosis?* It suggested that, as we get older we depend more on religious faith. This made me wonder if our interest in "Faith" becomes more pressing the nearer we get to the end of our days in this world. If so, does this mean that "faith" is an escape from the reality of death, or may we conclude that, after

retirement, we have more time to ponder upon life?

One of the panelists did raise the question "What do we mean by 'Faith'?", but the question was never really answered. It was pointed out that we go to bed at night with faith that we will wake up next morning. I observe that the Nazis and Communists both had faith—they had faith in the belief that their system was the right one. Americans and others believe that Capitalism is the better system. They have faith in the system.

This led to the distinction between belief and conviction. The Concise Oxford tells me that to convince is to persuade firmly, to produce a moral conviction of something in a person. Unfortunately, it also has theological overtones of being proved guilty, particularly of sin. Is it healthy to be convinced that "I am a sinner?" To what extent does our belief in a religious doctrine become a conviction that our faith is the right one and that anyone who doubts is a sinner, with dire consequences?

The thought was expressed that people have to believe because they cannot explain everything. We have to try to explain what is invisible, what is behind the things we cannot understand. It was suggested that we are hard-wired for faith, but does this mean that we are hard-wired for religion? What is the difference? The thought was expressed that faith is a personal thing, whereas religion is a system, a tradition, even a superstition. It can also be a means by which we govern our behaviour—or, at least, draw up a system by which we hope to govern it.

I enjoyed the panel, as I do with most of the Agenda discussions, but I was disappointed in the outcome. No distinction was made between faith and religious faith, with the result that I finished up asking myself the question: *where do we go from here?*

I believe that one of our great problems today is that we use the term *faith* too narrowly. If you ask anyone "Do you have faith?" we seem to automatically think in terms of belief in God. My dictionary tells me that faith is "reliance, trust, in; belief founded on authority"—in other words we have faith in our parents (or we *should* have), We have faith that our car will start in the morning (our experience tells us we can trust it unless we have an old creak), and so on. We *trust* these things to happen. A theological definition of faith includes "spiritual apprehension of divine truth *apart from proof*" (italics mine). Strangely enough, there is no proof that my car will start when I turn on the ignition, but I certainly expect it to. Do I expect God to keep me healthy and give me a long life? Such things are not in my hands, but neither is my car, unless I am my own mechanic. I am not my own creator.

When we come to religious faith the apparent lack of proof is the bone of contention. The TVO panel brought out the problems in believing in a god or gods—there is no proof. Or is there? Why do so many of us have an apprehension of a divine truth? *"There's a divinity that shapes our ends, rough hew them how we will"* said Shakespeare (Hamlet: Act V, Sc. II).

One of our hymns reminds us that "God moves in a mysterious way His wonders to perform". I was browsing among my books looking for "Letters to Young Churches" by J. B. Phillips, when I discovered "New Testament Christianity", a book by the same author, published over fifty years ago, that I appear not to have read before. I opened it and found a whole section on *The Faith-faculty*.

The panel had been asked "what is faith?" The dictionary had sent me back to belief, trust and reliance and it seemed to me obvious that we commonly use the word in a more religious sense, whether we realise it or not. J. B. Phillips wrote in a way it is a pity that we have to use the word "Faith" to describe the faculty by which the unseen dimension is grasped, drawn upon, and lived by. For someone writing fifty years ago he uses a very modern concept: *dimension*. I rejoiced.

Years ago, when he was rector at All Saints, Archdeacon John Rathbone invited us, during a sermon, to read Stephen Hawking's "A Brief History of Time". It's tough going, but well worthwhile for anyone with some knowledge of physics and mathematics. I came away with a reinforced concept of dimensions—of the states of which our senses make us aware, such as time, distance, space, colour, etc.

We all have an innate faculty of imagination which takes us into another dimension, intangible, but nevertheless real. We also have a faculty for the spiritual, the sense that there must be some reason for our

existence, the sense that Shakespeare called a *divinity that shapes our ends*, a sense of the spiritual. We can deny it, or we can cultivate it. J. B. Phillips called it the *Faith faculty*, but added that our faith has degenerated into a *rather dogged holding on to something which we believe to be true*. We need to cultivate the Faith Faculty.

St. Paul told the people of Athens that our God is "the God in whom we live and move and have our being". To understand that fully requires a concept of the Spiritual Dimension, a faculty that we have, but that we all too often have failed to cultivate. It requires meditation, the quiet moments; we need time to ponder upon life. I suggest that it is inborn, that we are "hard-wired" for it, but it can be atrophied very early on if there are no signs of its existence in the environment. We have been prone to keep our spiritual experiences to ourselves with the result that others are denied the environment in which their own spirituality may be developed. During two thousand years we have been indoctrinated with something that we are told to believe to be true and many of us have doggedly held on to it. We have not permitted our faith faculty to embrace it and to develop our individual spirituality. Youth today is developing its own spirituality, but traditional religious institutions are, in general, failing to offer encouragement.

Did your faith stop at your mother's knees or in the presence of a favourite Sunday School teacher, or are you letting it grow as you spend a few minutes in meditation?

## PEOPLE IN THE NEWS

### Appointments

- Bishop Ralph Spence has been appointed interim pastor at St. Peter's Lutheran Church, Kitchener, effective May 5.
- The Reverend Gordon Walls, Diocese of Toronto, has accepted the appointment as Rector of Grace Church, Arthur and St. Paul's, Mount Forest, beginning August 5.
- William (Bill) Mous has accepted the appointment as Assistant Curate at St. James', Dundas
- Sheila Van Zandwyk has accepted the appointment as Assistant Curate at St. Simon's, Oakville.
- Matthew Griffin has accepted the appointment as Assistant Curate at Christ's Church Cathedral.
- The Reverend Nancy Riewe has been appointed Assistant Priest at St. George's Church, Georgetown, part time, effective May 1, and will continue as Priest in Charge at St. Paul's Church, Norval, on a part time basis after ordination on May 11.

- Sheila Plant appointed Deacon at St. Luke's Church, Burlington.
- Ronald Vince appointed Deacon at Christ Church, Flamborough.
- Irene Walback appointed Deacon at All Saints Church, Erin.
- The Reverend St. Clair Cleveland issued a Bishop's Permission as Deacon in the parish of Holy Trinity, Hamilton, effective April 1.
- Canon David Long will continue as Director of Human Resources until June 30.
- The Reverend Elizabeth Steeves appointed Honorary Assistant at Church of the Resurrection, Hamilton, effective March 1.
- The Reverend Ann Turner, Deacon, has transferred her residency to the Diocese of New Westminster, effective March 1.
- Permission to administer the chalice: Stephen Hanns and Charlene Kereluk, St. David's Church, Welland, effective April 14.
- Lay Reader licenses issued to: Nicky Forsyth, Dianne Boyko and Joan

Urquhart at St. Paul's Church, Dunnville, and the Dunn Parish, effective March 1.

### Announcements

- Deepest sympathy to Dr. Brian Rutan and family on the death of Brian's mother, Monica, on March 18.
- Our deepest sympathy to the Reverend Jean Ruttan Yates, Deacon at St. Andrew's Church, Grimsby, on the death of her husband, Bill, on March 24.
- Congratulations to Fred and Helen Edwards, faithful members of St. Stephen on the Mount, Hamilton, who celebrated their 60th Wedding Anniversary on March 27.
- Congratulations to the Reverend Brian Burrows and Mrs. Rita Burrows, of Niagara on the Lake, on their 50th Wedding Anniversary on April 5.
- Happy 100th Birthday on May 1 to Dorothy Grosart, faithful member of St. Mark's Church, Orangeville.
- Congratulations to Sheila and Bill Jones, faithful members of the Ridge

- Parish, who celebrated their 50th Wedding Anniversary on May 2.
- Congratulations to Bishop Ralph Spence who celebrated his 40th Anniversary of Ordination on May 5.
- Congratulations to Canon Wendy Roy, Director of St. Matthew's House, who celebrated her 25th Anniversary of Ordination on May 10.
- Happy 80th Birthday to Helen Olgivie on May 12, faithful member of the Ridge Parish.
- Congratulations to the Reverend Pauline Head and her husband, Rick Petersen, who celebrated their 25th Wedding Anniversary on May 13. A special parish celebration is planned for May 25.
- Congratulations to Archdeacon Peter Moore, Retired Executive Officer, who celebrated his 50th Anniversary of Ordination on May 15.
- Congratulations to Archdeacon John Rathbone, Diocesan Archivist, who celebrated his 50th Anniversary of Ordination on May 18.
- Congratulations to Canon David

- Long who celebrated his 40th Anniversary of Ordination on May 26.
- Congratulations to the Reverend Jim Styles and Mrs. Rosemary Styles who celebrate their 50th Wedding Anniversary on May 31—and to the Reverend Styles who celebrated his 50th Anniversary of Ordination on April 25.
- Congratulations to Archdeacon Earl Clark who will celebrate his 65th Anniversary of Ordination on June 24.
- Congratulations to Archdeacon Michael Patterson, Canon Elaine Hooker, Canon Richard Jones and Canon Charles Stirling who celebrate their 20th Anniversary of Ordination on June 5.
- Congratulations to the Reverend William Steinman and Mrs. Lorraine Steinman on their 50th Wedding Anniversary on June 28.
- Congratulations to the Reverend Mark Gladding, Rector of St. Paul's Church, Fort Erie, and his fiancée, Jennifer Andrew, who will be married on August 3. Best wishes to you both.

# St. George's Lowville is still alive in the diocese

KAY MIGHTON  
ST. GEORGE'S ANGLICAN CHURCH, LOWVILLE

Are you wondering what has happened to the group of us from St. George's who chose to remain with the Diocese of Niagara?

For the past few years, my husband Jim and I have been in a soul-searching mode. It has been troubling for us to witness our parish being led down a path heading away from the Diocese of Niagara and the Anglican Church of Canada. Finally, at the Special Vestry February 17 our God-guided conscience led us to vote against joining the "Network". Others (about 40) felt as we did and are happy to continue to be a church in the Diocese of Niagara and remain loyal.

Once the Vestry decision was known, Bishop Michael Bird acted quickly and provided us with pastoral care from Reverend Susan Wells as our priest-in-charge. On Sunday, February 24th, along with like-minded parishioners we participated in a wonderful, spirit-filled service at St. George's at 9:00 AM prior to the 10:30 "Network" service. Bishop Michael Bird was our guest preacher and celebrant.

Several parishioners who had left our church in the past two or three years along with other Anglicans from around the Diocese joined us on that occasion. Their support was certainly welcome. Only a couple of "Network" folk attended.

Then, much to the upset of everyone there was a court hearing because St. George's (Network) would not share the church building again with the Diocese and our group.

At the time of writing, we are still waiting for the Supreme Court Justice to rule on how the building will be used

until it is decided who owns the property. We believe that eventually the Diocese will be found to be the trustee of the property. In the mean time we wait.

One of the Network leaders has been quoted as saying that if we (he calls us the dissidents) were present in St. George's for our own separate service it would cause irreparable harm. Imagine! That really hurt! Collectively, over the years, (for some as many as 80 years), we have been involved in worship and fellowship and in the stewardship of the church, its fixings, its 1990 addition, its parking lot, its grounds and the cemetery. How could we who have worshipped (and worked) in the Church for so many years be accused of causing irreparable harm? We are good Christian people whose only desire is to worship the risen Lord and remain loyal to our Bishop within the Diocese of Niagara.

Without missing a beat Reverend Wells was able to rent the Old Schoolhouse in Lowville Park for our worship services. What a charming, pleasant location even though it lacked a few conveniences (like running water, washrooms and accessible parking). Two of our members remember being in Grade 1 at the school. One Sunday service was cancelled because a snowstorm made it impossible to get in to the property. Otherwise our times there were wholesome and holy surrounded by the presence of the Holy Spirit.

Then a gift from God came our way when Lowville United Church offered to share their facilities with us. What a blessing! Our first service there was on Easter Sunday and it was like a new beginning as we rejoiced in the risen Lord. We will continue to gather there to praise God until such time as the court rules.

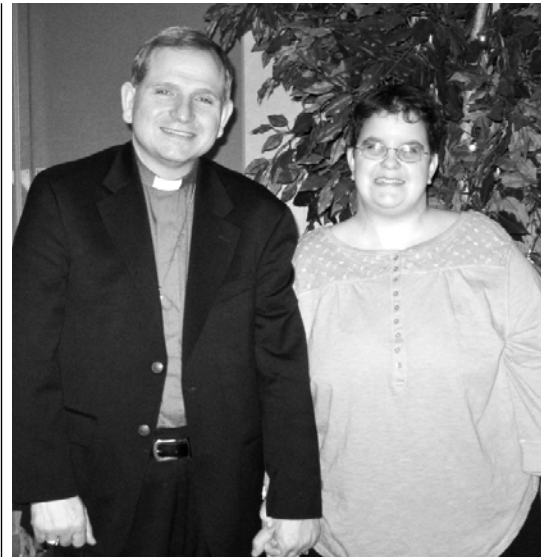
On Sunday mornings most of us arrive shortly after 11, help the Lowville United Church tidy up following their fellowship time and set up our own coffee time goodies. The building is ours by 11:30 and we head into the church for our traditional Anglican worship service with many of us taking turns to participate in the leadership of the liturgy. Rev. Wells provides printed service booklets for us each week complete with hymns and bible readings following the Anglican lectionary.

When a former St. George's parishioner, Kate Ward, was not committed to duties at another church she has played the organ and led our singing. She has been wonderful and we are grateful. Then there was a surprise on April 13; Rosemary Jackson, a retired organist from Lowville United decided to be our full time organist. She is another gift from God! Already we have an amazing music ministry and some of our members have outstanding voices.

God is good and St. George's, Lowville, in the Diocese of Niagara in the Anglican Church of Canada is flourishing. The love of the Lord surrounds us and it is thrilling to report that about every other week or so one or two newcomers join our body of Christian believers.

And now, for me, as the hymn writer says, "All is well, all is well with my soul."

.....  
Editor's Note: Since Kay wrote this insightful article, The Ontario Superior Court has found that St. George's along with Good Shepherd and St. Hilda's must now share administration with both departing congregants and the members loyal to the Diocese of Niagara. More details are found on our website, [www.niagara.anglican.ca](http://www.niagara.anglican.ca).



Beth Blalock with Bishop Michael at the Cursillo Anniversary

## Niagara Cursillo Silver Anniversary Celebration

CAROL SUMMERS  
ST. JOHN'S, YORK

It was a beautiful day on Sunday April 20 and inside the Renaissance Banquet Hall, Hamilton, the atmosphere was equally warm when members of Niagara Cursillo greeted each other as they gathered to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Cursillo movement in Niagara.

Cursillo draws together people from across the diocese whose paths would otherwise never cross so at the beginning of every event there is always a pleasant time of discovering old friends and catching up on news and this gathering was no exception.

Bishop Michael Bird was the celebrant at the Eucharist. In his homily Bishop Michael encouraged us, assured us all of his support and talked of the joys of coming home, particularly now that his role as Diocesan Bishop takes him away so much.

After the service we enjoyed hors d'oeuvres, more socializing and then we sat down to a delicious dinner.

Singing is always an important part of Cursillo. There were plenty of favorites to sing throughout the evening which was also a way of ending the evening on a pleasant note.

We look forward to the next 25 years of Cursillo in Niagara.

ADVERTISE IN THE NIAGARA ANGLICAN Contact Colin Jacobs



Meet the staff »



Meet the staff at Cathedral Place (includes both Cathedral and Diocesan Resource Centre Staff). Please note our summer office hours begin on July 7th until after the Labour Day Weekend. They are Monday to Thursday 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM. The office will be closed on Fridays during the summer.

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# Oprah's church doesn't quite help me

## New Age Teaching

Oprah's Monday evening webcasts this year have brought together silent meditation, new-age teaching, and an evangelistic tone of urgency. They've attracted a live audience of anywhere from half a million to two million registered viewers, depending on whom you believe. Many more have watched the webcasts afterwards, since they're archived. Winfrey says that these programs are "the most exciting thing I've ever done."

Winfrey was raised a Baptist, but in her late twenties rebelled against rigid belief systems, scriptural imagery, and Christian claims of exclusivism. Then she discovered an obscure Vancouver-based spiritual teacher named Eckhart Tolle (pronounced TOE-lee). He has been her guest on her Monday evening webcasts.

I went looking for his latest book, "A New Earth." I didn't realize that Costco had truckloads of them for \$8.95 each, so I got one at Chapters for about \$16.

## Religion is hot

True, I got bilked, but my bookstore outing really opened my eyes. I had no idea how many zillions of books are being written about religion! At Chapters you can walk from the "What's Hot" table to the "Staff Picks" table to the "Best-sellers" table to the religion table, and everywhere you'll see stacks of books selling various forms of theism, arguing various forms of

atheism, promoting various forms of spiritual self-help, profiling world religions, explaining the Bible, or panning fundamentalism.

When I was a student in the 1960s, I thought that religion's shelf-life was already stale-dated. I never imagined that in 2008 religion would be one of the hottest topics around. If our Anglican churches aren't packed every Sunday morning, it's not because no one cares about religion.

## Eckhart Tolle

Let me tell you something about Tolle, whose "A New Earth" has been #1 on the Publishers Weekly list of best selling trade books for several weeks. He was born Ulrich Tolle in 1948 in Germany, had a miserable childhood, dropped out of school, moved to Spain, and then in his twenties made an unsuccessful attempt at doctoral studies in England. He was depressed and suicidal when he had an amazing spiritual awakening.

He doesn't divulge what happened in the next fifteen or twenty years, but we know that he changed his name to "Eckhart" after a famous German medieval mystic. In 1997 he wrote a spiritual self-help book called "The Power of Now," which over the next three years managed to sell only a few hundred copies. Then the actress Meg Ryan read it and recommended it to Oprah. Once Oprah endorsed it, millions of people bought it. "A New Earth" followed in 2005, and it, too,

made extremely little impact until 2007 when Oprah promoted it.

Tolle has one home near the University of British Columbia and another on Saltspring Island, where he lives with his Kim Eng, his girlfriend, business partner, and interpreter.

## Zen tendencies

His philosophy closely resembles Zen Buddhism, and many of his illustrations comes from the life of the Buddha and the stories of the Buddhist sages and the Zen masters. There is no personal God. The ego is an illusion. Living with a physical body is a problem. Truth is found within. Material goods, sex, fame, popularity, and networking can never make us happy. Pride, longing, self-pity, resenting the hurts of the past, and spinning out hopes and plans for the future are destructive. Happiness is making our peace with "the Now," even if the Now is full of personal suffering. We find our true nature in our inner energy in peace and harmony with Being.

These observations are joined with an apocalyptic tone of urgency. Tolle thinks that accepting his teaching is the only way of "responding to a radical crisis that threatens our very survival".

I've found no reviews of the book in the quality press, let alone academic journals. A recent short note in "The Times" of London describes it as "twaddle." A review in the "National Catholic Reporter," on the other hand,

is surprisingly gentle with it, and acknowledges that it's well written.

## Some agreements

It's hard not to agree with Tolle's critique of our North American consumer culture. And he's right to want us to stop always looking out for Numero Uno. And who will deny that our cupid-ity is destroying the planet? And I got quite a chuckle out of a section where he warns readers that when someone declares "war" on something—a war on drugs, a war on terror—they had better watch out, because things are about to go very wrong.

He tries to sound multi-faith by quoting Jesus. He thinks that Jesus was a great teacher, like the Buddha; he's only sorry that the Church misunderstood him so badly. But who's misinterpreting whom? Tolle's purpose is to make Jesus sound like a Buddhist. When Jesus said "kingdom of heaven," Tolle says, he meant spiritual transformation. When he commended being "poor in spirit," he meant getting rid of ego. And by "deny thyself" he meant "negate the illusion of self."

There are lots of things in Tolle that a Christian can't buy. I'll mention just three.

First, the really unpleasant move in Tolle's book is trying to make out that Jesus' great achievement was breaking free of Judaism. Just to remind you, that was also the apologetic of the Nazi theologians. Not in so many words, but in effect, Tolle pictures Jesus as

repudiating as worthless the Jewish faith that God created us and loves us; that (hear O Israel!) the Lord our God, the Lord is one; that we should love the Lord our God, and our neighbour as ourselves; that our God has wisdom and creative purpose; that the Lord works through history; that God gave Israel its homeland; and that the Lord demands our exclusive obedience.

Second, for all that Tolle talks about dissolving ego, he's really an ultra-individualist. He has no place for community in his philosophy, and prefers the life of a hermit. His message to the oppressed, the marginalized, the hungry, and the sick is: "take responsibility for your inner state". Our multimillionaire Sage of Saltspring Island has no apparent use for social responsibility, justice, charity, or grace.

Third, Tolle's religion is entirely non-incarnational. For Tolle, God doesn't take our flesh, doesn't enter our history, doesn't bless human friendship and food and marriage, doesn't join us in suffering and death, and doesn't ask us to remember the past or to hope in a future. In fact, for Tolle, there's no personal God there at all.

I agree with Tolle that we all need to connect authentically with ourselves. But unlike Tolle, I find that connecting with myself requires me to connect with others, and with the God who creates us, redeems us, and leads us into wholeness. So I think I'll keep going to Anglican worship services.



Alex Urquhart seen here with Brian Munro, President of Grand Valley Branch, Walter Raybould, Past President of the Niagara Branch and Dr. Diana Verseghy, President of the Toronto Branch.

## Youth overwhelms Prayer Book Society

A new board of directors swept into office in the Greater Niagara Branch of the Prayer Book Society of Canada in April. Headed by the new President Alex Urquhart O.N. of Saint Paul's Dunnville the slate consists entirely of young men from the ages of sixteen to twenty nine representing churches from all over the Diocese of Niagara. Mr. Urquhart who is the youngest Order of Niagara recipient, the head

server at St Paul's and a St Michael's Youth Conference of Ontario member will be also representing the Society at Lambeth 2008 in July.

When asked to comment on his new responsibilities young Alex was keen to let it be known that the new board has a full list of ambitious events planned. He was also in awe that he would be going to Lambeth 2008 where he is determined to meet as

many bishops as possible and see Canterbury Cathedral etc.

The Greater Niagara Branch puts out a quarterly newsletter (The Niagara Light), maintains a website and has many ad hoc meetings, barbecues and wine tours carried out with frequency and informality. It is expected in seeing the interests of the new executive that tripping the light fantastic Salsa style will be added to these events!

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1 »

## Freedom is about choice

Many a dinner table conversation focuses on issues of freedom from violence, freedom from hunger, freedom from disease for ourselves and all others. And yet, when my freedom of expression is contrary to your perspective conflict often ensues as we struggle to hold on to our personal ideologies.

Communities form around common purpose and the desire to care for one another. This is both fundamental to human beings and pragmatic. The kicker is when two communities hold vastly different views. Then honouring freedom for another can fly out the window! It is then that conflict easily escalates to violence and war.

It is a deep paradox and one for which I have no answers and only more questions.

What I do know is that when we shift our focus from the external world to that within ourselves the perspective changes. The chance to become aware of how to use our mind and heart to support freedom for ourselves and others increases exponentially.

Our sense of freedom expands when we see our choices. The most fundamental choice lies within us. Do we wish to live from a place of love or fear? If we choose to live from fear it simply means we indulge our mind's dislikes, judgments and prejudices. We set a pattern in which our mind can justify any action including violence for the sake of security or safety. We justify taking away another's freedom.

If we live from love we make the choice to do no harm. We find joy and freedom in all situations. When

Nelson Mandela was incarcerated for many years he did not see his prison as restricting his dreams, hopes or plans. He lived from love, fully aware. He made a conscious choice to love those who hated him and the miracle of the end of apartheid happened.

There are profound lessons to be learned in contemplating freedom, our own and that of others. My biggest learning came from my godmother, Janet Shea. Perhaps her story will provide us all with a place to sit in ourselves and reflect.

In her later years, Janet suffered a very serious stroke that left her paralyzed and without speech. Her only way to communicate was a typewriter. By using a downward movement with a mouth piece she held between her lips she could punch the letters and thus make her thoughts known. One day I came to visit her and all I could think of was how sad and horrible it must be to be trapped in her deteriorating body.

As my attention returned to the moment, I glanced over and she was painfully, slowly typing me a message. It took her almost an hour to complete. This is what she wrote.

"Linda, do not be sad for me! This shattered body is a gift. Each day I get to spend my time in prayers of gratitude and contemplation. Each day, uninterrupted, I send my love out into the world. I have a purpose. I am at peace. I am happy. I believe I have found the deepest meaning of true freedom. Please simply celebrate with me."

And so understanding and tolerance grows...

## SPIRITUAL DIRECTOR TRAINING PROGRAM

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