



# Niagara Anglican

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Members of the Bishop's Company gathered on October 6 in Burlington for the annual Bishop's Company Dinner.

## Bishop Michael sends a message



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

No one was left in any doubt: Our Church and our Diocese is about to enter a new stage of vibrancy and growth. Bishop Michael Bird says so. Some four hundred members and guests of the Bishop's Company dinner in October rose to their feet and applauded. There was nothing to be added to the words he had chosen to describe his vision – his "Lambeth Reflections".

It had begun with the unpretentious title of "How I Spent My Summer", projected on a very large screen - a series of photos of the great Anglican gathering, accompanied by comments more on what was left out than what we were shown – just as well, when we were steeling ourselves to see more of what we had seen all summer on the internet. Not at all. Sacred and profound moments, was the tone, with one or two profane bits, such as an inevitable reference to the role played at Lambeth by

Michael Bird's beloved predecessor, Bishop Ralph Spence.

The first semi-serious note came with an account of how Lambeth came about, 140 years ago, not without some doubting Thomases, and with the declared understanding of Archbishop Longley that "at this meeting no declaration of faith shall be made, and no decision come to which shall affect generally the interests of the Church, but that we shall meet together for brotherly counsel and encouragement." How history repeats itself, said Michael Bird

The next hint of what was to come was embedded in the story of St. Alban – a story known to many of us by Stephen Reynolds' account of Alban, first martyr in Britain, c.209, in *For All The Saints*, the memorial for June 22. Michael and Susan had been guests of the Bishop and the Dean of the Diocese of St. Alban's. (He presented them each with a bottle of Niagara Ice Wine.) "I believe that Alban's life and witness provides us with a powerful example of courage, compassion, radical hospitality, self-sacrifice and generosity as he risked his life to welcome a persecuted stranger", said Michael.

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## A rollercoaster of a ride!



**MARTHA TATARNIC**  
PRIEST-IN-CHARGE, ST. HILDA'S OAKVILLE

*"A husband and wife and some kids isn't a family. It's a terribly vulnerable survival unit."*

*"I met a man in Nigeria one time, an Ibo who had six hundred relatives he knew quite well. His wife had just had a baby, the best possible news in any extended family. They were going to take it to meet all its relatives, Ibos of all ages and sizes and shapes. It would even meet other babies, cousins not much older than it was. Everybody who was big enough and steady enough was going to get to hold it, cuddle it, gurgle to it, and say how pretty or handsome it was. I sure wish I could wave a magic wand and give every one of you an extended family..."* (Kurt Vonnegut, *A Man Without a Country*)

In mid-September, I was appointed, by Synod Council, priest-in-charge of St. Hilda's Oakville, one of four churches in the Niagara diocese that have voted to leave the diocese and align themselves with the diocese of the Southern Cone. A group of generous, mission-minded St. Jude's parishioners have made a commitment with me to participate in the worship at St. Hilda's, and we have begun to imagine together what the seedlings of a new Christian community in Oakville might look like.

### No Template

We gather in a building that is at the centre of intense legal scrutiny and unchristian argument. We gather without a firm ruling as to who owns the building. We gather and can only imagine what God might have in store for our budding community.

But as much as this context can seem full of limitations, the Kingdom of God holds the capacity to flip our worlds upside down.

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## Shoot Ready Aim: On the death of pets

**HOLLIS HISCOCK**  
RETIRED PRIEST - BURLINGTON

### SHOOT - The photograph

Our dog Desi and cockatiel Cabot died this summer. It was not 'the best of times'.

Cabot entered our family in 1991, when we moved from Newfoundland to Ontario. Named after the discoverer of Newfoundland, John Cabot, we thought the name aptly tied together our 'new found land' with our 'new found province'.

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## Choosing our perspective: Fear or love?

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

This article is for Michael. I met Michael several years ago and it was he who taught me to ask this question, "Do I choose to live this moment in fear or love?" This one question changed my life profoundly.

Michael was a 32 year old young man with the world by the tail. He was an up and coming senior executive in a successful company, well liked by friends and family and beginning to explore his spirituality.

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## It was not my father

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

Last week I saw, at some distance, and for some minutes, a man who might have turned out to have been my father. From that distance, in that light, the shape was just right – the right shoulders, the right head, right stature. Ten years ago, I would have looked more closely, crossed the space between us enough at least to see his face. I do not often wish for things.

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## Proclaiming our Patrons!



**PETER WALL**  
DEAN, CHRIST'S CHURCH CATHEDRAL

Once, several years ago, when I was the Rector of the uniquely named 'Bishop Cronyn Memorial Church' in London, Ontario, I was attending some national meeting in Toronto and, when responding to a question about where I worked, got a sneered response; 'Is that an Anglican church?' While the tone of the response was rather rude, the content should not have been unexpected. After all, the vast majority of Anglican churches are named after either a saint, an event in Jesus' life, or, like this Cathedral, after Christ himself. November is a month which begins and ends with Holy Days – November 1 is All Saints' Day, a *Principal Feast* and November 30 is St. Andrew's Day. The only other month that comes close is May, which begins with the Feast of Ss. Philip & James, and ends with The Feast of the Visitation. So, for many of us, November will be a month in which to keep out patronal feast days.

Many parishes in our midst will keep patronal feasts on All Saints and All Souls; some on November 11 (St. Martin), some on November 16 (St. Margaret), still others on November 19 (St. Elizabeth), more on November 20 (St. Edmund) and still others on November 30 for St. Andrew. Some, like this Cathedral, dedicated simply to 'Christ', will keep their patronal on the Feast of the Reign of Christ, which this year takes place on November 23. (November 23 also happens to be the feast day of St. Clement, so sometimes one must choose...) Even parishes named after particular events or doctrines – Trinity, Annunciation, Nativity, Epiphany, Incarnation, Transfiguration – have their feast days to celebrate. Interestingly there are not many parishes (yet!) dedicated to The Visitation or The Presentation. (Bishops – for whom is reserved the privilege of naming parishes – take note!)

Observing our patronal feast provides wonderful opportunities for celebrating our communities and our

ministries. It gives us an *anniversary* (I am one of those people who is uncomfortable with some kind of *founders' day* or some such – seems to me that our founder is Jesus!); it gives us a day for expressing our thanks for the parish and for all that it has meant and continues to mean to so many; it gives us a chance to learn about these interesting and compelling people whose witness and work has added so much to the tapestry of church history. Keeping our patronal feast may provide us with a moment to recognize and thank volunteers for significant ministries and gifts; it may provide us with an opportunity to teach people about the unique and wondrous history of *their* parish – a history which we assume people know, but in many cases they do not.

Keeping our patronal should be a special day – perhaps with a festive procession, special hymns celebrating not only the patron but also the parish. What are the *symbols* of the patron – in which ways has this particular saint been portrayed in art, in music, in the stories of the Church? How does the mission of the parish resonate with the life and witness of the saint? Should it? Why was the parish named as it was? What was going on at the time? How many more same-name parishes are there in the Diocese? In the Canadian church? Have you thought about contacting other similarly named parishes in other dioceses – linking yourself to them?

I hope that parishes see their patronal feasts as important days in *their* year – days which stand out and stand apart. I like the fact that we name churches as we do, although there are those who say that we should be more creative and use other, perhaps more inviting names – church of the new life; church of new hope, etc. What does your parish think about that? A study group, perhaps...

So, as we begin the month that in many ways is the most dismal of months – November with its dramatically shortened daylight, its usual weather of rain and cold, its portents of things to come in winter – let's remember to begin and end it appropriately with Feast Days – which we can all keep! If it is *your* patronal feast this month – have a great one! If it is coming soon, plan for it carefully.

Let's remember those patrons!



## It's worth the drive to Thorold!



**MARGARET MURRAY**  
RECTOR, ST. MATTHIAS, GUELPH

Coming from Guelph and not being a morning person, I have to admit that I did have to think twice about my



This new era provides an opportunity (for the Church) to do a new thing.

decision to attend the one day conference sponsored by The Church of the Transfiguration and the Diocese of Niagara featuring author, speaker and scholar Diana Butler Bass. Once I arrived, I knew I'd made the right decision and wished I'd been able to bring a parish team to participate as well. I found her presentation and ideas energizing – well-timed to help in the building momentum of late September. It's been two weeks since the conference; and, in conversations with several colleagues, I know that Diana's down-to-earth wisdom and reflections are already affecting life in a number of parishes within Niagara.

Among the books written by Diana Butler Bass is her 2006 publication, *Christianity for the Test of Us: How the Neighborhood Church is Transforming the Faith*. The book represents the distillation of her scholarly research into the patterns which are evident in mainline churches experiencing new vitality.

Wait – don't let those words 'scholarly research' trigger your urge to skip down to read the next article! Diana's presentation was like a breath of fresh air – and so is her book!

I loved... the fact that Diana

doesn't even pretend to have the answer! And I love her questions. I loved... the 'organic' character of her quest. Rather than attempting to fix churches, she searches, listens, discerns and reflects upon the signs of life. She asks herself, "What's happening when unexpected life is emerging?"

While people who are still in the Church may long for the 'good old days', she is clear that the majority of people in North America seldom look to the church for help – for living ethically, for moral decisions, for spirituality, as a support-system or for communal meaning in life. "The chain of memory from the past has broken". Instead of viewing that reality as a tragedy, we could recognize that this new era provides an opportunity to do a new thing.

Several of her questions echo the themes I often hear from parishioners and also from those outside the church:

- Do you relate to the idea of being a 'spiritual nomad'?
- Would you describe yourself as spiritual, but not religious?
- Do you think that faith is about asking questions or finding answers?

For those involved in the church, she would ask, "With which image do you most strongly identify: returnee, exile, immigrant, convert, or villager?"

Diana would say that within our culture, many people are choosing "disestablished spirituality". Noting that people used to look to the Church for their belief system, Diana points out that people today are looking for a more integrated approach – to make sense of life in the hope that our lives might *mean something*. Beliefs are no longer enough. People need to find, in the Church, experiences which touch their thoughts, their hearts and their actions or practice. And she believes that even mainline churches can be

vibrant and growing whenever we are intentional about the way that our communal life reflects "God's justice, beauty and love in the world... The Holy Spirit has placed us here. We are the people to whom God has assigned 'this time'... We can do this because we are in God now."

We will need to re-examine our assumptions though! Again, her phrases succinctly express the challenges we face in the church as we try to meet today's needs in the people we meet:

- Are we meeting their spiritual needs? – not – Are we able to make them members?
- Are we enabling them to experience depth?
- When no one is staying a long time, you need to be more intentional.

She suggests that our intentionality within church community life will help us turn *spiritual tourists into pilgrims*.

When you buy her book, you will discover that her research yielded 10 spiritual practices which led to transformation in 50 mainline churches, making them more vibrant and engaged. She clearly highlights two: the practice of hospitality and the practice of diversity.

To glimpse a starting point for your own congregation, you might use one of her questions: "What is it that you do – here in this church that has changed your life & the life of your congregation in the last 10 years."

In the parish I serve, we love questions! And Diana's questions are exactly the questions which speak to our current challenges! Thank you to Nissa Basbaum, Robin Graves and The Church of the Transfiguration for inviting the whole diocese for a day of learning! I'm grateful for your initiative, your willingness to risk and your hunch that many of us might be facing the same challenges.

### Need assistance with parish accessibility?

In the spring of this year the Federal Government made available funds to assist large and small organizations with accessibility.

If you have any intentions in improving your accessibility issues in the parish please contact Ken Schroeder, Bishop's Advisory Committee on Church Buildings, at 905-561-7023. He will be pleased to help you with the process.

# Has Christianity blown it?



**SUSAN C. H. WESTALL**  
RETIRED TEACHER, ALL SAINTS HAMILTON

In an article entitled "Time for a Christian truce" (*Niagara Anglican*, June 2008) our editor asked "Who knows who was right in the Christological arguments of the 3d. century?" He goes on to remark that "each of us has a unique understanding of our relationship with Jesus Christ". But was this always so? Indeed, is this true in the 21st. century? Do we each have a unique relationship with Jesus, or do we believe what we are told to believe?

John Bowen takes our editor to task in "Why Arius was wrong" (*Niagara Anglican*, September 2008). Apparently he does not consider that it is time for a Christian truce. Such being the case, I will throw my hat in the ring.

I have already expressed my doubts as to the veracity of the 325 A.D. conference at Nicaea. I consider it a political exploit of the Emperor Constantine. Harold Mattingley (*Outlines of Ancient History*) states that, at the time, there was so much controversy in the Church that it began to call in the worldly power. The controversy was occasioned by the very question that our editor has raised and to which John Bowen has responded with rather specious statements.

I would argue that Athanasius was by no means the saint that he has been

considered. When he proclaimed his doctrine, Arius was Bishop of Alexandria. A council in Nicomedia in 323 had declared in favour of Arius, but the argument still flared with the result that Constantine convened the council at Nicaea in 325. This time Arius was condemned and the Arians were persecuted (a good Christian practice!). Athanasius became Bishop of Alexandria in 328, but refused to accept Arius back into the church when he and a number of followers made his peace in 330. Athanasius was called before the council of Tyre in 335 and condemned for abuse of power and banished, but was restored for political reasons by Constantine's successor, Constantius, in 338. This time he lasted for two years and was again deposed, only to return in 346 and then to be excommunicated in 353 by the council of Arles. This led to riots and he again forced his way back to Alexandria only to be driven out after serious rioting in 355. In 359 the Arian creed was confirmed by the councils of Ariminium and Seleucia. The Arian creed dominated until 381 when a synod of Constantinople accepted the Nicene formula and Arian bishops were expelled by violence from their sees.

Athanasius was a strong-willed man. Not being completely satisfied with the Nicene formula, he wrote his own creed, which was accepted from the Roman Church after the Church of England broke with Rome in 1534. No English Prayer Book was issued until the reign of Edward VI when the first book was published in March 1549. The recitation of the creed is required at both Mattins (Morning Prayer) and Evensong. In

the latter is the instruction that the Athanasian Creed should be used on six great feast days. This creed may still be found in the Book of Common Prayer at p.695.

The Athanasian Creed is an anomaly; it makes one statement and then follows it with an apparent contradiction, e.g.

15. *So the Father is God, the Son God, / the Holy Ghost God;*

16. *And yet there are not three Gods, / but one God.*

If anything is intended to confuse, that takes the cake! Even worse, this creed concludes with the statement

42. *This is the Catholic Faith, / which, except a man do faithfully and steadfastly believe, he cannot be saved.*

You either believe what you are told, or there is no hope for you (women excluded?).

I have the impression that the Church has thought that, ever since the Resurrection, God has done no work outside His Church—the Church is the sole purveyor of God's good grace. By now we should recognise the truth of the hymn *God moves in a mysterious way / His wonders to perform*. He can, and does, work outside the Church. I suggest that God was so disappointed with our convoluted thinking that he inspired another messenger to make us think again. The doctrine of the Trinity had already confirmed the Jews that Christians were barking up the wrong tree and now they were confusing possible converts, so God sent a new messenger to proclaim that "There is only one God, Allah". Of course, his disciples added "And Mohomet is His prophet".

Islam has been a bugbear to Christianity ever since its inception. It has made the mistake of belligerence in its determination to drive home its point that there is only one God, not three, but Christianity has responded with force, in spite of Jesus's teaching to turn the other cheek (Matthew 5:39). Christianity then failed by becoming involved in the Crusades, resulting in a continuing distrust which has given rise to the present militancy of Islam. This time we must learn to turn the other cheek, to show love to our "enemies", to be able to iron out our differences and agree that we both worship the same God. Islam recognises Jesus as a prophet. Let us start there and show how great a prophet he is. He is the model, the ideal that God had in mind when he caused the development of the first human ancestor. Jesus is the model for what humanity must become. God cannot be foiled.

I believe that there is another "sign of the times". As Bishop of Alexandria, Athanasius ordered that all heretical documents were to be destroyed. This was aimed at all documents that did not conform with the recognized teaching of what was rapidly becoming the Roman church. Christianity was strong up and down the Nile valley, but the term *heretic* not only applied to Arians and Donatists, but to other deviants who were loosely lumped together as *Gnostics*. As a result monasteries in Upper Egypt buried their most treasured documents in the hope that they might be recovered at some future date. Important finds have been disclosed in the twentieth century.

Early in the last century the world

fought a war that was to end all wars. That proved a vain hope and little more than twenty years after the First World War concluded, the Second followed. Since then the world has lived under the threat of nuclear war and there have been a succession of "local" wars. In spite of all this, there have been discoveries that have opened our eyes to new revelations of God, not the least of which have been our exploration of our own universe and outer space. Where is the Heaven of which the Book of Revelation speaks? The discoveries at Nag Hammadi and on the shore of the Dead Sea have revealed much of religious thinking that was lost for over sixteen centuries. We now have a hoard of past faith philosophies; is it not time that world religions got together and recognized that we all seek the same God, even if our paths are different?

As the Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregation of the Commonwealth said in a speech to a plenary session of the Lambeth Conference on July 28, "*the call of God in our time is for faiths to come together in a 'global covenant' to address the challenges of the times.*" As bishops meeting at the Lambeth Conference concluded *Christianity needs to be lived and presented as "a way of life", rather than a static set of beliefs* (89) and *There is a need for education to help all the baptised to understand and engage with people of other faiths* (97). (n.b., numbers in parentheses refer to paragraphs in the report of the Lambeth Indaba, 3 August 2008).

*Turn back, O Man, forswear thy foolish ways.*

# Family Ministry in Advent



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

December is an incredibly busy time both in the life of the church and in the culture. And that makes it the perfect time to offer events or activities for families - not to add to their busyness but to offer them an oasis of calm in the midst of it; a spiritual re-grounding to help them live in that busyness.

Often, the Sunday morning children's programming tends to shift to pageant preparation and rehearsal, and there is little time to teach the children about Advent while they're in church. If you're feeling inclined to spend less time on the pageant, there are several quick, no-work "pageant" ideas that will leave your Sunday mornings free, and they come parish-

takes its name from the passage in Isaiah 11 "...Then a shoot shall grow from the stock of Jesse, and a branch shall spring from his roots..." Again, directions for wreaths and Jesse trees are available from the Children's Ministry staff person as are complete program plans for an entire session including supply lists, directions, and worship pieces.

Getting families together for pre-Advent learning and fun activity is both simple to do and takes little prep time. Invite families to gather on a Saturday morning or to stay after church on the first Sunday in Advent (bring a bag lunch or host a potluck). Advent wreath making can be as simple as decorating a foam ring and adding candles or you could invite some of your talented floral arrangers to help families decorate wire wreaths. If you're tired of making Advent wreaths, then, try a Jesse Tree - this family tree decorated with symbols of the people who are significant in the development of our God-story

the opportunity to shop hassle-free while the parish feeds and entertains their children on a Saturday morning or a weeknight. You might also have the children use recycled Christmas cards to create Christmas greetings from the parish to home-bound seniors or families staying in the local shelter.

For those who want to focus on families of teens, there are resources available to help you plan an evening or dinner with teens and their parents complete with activities geared to help them listen to one another more effectively, explore how family decisions are made, explore how birth order impacts behaviour, share their faith stories with each other, and more in a fun, relaxed atmosphere. For a local shelter, serving Christmas dinner

If Advent feels too close for event planning, you could give an Advent calendar to each family. Each day from Advent 1 until Epiphany, the calendar suggests a faith-based activity for children and their families to

do together. Some of these activities result in great "show and tell" items that could be integrated into the beginning of the church's worship service. These calendars are available from the Children's Ministry office or you can create your own. The parish could also offer an Epiphany event that might feature a Kings' cake, dancing for the whole family and some teaching about the Feast of Epiphany. Again, resources for such an evening are available from Children's Ministry.

Just want to create some time for the parish's families to get together? The Christmas break is also a great time to organize a skating or sledding get-together for families with hot chocolate, goodies and a family blessing to end the evening.

You can make Advent a part of the lives of your parish families without too much work. Give Christyn Perkons a call at 905-527-1316 x420 for help and resources.

# A Ritual of Burning



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

One of the requirements for ordination in the Diocese of Niagara is a three-month unit of clinical pastoral training. Mine, which took place at Queen Street Mental Health Centre in Toronto, was an experience from which I retain only a few memories.

In the summer of 1982, I rode my bike each day through the streets of downtown Toronto to get to the hospital. At that time, I had behind me one year of theological education in a Canadian setting plus one year of residence in an English theological college. More to the point, perhaps, was that I had only been an Anglican (and a Christian) for a little over four years.

## Why must it be consumed?

One of the students in my group with whom I developed a good friendship was a Baptist who was studying for ordination at Wycliffe College in Toronto. While my memories of clinical training may be somewhat dim, during this time as the two of us forged our relationship, I do have quite vivid memories of one particular conversation between the two of us.

As was often the case, while we had lunch together, we got involved in a serious theological discussion; this particular time, regarding the Eucharist. My friend asked me a not unreasonable

question: "Why don't Anglicans throw away the bread and the wine that is left after the distribution of communion? Why does it all have to be consumed?"

Definitely not unreasonable except for the fact that, at the time of being confronted with this, I had only a little theological training behind me, and a mere five years prior to this, I was Jewish. I gulped. Taking my time before responding, I thought for a moment about what the right answer might be. (Yes, there was a time when I naively assumed there could be a right answer to a theological question. I guess some things do change!) Here's what I said.

## It makes sense

"Well, I can't tell you for certain the correct response to your question. I can only tell you why it makes sense to me not to throw away the leftover bread and wine after communion. What is really happening at the time of the consecration is that the bread and wine become the body and blood of Christ – not the body and blood of *Jesus*, I added, but the body and blood of *Christ*. In other words, in the act of raising up the bread and the wine and consecrating these elements, the priest is raising up the *Body of Christ* – that is, the members of the community. If the bread and the wine are representative of this community, therefore, then throwing away the "leftovers" essentially would be the equivalent of casting aside the "leftovers" of the community.

Pausing for a minute, I held my breath. For whatever reason, I felt as if I had been put in the position of defending Anglicanism and I wasn't sure how I was going to fare.

"Hmm," my friend responded. "That makes some sense." (In fact, it might have made so much sense that this woman ultimately ended up as a priest in the Anglican Church, though I'm sure there were other reasons for this!)

Recently, while performing a task at church that I have always found particularly difficult to do, I was reminded of this conversation.

At Transfiguration, we have a somewhat unique way of introducing newcomers to the congregation. Several years ago, one relatively new parishioner suggested that she would find it helpful if, following worship, there were pictures of parishioners available for her to look at. In this way, if she met someone new during the service, being able to see their picture would help her to identify and remember their name. Following this request, one of the children in the congregation painted a tree on a hall wall, and "paper doll cut-outs" of each household were placed on this "family tree."

## Photos off the wall

Over the years, the wall has been received with enthusiasm and has certainly been a useful tool in assisting people in their identification of the members of our congregation. Besides this, the playfulness of both the artwork and the paper doll cut-outs lend a bit of colour and joy to an otherwise drab off-white wall. In fact, there has only been one side effect from this endeavour that has proved to be problematic. But this side effect is no small complication.

When a couple separates and divor-

ces, or someone moves away or dies, it is not only awkward but, in many cases, heart-wrenching to remove their picture from this family tree. In fact, there is a resistance to taking these photos off the wall and, unfortunately, for this reason the task is often left to me. This past August, the reality of this situation came home rather painfully.

Somewhat unexpectedly, a long-time Transfiguration parishioner died. Isabel was a good age and she died well; in fact, the way most of us would want to – in her sleep. Upon our return from holidays in August, however, I discovered that Isabel's picture remained on the wall, left I guess for me to remove. After church one Sunday, I did this, following which I took the picture into my office to dispose of it; as usual, I couldn't do this.

## Not unlike the leftover bits

As I went to throw away the green leaf on which Isabel's paper doll cut-out was pasted, of course, I couldn't let go of it or, what I probably should be saying is that I couldn't let go of her. I hadn't ever been able to do this before so I have no idea why I thought I would be able to do it this time. Most of the pictures that have come off the wall have ended up in my desk drawer, placed there in a Scarlett O'Hara, "I'll think about that tomorrow," sort of way. And, then, I don't think about it. Instead, I leave the pictures in the drawer and avoid the reality of having to say good-bye in what seems like such an uncaring fashion.

These pictures – those people from the parish who for whatever reason are no longer a part of our family – are, for

me, not unlike the leftover bits of bread and wine following communion. Just as I can't imagine disposing of any of the members of the community as they are represented in those bits of bread and wine, I also cannot dispose of these photographs that represent a piece of the life-breath of Transfiguration's family. Yet, I have also learned that they cannot forever remain in my desk drawer, untouched because neither I nor anyone else in the congregation can find a satisfactory way of letting them go.

## Reverence and Respect

Here, then, I find myself returning to the symbolism of the Eucharist and the changing of the bread and the wine into the Body of Christ. Some, though not all Anglicans, believe that if consecrated wine is spilled, the item on which this wine lands should be burned; for example, altar linens or a piece of carpet. Once upon a time, I might have considered this to be a little extreme and, even now, my practical side probably still does. Nonetheless, the act of burning this material illustrates and emphasizes that the consecrated wine is, indeed, the blood of Christ and therefore, the life-blood of the community. As such, at least metaphorically, the stain cannot – and should not – simply be "washed out."

A ritual of burning our paper doll cut-outs may be the way in which we at Transfiguration can appropriately let go of those from our community who have, for whatever reason, moved on. In fact, a ritual of burning may well be the one way in which all of us can express our reverence and respect for those we love even as we let them go.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1 »

## Choosing our perspective: Fear or love?

Not to mention he was absolutely gorgeous to look at! We attended a Thursday evening class together and quickly became friends. Within a few months of knowing him, he was told by his company he would once again be getting yet another promotion. This time a full physical exam was required. His life was about to take a dramatic shift.

Like a speed slap in the dark, the results of the assessment concluded he had a virulent form of cancer and was given less than a year to live. His healthy body and active cells in fact were a detriment to living longer. He was warned that the pain would intensify over time and his body would deteriorate quickly. Michael called me when he heard and we sat together as he wept for all that would never be for him.

Michael didn't waste much time on self pity. Instead he stepped up his spiritual discovery experience and began a journey that blessed the lives of all who knew him.

Michael began to create what he called conversation circles in his home. They were open to anyone who

was curious about the question, "Do I choose to live this moment in fear or love?" The world became very simple to him. Each moment was a unique and fleeting one of choice.

To live life in fear provides an opportunity to cover from the world and all beings in it. Every fear imaginable can be played out. There is a choice to fear rejection, the weather, the economy, people who are different, the loss of a job, a relationship. The possibilities are endless. If we stay in fear long enough we can totally incapacitate ourselves. We can shrivel and die.

To live in love there is the choice to reach out and embrace each and every moment. We can learn attributes of courage and strength, vulnerability and compassion. Loving allows us to greet each day as magic and full of adventure. We choose forgiveness and non-judgment, joy and the messiness of living. We expand to meet our passion and our potential contribution to others. We embrace the fact that we are all interdependent. In loving others we learn to truly love ourselves as simply magnificent human beings.

Before long Michael's living room would not hold all the people who wanted to join his conversation circle so more were started in local churches and community halls. Each day as Michael's body deteriorated he continued to facilitate the dialogues and encouraged each person he met to ask the question every day.

Over time Michael became too ill to leave home and was very physically weak. Instead he asked those of us who knew him if we would continue smaller circles back in his home where he could be part of the experience as he lay in his bed. He had time for every person who wished to speak with him. His emaciated body literally began to glow from within.

On the last day of his life when speaking was too difficult, in a shaky hand he wrote to me, "Choose love". Since that day I do my best in all my humanness to choose love. Some days my best isn't too stellar and still I choose love.

In turn I pass on Michael's gift of a challenging question to you. Do you choose to live this moment in fear or in love?

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# As to console



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

November is the most difficult month: wet and chilly weather, darkness, strep throats and slippery roads. This year, with the environment, the church and the economy in such difficulties, it's no wonder so many people suffer from depression.

Lucy Maud Montgomery committed suicide! In going public with the family secret of her depression



Both clergy and laity are frustrated by the slow decline of our congregations and by our perceived irrelevance.

and suicide, her grand-daughter hoped to support people who feel stigmatized by mental illness. This is a laudable motivation; one of the positive characteristics of our time is the willingness to look, publicly, at diseases that in the past were whispered about, and therefore more insidious.

In the picture found in so many books and articles about her, L. M. Montgomery does not look like the kind of person who would approve of this family secret being exposed. With her straight back, tightly curled hair, raised chin, pinched expression and black-laced dress, L. M. looks formidable. My grandmother, who looked much like her in a similarly-posed formal photograph, knew L. M. during the Great Depression.

Maud, as she was known to her friends, and her husband, Rev. Ewen Macdonald, were living in Norval, a village west of Brampton on the Credit River, where he had a Presbyterian charge. Mrs. Macdonald had a frosty pride that did not endear her to many people in the community. When she undertook to produce an edifying play in the church basement, a temperance melodrama, the laugh behind her back was that a local "character" (heavy drinker) had auditioned successfully for one of the main roles. On opening night, with too much homebrew in him, he transformed the play into a farce. She lost even more face that night as she yelled at him backstage. The opinion of the congregation was divided: some thought L. M. deserved the humiliation for being so self-righteous, while others felt sorry for her.

According to the biographies written before the granddaughter's disclosure this fall, her problem while they lived in Norval was disguising the fact that her husband suffered from mental breakdowns caused by "religious melancholia." At that time such an illness was seen as a weak-

ness, almost as a sin. Imagine the pressure on the Macdonalds. If the church leaders had known he was often incapable of functioning, they might have fired him. She apparently wrote his sermons, whatever she could do to keep the job going. She must have been a strong woman, and she must have hated the fishbowl of a village where she had to pretend that all was well.

L. M.'s heroine, Anne, must have been her escapist fantasy: the unloved girl who envies her placidly happy "kindred spirit," Diana, yet the red-head who succeeds despite her hot temper, who marries the alpha-male Gilbert, and who becomes a well-respected public figure and a well-loved matriarch. Talk about alter ego!

The Anne series also provided much-needed income for the struggling Macdonald family. I wonder if the good minister despised his wife's novels as escapist, immoral untruths? Perhaps she was torn between pride in her success and embarrassment at being a novelist and a better breadwinner than her husband.

It's sad to think what L. M. went through while presenting herself as a good and confident Christian. Would she have blamed God for her emotional state? Not likely! She probably blamed herself when she felt miserable. However did the Macdonalds manage to deal with the weight of the two of them suffering from mental disorders? What traumas did they pass on to their sons?

How did they relate their experience to their theology? How could they rejoice at Christmas or Easter? Maybe they focused on Judgment Day and on struggling to improve themselves and the sinners in their charge.

We are more open about such problems today. Margaret Laurence was another great novelist who struggled with depression, along with alcoholism and, at the end, lung cancer. When she overdosed on pills, her contemporaries reacted with compassion, not criticism. And her society praised her novels about women filled with doubt. *A Jest of God*, that's not a title L. M. could have used. Her *Anne of Green Gables*, first published in 1908, was relentlessly cheerful, like the American E. H. Porter's *Pollyanna*, 1913.

We like to think that life for clergy families has improved from the oppressive times known by Montgomery. Yet just a few years ago statistics were publicized that many Canadian clergy of all mainstream denominations felt abused by their congregations and that many suffered from depression. Why? I think that both clergy and laity are frustrated by the slow decline of our congregations and by our perceived irrelevance. Clergy, taking the blame and internalizing guilt, end up depressed and hurt by their parishioners.

When we turn to the Bible for wisdom and instruction about mental illness and religious leaders, we

find that King Saul suffered from fits of violence for which the treatment was David's playing on his harp. Today we might turn to music therapy. Then there was the New Testament Saul/Paul. That man was conflicted, to put it mildly! His solution, it seems to me, was to put his energy to creative use; in working for his Lord he overcame his inner problems.

It is problematic for our 21st century faith that Jesus reflected the perception of his time, seeing demonic possession as the root cause of mental illness. Casting out devils is not useful to our modern understanding of the topic. Jesus was a man of his times and his times did not have our medical knowledge. What he does provide that is central to our Christian well being is his healing power of love.

Where else can we look in our tradition? Ironically, some people would say that being spiritual is a symptom of mental imbalance! Haven't most of the great mystics gone through "the dark night of the soul"? How is that different from depression? The former, for most people, is a temporary stage of their pilgrimage whereas depression, if untreated, can last a lifetime of chemical imbalance.

Today people suffering from depression have access to effective medications and counseling. Still, depression is socially problematic in that it seems to be increasingly prevalent, as the recent *Globe* articles suggest; however, the stigma of this disease lingers for those who suffer and for their families. And depressed clergy today will at least not be diagnosed with "religious melancholia!"

Depression of the world economy could trigger even more people into suffering from psychological depression. Canadian author Sinclair Ross portrayed the perfect metaphor for the Great Depression in the struggles of a depressed minister and his artistic wife in *As for Me and My House*, 1941. Ironically, his novel echoes the situation of L. M. and Ewen MacDonald and probably many other clergy couples.

How can the church help? We can support individuals suffering from depression and ensure that as an institution we do not inadvertently contribute to the problem. The austere discipline of Advent is a guide through the gloom of November to the promise of incarnation. Then we celebrate the message that God is with us, here and now. We can provide joyful worship and inclusive fellowship, and we can offer the potent medicines of faith, hope and love.

The genius of St. Francis's Prayer, in terms of psychological well being, guides us out of ourselves and our problems to worship God by helping others. "Grant that I may never seek to be consoled as much as to console, to be loved as to love, for it is in giving that we receive." This message is perhaps the church's best medicine.

# Victims and victors

**COLIN C. M. CAMPBELL**  
TEACHER, DIOCESE OF NIAGARA

A deep paradox lies at the heart of Christianity, namely that God needs both victims and victors to accomplish his purposes. Jesus was both. He was the Victim who became the Victor. As such, not only did his example inspire all Christian martyrs after Stephen, it also inspired whole communities, among them the Pilgrim Fathers and, less gloriously, the Voortrekkers in South Africa. Not as well known in the English-speaking world was its adoption by the Serbian nation in 1389, following their defeat by the Turks at Kosovo Polje. All three groups saw themselves as enjoying God's special



Whatever the modern world may think of missionaries, neither the Bible Society nor the Franciscans made converts using napalm and helicopter gunships.

favour. The politicizing of this belief lies deep within the American ethos, where some seem to believe that God has chosen the United States to be an instrument of his Providence. The legacy of the Pilgrims has bequeathed to the modern world a culture, which draws its inspiration from ideals rather than people, with tragic consequences not only for Americans themselves but also for those whom they profess to help. The countries of the former-Yugoslavia were the unfortunate recipients of this largesse, in a way that was concealed from the American and Canadian public.

In the Old Testament, again and again, the God of Israel delivered his people from the hands of their enemies. For every Goliath, God supplied a David. However, paradoxically, this same chosen people were slaves in Egypt, scattered by Babylon and Rome, and murdered in Nazi death camps. God allowed his elect to experience both victory and victimization. The ways of God seemed inscrutable at best, or unjust, at worst. This reaction is all too common. When individuals are victims, they commonly complain, "It is not fair of God." They may be right that it is not fair. Whether it is not fair of God depends on how we understand God's covenant with humankind. If God's success in the world is conditional on a moral response from human beings, then it is not fair to blame God, when people let him down. However, if God were to ignore the plight of victims, he would be the God of deism, not the Father of Our Saviour. The Christian tradition interprets the suffering of its martyrs as God's appeal to those whose hearts are hardened against him. He assures us that he does not desire the death of sinners but that they might "turn from their wickedness and live." Where there is persistent persecution of the faithful, God promises victory to the remnant, who continue to fight for what is right. Both victims and victors form one community. The remnant is

the Church Visible and the martyrs are the Church Triumphant. Both win in the end!

It was in this spirit that the Pilgrims left England for the New World. Their leader, John Winthrop, addressed his followers thus: "We shall find that the God of Israel is among us, when ten of us shall be able to resist a thousand of our enemies, when he shall make us a praise and a glory. We shall be as a city on a hill; the eyes of all people are upon us." The myth of the city on the hill implied that America was to provide moral leadership to the rest of the world, with God supplying the military muscle to back it up. Nathaniel Hawthorne was more realistic and remarked that civilization began by building a jail and a graveyard; and within two generations, there was a brothel in Boston.

The Puritans rule of faith was the Word. This led to a spirituality based on ideas and the mind, rather than relationships and the heart. They not only repudiated a religion led by people, whether by the King or the Pope, they also banished the veneration of people, such as the Virgin, the saints, and their relics. They reduced Jesus himself to an idea. For far too many, the idea of justification by faith, even today, has become a psychological trick, which turns Jesus into the instrument by which God saves us, using a kind of double entry bookkeeping. Of course, the doctrine is Biblical and true. When St Paul formulated it, however, he was not simply expressing an idea. He was describing a life-transforming experience. It was his discovery that Jesus' love, communicated in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, is greater than our anxiety, envy, and guilt. This metanoia of the heart leads to a relationship with a Person. In Our Saviour's Passion there was indeed suffering of the mind ("My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?"). With the benefit of hindsight, theology can answer his question. However, his perplexity arose from a troubled heart and it is with troubled hearts that we must meet him.

The idea that Americans are a people representing ideals has led them, not only to view themselves as propagators of the democratic ideal, but also to view others as representatives of inferior ideals. Inaugural addresses usually express in lofty sentiments how America will bring freedom to the world. Never do they expect that others have anything to teach Americans. It is a missionary mentality. However, whatever the modern world may think of missionaries, neither the Bible Society nor the Franciscans made converts using napalm and helicopter gunships.

The nineties saw a flourishing of the American ideal of liberty. Ronald Reagan revived Winthrop's image of America as "that shining city on a hill." One of the key doctrines of that period was that there could be no political liberty without economic liberty. Invited to visit Poland, Mrs. Thatcher only agreed to go, if she could visit the Gdansk shipyards where the resistance against communism began.

» CONTINUED ON PAGE 11

# Deacon at the border



**RODERICK MCDOWELL**  
DEACON, ST. PAUL'S FT. ERIE

Since the dawn of recorded history, humanity has been on the move. Some have moved from place to place because they want to go, today we call these people immigrants. Others have moved because they must. There are lives at risk because of what they believe, who they are or what group or tribe they belong to in their society. Today we call these people refugees.

The Bible is full of examples of both. Abram and Sarah were immigrants because they chose to follow the command of God and journey. The Children of Israel fled Egypt because they were persecuted by the Egyptians on account of their nationality. Jesus and the Holy Family had to flee to Egypt because they were persecuted because Herod feared the political and religious threat he believed they presented. The Children of Israel and the Holy Family were refugees. Jesus' entire earthly ministry was directed at those like the refugees. In recent years most of the Christian church, along with other faith groups, have begun to recognize the calling to minister to the refugee.

I am a vocational deacon at St. Paul's, Ft. Erie. Prior to my ordination in 2007, I served the parish as a lay reader, warden, etc. and today assist in the liturgical role of Deacon, visit the sick in our local hospital, etc. as well as being engaged, I believe, in answer to the call of our Lord, to a ministry engaging refugees.

In 1985, a group of 5 families, who had previously become acquainted in

an ecumenical effort to end a crippling strike in Ft. Erie, formed what would later be called, the Ft. Erie Refugee committee. Some were teachers, others worked in factories, my wife, Laurie is a nurse and I was a lawyer with just very basic experience in refugee law. A local immigration officer had brought to the attention of one of our members that refugees were arriving at Ft. Erie with no one to help them.

We tried to mobilise our faith communities, then originally just Roman Catholic and Anglican, and others in Niagara to provide hospitality to these people. I gathered and arranged training for a panel of lawyers to provide legal advice. We spoke in many churches. We gathered for prayer every Friday evening. Oh, and yes, on some weekends welcomed 300 refugees.

This had all occurred in Ft. Erie because of the creation of a refugee shelter in Buffalo, Casa Vive, by several orders of Roman Catholic nuns. Vive's purpose is and was to facilitate the flow of refugees into Canada.

By 1990, Archbishop Bothwell and the Roman Bishop, Bishop Fulton were blessing Casa El Norte, the first shelter to open. We continued to be a faith movement that worked with the refugees. Later the Fort Erie Multicultural Centre was created to help settle the refugees. A second shelter, Matthew House opened with the assistance of Baptist and the Mennonite Family of Churches. Finally a unique one-of-a-kind reception centre for refugees opened next to the Canadian immigration refugee processing unit. This Refugee Reception Centre is the only government funded facility that provides hospitality, advice and comfort to the refugees arriving at our border.

At the same time my law practice evolved to a point where I was design-

nated as a specialist in refugee law by the Law Society of Upper Canada and now devote almost all of my practice to serving refugees.

My ordination made me very conscious of a servant role that I was already performing. I then made steps to formally involve all of the main line churches in Ft. Erie to be consciously involved in supporting refugees. In June of 2007, for instance, St. Paul's hosted a day involving an interfaith worship service, a lunch from 'around the world' hosted by the Fort Erie Multicultural Centre involving dishes prepared by our newcomers, and finally a Citizenship Court. Over 400 people came and went at various times to celebrate Multicultural Day.

I remember another time, several years ago, when St. Paul's hosted a Eucharist and celebration for our refugee committee. One of my then clients, a devout Muslim, went up and received Communion. I was, of course, delighted and asked what moved her to take that action. She said "Something wonderful was happening." What a great statement about the Eucharist, when we are called to that wonderful meal by a former refugee, Jesus Christ.

The refugees that arrive in Ft. Erie, now at a rate of about 400 a month, are so often victims of torture and unspeakable cruelty. They have left everything to save their lives. Many suffer from post traumatic stress syndrome and physical problems caused by the trauma and the journey itself.

Therefore my "bread job" - ie. practising refugee law and my work as a Deacon are very much one. Thanks be to God for the privilege to serve.

Oh, and by the way, if your parish would like to extend hospitality to some of these refugees, you know what to call.

# What's in a name?

**IAN DINGWALL**  
RETIRED ARCHDEACON OF NIAGARA

My last article concerned the topic of "Titles" and how we use them. Let me follow up with the topic "Names": Somewhat related but Names and Naming is somewhat more substantive.

There's power in names. The Hebrew people recognized that and many of their Names have significant meanings. "Emmanuel" means "God with us" which would be a potent message as one might observe someone named Emmanuel strolling down a Jerusalem avenue. The name Isaac means "Laughter", the result of Laughter being the response when his mother, in older age, was told she was to have a baby. And people would be reminded, when they heard his name mentioned, of the humour that accompanied his conception.

Consider things in a very personal manner, too. You are in a large supermarket, perhaps, and think that you are alone and unknown, when suddenly you hear your own name called out. That's a personal moment of empowerment - that's my name; I am unique.

When you "name" something or someone, you exercise power and reveal something important in the person so named.

For example when we are confronted by something scary or frightening we become silent and paralyzed in its presence. At that moment it could be important to name that Fear and by doing so, observe it lose some of its power. Cancer is one such word and the Fear that accompanies it.

When you boldly, humbly and directly confront this fear by "naming", you are able remove much of its supposed power over you.

There is again the Naming of something that is important and good.

We ought to do this more and notice the increase in its relevance and power.

Think, for example, of naming who we are within our ecclesiastical

tradition. For some months now we have witnessed our Communion's name being somewhat abused by those who seem to wish harm. That kind of thing needs challenging, so let's name ourselves who we are: "The Anglican Communion Family of Faith. By doing this, we will remember the history and the greatness of our Anglican roots in the British Isles through the witness of the Church of England and our Celtic Roots in Iona, Lindisfarne and other places of importance. As we do we will recall names of our heroes and saints such as Saint Columba, Saint Cuthbert, the Venerable Bede and Saint Patrick from northern England and southern Scotland, as well as in Ireland. We recall too, the unique richness of the Anglican Reformation of the 16th and 17th centuries and names such as Richard Hooker, Thomas Cranmer, and Bishops Latimer and Ridley. Anglicanism does have a rich heritage and we need to name it as we call people in our times to build on that heritage.

And when we come to reflect on the naming of God, we need to heed the caution exercised by the People of Israel. They were inspired to be cautious and silent when the Naming of the Holy One. Recently I have read a new translation of the Psalms (written by an Old Testament/Hebrew scholar, Dr. Tom Barnett who deliberately avoids using the word "God" and, substitutes "Holy One" as perhaps more appropriate and poignant. That sort of "Naming" is significant for me because it releases the power of Mystery of Divine Love. It also suggests a widening and deepening understanding of the Creative Love, rather than an "in the box", limiting kind of thing.

Names are important! (Shakespeare's admonition to the contrary) Name the evil and put it in its proper place. Name the good and call others to contemplate its vitality.

## John Bell

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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1 »

# On the death of pets

Cabot, whose world was limited to his cage, had no desire to stray from his secure surroundings. We tried to teach him human languages, but to no avail; thus, we conversed mainly through whistling. I guess he taught me his language – ‘cockatielish’.

Desi joined us two years later, shortly after our dog Rebel took his leave from this earth. Desi quickly charmed us all and trained us well to cater to his every whim. He seemed to appreciate life to its fullest, whether going for walks, playing in the back garden, sitting with a sick or lonely family member, napping while others watched television or read, greeting people, licking hurts and pains away or any other gesture to make our lives better than they were.

Cabot’s cage and Desi’s bed sat next to each other in our kitchen. They spent many hours together there, as we humans did ‘our thing’ elsewhere in the world. No doubt they felt secure, protected and comforted in one another’s company.

The day Desi slipped ‘the surly bonds of Earth’, as poet John McGee penned in ‘High Flight’, Helen and I placed our hands on Desi’s head, offered a silent prayer and allowed him to soar to heights unknown.

No doubt Cabot missed his buddy Desi. So several months later, without consulting any human, he chirped his usual hearty good night, as the blanket descended over his cage. Then during the darkness of the night, he gingerly stepped from his physical body to enter the light of another dimension to join Desi.

They are buried next to each other in what the Newfoundland folk song

writer Otto Kelland called ‘the earth’s cool breast’.

The many joys and pleasures they brought to our lives will fill a lifetime of memories.

The photo of Desi and Cabot was taken in earlier days while they were enjoying an afternoon on our patio. It appeared that Desi was interested in getting to know Cabot, but Cabot was being coy.

**READY - Words behind the photo**

The outpouring of support on the death of our pets was phenomenal. Through emails, telephone calls, cards and personal conversations, we felt that we were surrounded by a caring, empathetic community. Pat summarized the experience as, ‘one of the hardest things to go through in life. We love them so much’.

Florence, a frequent visitor to our home, said, ‘I will miss Desi’s warm and enthusiastic welcome’. Desi and Cabot greeted people with loud hearty voices. Maybe they were fulfilling a covenant described by the Old Testament prophet Hosea (2:14-23). God, in attempting to mend a broken relationship with an unfaithful people, promised an agreement ‘with all animals and birds, so that they would not harm my people’. Could it be that dogs, birds and other animals today are still abiding by the terms of that 2,800 year old contract?

Like many of us, our former neighbour Keren may query the existence of an animal heaven, but she asserted, ‘if there is a doggy heaven, my little dog Alex is probably barking and all excited to welcome his pal Desi’. Similar uncertainties were expressed

by the Bible writer, nicknamed ‘the Preacher’. In Ecclesiastes (3:18-22), he claims that humans ‘are no better than animals’ and ‘since we came from the dust that is where we are going’. He wondered, ‘how can anyone be sure that a person’s spirit goes upward while an animal’s spirit goes down?’, especially since ‘there is no way for us to know what will happen after we die’. Eternal life for humans or animals may not be an option for the Preacher, but what about us post-resurrection believers? Did Jesus’ promise of eternal life extend beyond human beings to the rest of God’s creation? Gerry had no doubts for, in his email, he assured us that ‘dog heaven is a better place today’, because Desi is there.

Shelagh offered comfort by saying, ‘it’s wonderful that you loved Desi enough to let him go’. I think we let him go because he wanted to go, and the question is ‘where?’. The Psalmist gives us an inkling. Psalm 50 (verses 10-11) reiterates God’s sovereignty over all life, ‘all the animals in the forest are mine’, which includes all cattle, birds and ‘all living things’. After their sojourn with our family, Cabot and Desi have now returned to where they rightfully belong. If that is indeed the case, then Monika’s message speaks volumes, ‘now Desi will be pain free, running through heaven with nothing but joy, energy and love’.

When a family pet dies our emotions, intellect, beliefs, traditions, social interactions and physical bodies intersperse and interact as we deal with our grief and search to find a balancing centre of equilibrium in our everyday life. Bobbie called this ‘the anguish you experienced’; going through such



experiences Jesus assures us, ‘I am with you always’ (Matthew 28:20).

**AIM - Questions and actions for you**

- How have pets enhanced your life?
- Consider the relationship among humans, other creatures and God, and how you can make it better locally and globally?
- Did Jesus intend for all creation to be included in His Resurrection prom-

ises, or is eternal life reserved only for humans?

■ 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.

# Keeping the relevance in faith and buildings



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

There was nothing, in my mind as a child, lovelier than old St Mary’s Church, in the former Hamlet of Bartonville, and now many miles inside the City of Hamilton. I was eight when I began to go there and stayed until my wife and I bought our home in another parish. We were married there fifty years ago. Built in 1881 of local limestone it was complete in every way. The Altar Guild always saw that it was at its loveliest at Harvest Festival. It was a lovely place to grow up in and was more than a valued experience for me. I still have two much valued good friends from that time, and the Venerable Earl Clark is happily still with us.

**Long Term Memories**

People and progress came to East Hamilton and a larger church was needed, and great arguments were held as to whether a new church was necessary. The Bishop said it was and so it came to be. Most of the nave became the chancel, and the old chancel became the sacristy. A new nave was constructed to the west, taking out most of the west wall. It was this way for a while and then again a renovation. The walls of the chancel were stripped to the stone and expanded to the whole of the old nave, and the new partly stone altar was set forward. The east window, the porch and bell cote were all removed and replaced inside and out with stone. Fixtures became brass. It was quite a transformation with another large room, offices, chapel and main entrance. The old and historic hall was torn down.

It might be argued that the old building could have stayed and a completely separate new one built, perhaps,

but then the property was situated on a difficult hill. One could also argue that much had been changed or sacrificed for the new building. On the other hand the first building is with us yet, being now 127 years old. People have made it work. It is a good place to be.

**The New Future**

But, what is the future for some of our parishes? Who knows when it may come to a point that a new and larger building might take the place of two or three others, in another place? How will the people feel, what will be the major obstacles? The best answers will lean toward what is right for the Church and the people should move on to the next phase of their life of faith and witness without too great a sense of loss and mourning. It will be a tough choice, yet above all things, people must be called to understand that they alone are the Church wherever it gathers and that the building as much as it may be loved and treas-

ured is quite something else. In life people do move and change parishes for many reasons and surprisingly they survive!

We now are at a space in time when some of our buildings are becoming burdens, and not always because the demographics have changed, but more specifically because they no longer allow us to explore and develop liturgy in new and exciting ways. Two or three small parishes should surely thrive if given a new chance in a new place to worship and mix and mingle in new ministries and good witness. Many folk have already made changes in their lives to good effect.

**A Good and Wise Move**

Not too long ago a parish in Toronto recognized that its ministry in that place was at an end. The congregation was largely elderly and many had been coming at distance from where they had moved. With happiness they approached the close of

their parish. Most had found new spiritual homes, so they divided up their assets, giving many away, and closed the building. The time had come. It was a courageous decision. Whatever that parish meant to those folks was taken with love to their new places of worship. The reality of the parish did not die.

The hardest things people have trouble with are furnishings and windows and bits and pieces given in love and in memory. We need to remember that they were given and no longer ours. But there is wonderful opportunity for the parishioners to give these things away to another parish, who could use them. As I said before it will be tough, but we need to walk away in joy and love, and in the conviction that we have ended a good ministry and are now called to new service in a new place. Let me say again in slightly different words; wherever the people of God come together in worship, that is where the Church is.

# PARISH NEWS



## Prayer Shawl Ministry

**LEE KINGHAM**  
ST. JOHN'S, PORT DALHOUSIE

The Outreach Ministry at St. John's Port Dalhousie, includes the Prayer Shawl Ministry, which began in the United States in 1998. It came to our attention from St. Mary's, Richmond Hill, ON in 2006.

To date, over 160 shawls have been lovingly knit or crocheted by our group and then blessed by Canon Gordon Kinkley at our monthly healing services.

Prayer shawls have been given to family and friends of St. John's, especially those suffering illness, facing surgery or mourning the loss of a loved one. The shawls provide comfort, strength, hope, peace, love and warmth to those experiencing difficult times. They have been delivered to Linhaven Home for the Aged, Gillian's Place and a Breast Screening Unit. A shawl was presented to Susan Bird at our 140th Anniversary Celebration.

We have been able to share special, joyful occasions by giving shawls to Parish Order of Niagara Recipients, students attending University and the birth of a child. Our shawls have been sent to Germany, Scotland, England, California, Alberta, Manitoba, Quebec, New Brunswick and various places in Ontario.

We have been blessed with the opportunity to show our love and concern for others with our Prayer Shawls. We are deeply touched and humbled by the letters and notes of appreciation expressed by recipients of our shawls. They really do make a difference in people's lives, as is evident in the following quotes from thank you letters we have received.

"Thank you so much for the prayer shawl and your prayers. Many nights I clutched the shawl to my chest as I tried to deal with the pain. I was comforted knowing that your prayers were with me."

"I was deeply touched to be a recipient of a prayer shawl. It's meaning is so profound and reminds us of the important things in life, and the love and fellowship we feel in the St. John's family."

"A sincere thanks for the lovely shawl and prayers. It is received with many thanks and will be a reminder of all the people of St. John's and the happy times spent with the children and the Sunday School and Women's Group

and so many people that all worked to a common goal of friendship."

"You have given me a precious gift of care, comfort and love and Lord knows I need it. I will treasure it and give thanks everyday for friends like you. I am truly blessed."

"My shawl will remind me that God is with me as I await my surgery."

A card containing a Prayer of Blessing and a Prayer of Comfort or a Prayer that is appropriate for the occasion is always included with each shawl.

### Prayer of Blessing

May God's grace be upon this shawl; warming, comforting, enfolding and embracing. May this mantle be a safe haven, a sacred place of security and well-being... sustaining and embracing in good times as well as difficult ones. May the one who receives this shawl be cradled in hope, kept in joy, graced with peace and wrapped in love. Blessed Be!

### Prayer of Comfort

As you wrap yourself in this shawl of comfort... May the Mother of Mercy, The Father of Faithfulness and The Spirit of Compassion wrap you in all-encompassing love this day. May you find comfort from all that appears to much to bear at this moment.

From all that feels as if it might be the breaking point. From all that seems to threaten your peace of heart. May this shawl be a shelter for times of overwhelming grief. A shade in times of sorrow too deep for words. A shield from times of unimaginable loss. May you be comforted by the presence of those who love and support you by faith in the Eternal Loving One, by the memories of what you hold most dear. May you be strengthened in your daily comings and goings. In your tentative new beginnings. In your unfolding new memories. Blessings of the Angel of Comfort be with you and all you love now and forevermore. Amen.

If you would like more information on our Prayer Shawl Ministry, we can be contacted at St. John's Anglican Church, 80 Main Street, St. Catharines, ON, L2N 4V2, Telephone 905-935-6021

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Lee Kingham wrote this article on behalf of Marguerite, Irma, Betty T, Beth, Joan, Joyce, June, Lynne, Daisy, Betty C. and Eileen at St. John's Anglican Church in Port Dalhousie.



## One Hundred Mile Luncheon at St. James

**SUE CARSON**  
ST. JAMES DUNDAS

On Sunday, October 5th St. James, Dundas held a 100 Mile Luncheon. The event was hosted by the Justice and Peace Greening Group. All of the food was grown or produced within a 100 miles radius of Dundas. This created a few challenges but as our area of the country must be one of the richest in fruit, meat, dairy and wheat there were plenty of recipes to select from. We were even able to use salt as it is mined in Goderich, Ontario – just within our 100 miles.

### 100 Mile Luncheon Menu

- Beef and vegetable soup with bread
- Quiche and salad with black rasp-

berry dressing

- Baked apples with honey, blueberries and ice cream

Apple cider and herbal tea were also offered. Parishioners were encouraged to bring their own cloth napkins to save using paper ones.

The event was the first of the year in St. James' Lunch 'n' Learn series and Julia Kollek from Environment Hamilton came to speak about Faith and the environment. She spoke during the service and then again during the lunch, which was attended by 90 parishioners and other members of the community. Environment Hamilton is a non-profit organization that helps develop knowledge and skills needed

to protect and enhance the environment. A number of parishioners signed up to participate in an on-line Survey, called Climate Change Champions, which Julia is promoting.

We were reminded that buying local food helps cut back on Greenhouse Gases. Often the food we eat has traveled over a thousand miles to reach us. Buying local also means farm land is protected, farmers can feel secure in their livelihood, and there is a greater choice of produce. Taste and goodness are so much better when food reaches the consumer faster. I'd be happy to give ideas and suppliers names to other churches wanting to host a similar event.

## SAINT LUKE'S HAMILTON YOUTH GROUP



Part of the Saint Luke's Hamilton Youth Group who set out on a pilgrimage to Trinity Church Warton Ontario where besides participating in a High Church "smells and bells" service on the Sunday, had a great time all round. Warton Willy has been adopted as a mascot; plans to revisit Warton next year are in hand.





## St. Hilda's, Oakville: A church that is just a church

**LUCINDA LANDAU**  
ST. HILDA'S, OAKVILLE

In the midst of a break-up, something new is being born. A church community without a budget, committees, staff or even an altar guild is beginning to grow at St. Hilda's in Oakville. "A church that is just a church," is the approach of the newly appointed Priest-in-charge, Reverend Martha Tatarnic. "At this moment in time," said Rev'd Martha, "we have the unique opportunity of gathering simply as Church to worship and to be a community."

St. Hilda's Oakville has received much attention since the vote of its congregation last February to separate from the Anglican Church of Canada and join the Anglican Network. A court decision this past May awarded joint use of the property to the Diocese of Niagara and the Anglican Network group. The Diocese has access to the church specific times during the week, including early Sunday morning for a worship service.

I have been attending Diocesan services at St. Hilda's since Easter. I am currently working as a chaplaincy resident at St. Joe's Healthcare Hamilton and am also a recent MDiv graduate of

Trinity College. I wanted to find a parish where I could put all my divinity training to good use, and I felt a personal call to assist at St. Hilda's. In the midst of change, new possibilities open up - I saw it as an opportunity to start a congregation from scratch. It is my sincere conviction that we will be able to foster not only a new community that is supportive of the Diocese, but innovation in our worship experience.

The invitation to attend Sunday worship at St. Hilda's 8:30 a.m. service is open to everyone, with a particular invitation to those who are members of St. Hilda's but have not agreed, or felt comfortable, with the decision to split. Right now the service is also supported by parishioners from St. Jude's, Oakville. The services reflect a simplified, but creative, model of Anglican worship. People of every age and background are welcome, and despite the early hour, a number of children have been regularly attending. They are encouraged to bring toys into the church, and to feel as comfortable in the service as they would in their own homes.

Rather than host an elaborate coffee hour at the church, the community opts

for post-worship gathering at a local coffee shop. It is an opportunity to witness to our faith outside the church walls, to strengthen our community of worship and perhaps attract others to what we are doing early on a Sunday morning.

St. Hilda's is a community of people free to explore and engage in prayer without some of the traditional trappings of church. Everyone attending recognizes this as a unique adventure. We are compelled to do the majority of our community building outside the church walls - ironically, the limitations imposed by the court on our access to the church buildings may turn out to be our finest asset.

So, if you find the idea of church without bureaucracy appealing, if you are looking for "eckleisa" in its simplest form, come out and experience a fresh approach to worship at St. Hilda's in Oakville.

The doors will be open this coming Sunday at 8:30 a.m., at St. Hilda's on 1258 Rebecca Street, between 3rd and 4th lines of Oakville. For more information, contact Rev'd Tatarnic at 905-616-6972 or check out our website [www.sthildaokville.ca](http://www.sthildaokville.ca).

# Free grace. Really?



**MICHAEL BURSLEM**  
RETIRED PHYSICIAN, ST. GEORGE'S GUELPH

Jerry Salloom compares the price of today's gas with that of grace. One is astronomical, and the other he says is free. But Jerry does not go on to say, as, so called, Bible believing Evangelicals (with a capital E) do, "You've gotta believe in Jesus Christ as your personal savior, or else Satan's gonna getcha: you'll roast in hell." That's putting a price tag on it; it's no longer free; nor is it grace.

On my blog, *Building Bridges*, I saw the question from a Muslim, "Can Christians alone be saved? You quote Jesus' saying "I am the way, the truth and the light, no one comes to the Father but by me." He then asked, "Does this mean that only Christians can be saved?" I replied that many Christians would have different answers to that, (and I would like to hear from others how they would answer) but I did add a quote from Robert Farrar Capon's *The Fingerprints of God* (published by Erdmans in 2000):

"...a passage that I think has been read wrong almost from the start. It's John 14:6: "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but by me." The usual interpretation of the second half of that statement divides the world into two classes of people: those who decide to accept Jesus as their way, truth, and life, and are therefore the beneficiaries of his salvation; and those who don't, and thus are not saved. Even worse, it's been read to say that only practicing Roman Catholics, for example, or proper Missouri Synod Lutherans, or hard-shell Baptists—but certainly not Jews, or Buddhists, or atheists—have Jesus as their ticket to heaven...

"The reason such "Christian exclusiveness" is the wrong interpretation of "no one comes to the Father but by me" is simple: the Word who becomes flesh and dwells among us is God himself, the Word by whom all things... are made. So when Jesus says, "No one comes to the Father but by me," he's talking not about select types who happen to choose him but about the entire human race that's already been chosen by him and in him. And therefore the right way to read this saying of Jesus is to interpret it the same way you would the statement "No mammal can live without air." If that doesn't mean mammals have to decide to breathe air on pain of condemnation (it simply states a fact about all mammalian life), then likewise, no human beings have to select Jesus as their way: they're on the Way no matter what they decide. True, they won't enjoy the trip much if they balk at the ride; but even if they fight it, he's still got them riding with him. Paul got it exactly right: "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (Rom.

8:1)—and there's just nobody who isn't in the Word by whom all things are made."

Offering salvation to everyone who lives on this planet, whether they accept it or not, would seem to me to be the genuine grace that God gives, what John Bowen calls 'the radical liberalism of Jesus.' In other words the 'abundant life' of John 10.10 isn't only for Christians. I find Evangelicals having as much difficulty in fully understanding the concept of grace as the Pharisees did, who thought that salvation was only for Jews. They reason from the Scriptures, as the Pharisees did; they disdain the culture around them, and thank God that they are no way like 'those sinners;' then they separate themselves from others, so as not to get contaminated.

I would not have written this five years ago, because I was then a Conservative Evangelical, as Jerry and friends in Guelph well know. (It took the hijacking of the Progressive Conservative party by the Western regressive conservatives to turn me into a Liberal. I refused to embrace their brand of conservatism and am now a proud member of the Liberal party.) So it has taken the recent dispute in the church to cause me to rethink my position here too. I thankfully have now cast off my conservative straightjacket and have embraced liberalism.

Jesus was the first post-modernist. As a Middle-Easterner he would have used picture language; using image after image, side by side one another, without any verb, such as "is" or "is like." In English we like to be more precise; we see such similes or metaphors as flashing equal signs. But Jesus left it to his hearers to take home whatever image they wished to hear, and that was right for them, but not necessarily for any one else. One listener could be as a-theist as Jack Spong; another as supra-naturalist as C.S. Lewis. I think in the 21st century we need to think a-theistically, so as to be able to talk to a-theists, but leave the door wide open so that we can enter that 'other world,' so that, when we return to this world, we see it differently.

Having visited that 'other world' we see through eyes of faith, through which we can see that God was indeed in Christ, reconciling the world to himself. Therefore, the world, and the culture of the world in which we live, is not evil, as Evangelicals say it is, because God has made it good. I admit that one does need the eyes of faith to really see it, because without them the world looks pretty awful. Sure there was the Fall, the effects of which with our natural eyes we see all around us; but Christ has overcome that, and we no longer live in a fallen world, but in a resurrected one.

This is why I think that so much Evangelical teaching is just a parody of what Jesus actually taught. It offers us 'free' grace, but with a price tag, and for my Muslim brothers and sisters, and for most of us too, that's far, far higher than today's price of gas.

## St. John's Port Dalhousie Celebrates 140th anniversary in spectacular fashion

**CARL SNEYD AND MAREE STASIAK**  
RECTORS WARDEN AND PEOPLES WARDEN

Recently, St. John's Anglican Church in Port Dalhousie celebrated the 140th Anniversary of the laying of the Church Cornerstone with a Gourmet Feast followed by a Dinner Show. Our Honoured Guests were Bishop Michael Bird and Susan Bird. The food was prepared and served by Chef Paul's Catering and was fantastic. The Dinner show was divided into various timelines stretching from 1868 to 1978. Each skit was written and performed by our talented and enthusiastic parishioners.

Just prior to the Dinner Show, David Cargill, the Chairman of our Cemetery board made a special presentation to St. John's. This consisted of a complete audiovisual set-up; one benefit of which will be the ability to see services in the Upper Hall as they are being conducted in the Church. This equipment includes

all new speakers and wiring, a High Definition Video Camera and tripod as well as a Fifty-Two Inch Plasma Television. This will be a great addition to St. John's.

The next day we gathered in the Church for a very special service for the Feast of St. John the Baptist. Our guest preacher that morning was Bishop Clarence Mitchell. Bishop Clarence was the rector of this parish from 1956-1959 and his many friends here welcomed his return.

We also had as Gospeller the Reverend Mark Kingham. Father Mark is a child of this parish, and in the early day of Father Gordon's ministry here, Mark was a server, head server and chalice bearer. Father Mark is at present the rector of St. Mary's Anglican Church in Richmond Hill. It was great to have Father Mark back to share in this celebration with us.

We were very fortunate that special

morning to also welcome our guest trumpeter, Rob Perrault and we thank him for sharing his talents with us.

After the Service the Ladies of St. John's served us a beautiful Victorian Tea in Smiley Hall. Some Ladies and Gentlemen actually wore Victorian era garments to add the festive atmosphere of the occasion. When the tea was winding down our People's Warden, Maree Stasiak began the auction of the various donated "Theme Baskets". Bidding was fast and furious and was supported handsomely.

As celebrations drew to a close that Sunday we thanked the two ladies from St. John's who organized and spearheaded the whole event, Kathy Penton and Barbara Butts, as well as all the parishioners who helped in anyway, great job ladies.

It leaves this writer thinking "What do we do to top this in 2009 for the 175th Anniversary of the Parish?"

# The Ten Commandments

## How far have we strayed?



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

As I listened to the Old Testament Lesson on the 21st day after Pentecost, (Exodus 20 – Moses receiving the Ten Commandments) I was suddenly awakened by the fact that we as a society have strayed drastically from those commandments that Moses received on Mount Sinai. Are these commandments relevant in our society? Should we even bother to weave them into our daily lives? Do we need a new set of values with which our spiritual world and every day lives should be governed? As I listened to each commandment, my mind flashed with events and tragedies in the world around me and in my life that prove that God's commandments have been all but forgotten.

Even before Canon Lynda Kealey delivered her homily my first thoughts were that the "Sabbath Day" means little to society as a whole anymore. A few examples and there are many more - stores are open, sports activities rule many families, city jobs (particularly non-union contracted out jobs) continue and something that I particularly have noticed the presence of eighteen-wheeler plus transports on our roads. Sunday is no longer the holy and restful day it was designed by God to be. How many among us can say that we truly keep the Sabbath day once we have attended our place of worship? I am as guilty as the next person.

The elimination of many of the commandments from the thoughts of a good proportion of society is evident with the increase in crime especially home invasions, murders, and theft. Without mounting a political platform I know that this increase stems, in many cases, from the loss of good paying jobs in our community. However, if we were not possession driven or have this need to keep up with the neighbours and live beyond our income, the crime rate might be less in some areas of society. Another factor is the increase in substance abuse. How have we allowed addiction to take such a stranglehold on society? Our papers are full of depressing stories of murder and theft and vandalism to satisfy this need.

How many of us have aging relatives in the immediate family? Are you their power of attorney? How many of you have read about the abuse of this power by family members by inappropriately using their funds to finance addictions or other needs and worse still the physical abuse given to aging parents by the caregiver?

Matrimony is no longer a life-long commitment. How many marriages last into a second decade or even half a decade these days? On many occasions it is the "other person" who comes into the life of one or other of the parties. Even what appears to be a good safe marriage can often result in a sudden surprise ending.

Have we ever considered what we say about a friend or neighbour when they are not in our presence? Have we been totally honest in our thoughts and words? Do some people ever outgrow their childish ways of pitting one friend against the other? The increase in slanderous remarks seems to be on the increase in our society. Some people think nothing of using debasing remarks about neighbours or friends. The politicians are great examples of this. Just read the political pages in the newspapers both in Canada and the USA.

In an attempt to make reference to all the commandments that society has lost then I must include one more. How many of use the name of God or His son in a situation when there are more appropriate words in the dictionary that could be used. How did we come to use God's name other than when praying. Is it from the many times when we did call on God when we were in trouble and now we seem to use His name even when we aren't really in need of Him? We do this without thinking.

There is probably a whole generation of Christians who have never been exposed to, let alone know, the existence of the 10 Commandments. Is this the reason that we are in the state we are today? What can we do to prevent the deterioration of society any further? How can we present to this generation a set of relevant values based on the commandments to ensure society does not decline further? How can we advise and counsel those who have missed this spiritual education. The public school system is so academia driven that there is little or no time to teach values that would mirror the commandments. Many families are turning away from attending church: therefore their children are missing out on the lessons that lay the ground work that might instill morals and ethics. It is difficult to teach our young proper values when movies, television, and video games exploit the debasement of human beings, and promote violence and murder.

Finally have we built new idols? Is society worshipping other gods? Are the idols or gods possessions and the need to have more? Or does society itself feel that it no longer needs to follow a set of values on which life should be based? Have we put aside our love of God with the misconception that we can survive in this world without Him? How far have we strayed?



## The glories of the Book of Common Prayer

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

Some of the younger members of the Greater Niagara Prayer Book Society Branch were addressed by their President, Mr. Alex Urquhart during their Sept. Ad-hoc meeting at Saint Luke's Hamilton during the dinner portion of the monthly Salsa dance held there.

His tales of being at Lambeth 2008

and working the PBSC booth there and dealing with bishops from all over the world were greatly entertaining as he gave them the inside stories with a humorous insight.

Many a bishop and many a bishop's wife will fondly remember young Alex handing out quantities of the maroon PBSC emblazoned umbrellas which were part of the Prayer Book Society's arsenal. And many will

long remember his salesmanship on the glories of the Book of Common Prayer.

More ideas and plans were advanced at the meeting including the launch of The Cranmer Conference 2009 which should keep the branch very busy this year. We are sure that with its new young executive the branch has the energy and the determination to make it all happen.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1 »

## A roller coaster of a ride!

And so we find our greatest limitations become our greatest assets.

We are a brand-new community. We have no template. We have no "this is the way we've always done it," and no expectations about how we need to look and operate. Each of us is here on a Sunday morning only because somewhere inside us, we are willing to be adventurous. This is an adventure. An unavoidable reminder each and every time we step foot into St. Hilda's building that our relationship with God is an exciting, spine-tingling, surprising, roller coaster of a ride – how great is that?

### No limitation

And following on its heels is the equally exciting reality that we are Structure-Less. We have no membership list, no committees, no meetings, no programs, no councils. We do not need to "join" St. Hilda's church, nor do we need to ask anyone else to do so – although we may very well want to invite others to *participate* in our community life. Our lack of bureaucracy must be celebrated as an incredible freedom – a freedom to be God's people, to embark on this adventure with one another, to develop friendship and relationship on the way, and to engage in the practices of prayer, service, and reflection which allow us to know God's power and love in real and tangible ways.

It is actually not a limitation at all that we have so limited access to this church building and that we are in indefinite limbo as to the legal future of these four walls. This situation forces us to re-imagine church in its

original incarnation – as a community of people, rather than a building. Our actions of Christian service will not be organized out of 1258 Rebecca Street – we will instead have to be intentional about the small choices of our daily lives, how we choose to engage the world around us.

Our practices of prayer, of Biblical reflection, of outreach, service and Christian formation, will not be deepened through coming to St. Hilda's for Programs. Instead, if we wish to more intentionally nurture our relationships with one another and our exploration of our faith, we will do so by gathering for coffee at the local Tim Horton's, or meeting in one another's homes to share hospitality and God's fellowship in more intimate and domestic ways.

### Becoming Church

At this moment in time, we have the unique opportunity of gathering simply as Church, simply to fulfil two basic, defining, mandates. One: we gather to worship God – to offer joyful and troubled, silent and celebratory, repentant and grateful, nourishing and challenging, worship. Two: we gather to be a community.

The word 'church' comes from the Greek word *ecclesia*, which means nothing more than 'community.' And this community, even more than the act of worship, is what defines us as church. Why? Because as Kurt Vonnegut insightfully points out, we are not built to stand alone. We are built to be part of a wide, deep, multi-generational, complex and diverse web of relationships. When we stand alone, we become merely a survival unit.

When we acknowledge and strengthen our relationships with one another, when we come to church, with a group of people we don't custom-pick with whom we are somehow meant to walk this road of faith, we are brought into the life-giving awareness of the truth that, like it or not, the joys of one are the joys of all, the sorrows of one are the sorrows of all, and God creates us that we might learn to care for one another.

It is a sad thing indeed that some of our brothers and sisters believe that the ways in which we are bound to one another can somehow be severed. However, out of that sadness comes a profound opportunity. We can be Church. Scaled down and uncertain as this situation is, we can be people who choose community, who choose to find strength and vitality together, rather than alone. We can, at 8:30 on a Sunday morning, find our lives – with all of their cares and concerns, worries and busy-nesses – blessed by God's love and goodness.

If you were a member of St. Hilda's, but have felt uncomfortable with, or unhappy about, the split, Come Back. Be part of how we are starting something new. If you live in the Oakville area, but for whatever reason have not been able to connect to a church community, offer the gift of your presence, your questions, your hopes and imaginings for what 'church' can be. We who have been creating, week by week, Anglican worship at St. Hilda's church, have been blessed in sharing this adventure with one another. Find yourself both blessed and blessing in participating with us.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5 »

## Victims and victors

There she lectured Lech Walesa on the virtues of the free market system. For Reagan and Thatcher, social democracy was not real democracy and a mixed economy was inferior to a free market one.

This economic fundamentalism was stronger than the religious fundamentalism from which it arose. Both were characterized by rigid doctrine, the belief that all problems are due to deviations from doctrine, and the determination that pain is inevitable if these problems are to be solved. The economic fundamentalists of the nineties employed three strategies. All of them were used in Yugoslavia. The first strategy was economic destabilization. Increase the interest rates to usurious levels (in this case, 18%) and offer debt relief with strong strings attached. The second strategy was divide and rule. Offer debt relief, not to the Federal government, but to its constituent republics, notably Croatia and Slovenia. If the country has internal conflicts, support one faction against the other. In the Lisbon Agreement of 1992, the Bosnian Croats, Muslims, and Serbs agreed to a country of ethnic cantons like Switzerland. The US encouraged the Muslims to break the agreement. War immediately broke out in Bosnia. The third strategy was to mount a propaganda campaign to persuade the American people and their allies that they were acting to defend freedom and democracy. This was the least fragrant

of the three methods. It deserves special mention.

Croatia hired the services of a public relations firm called Ruder Finn to manipulate American public opinion into bombing Serbia. Interviewed by Jacques Merlino of French television, James Harff, a director of Ruder Finn, boasted how, using deliberately misleading photographs, they were able to equate Serbs with Nazis in the public mind. During WWII, the Croatian Ustashe supported the Nazis and murdered 600,000 Serbs. The Bosnians and the Albanian Kosovars raised battalions for the SS. The Serbs were our brave allies. Dragoljub Mihailovic, the Chetnik resistance fighter, was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honour for saving the lives of over 600 American airmen shot down over Yugoslavia. In the 1990s, a pro-Ustashe government in Croatia, an Islamist, ex-Nazi president in Bosnia, and Albanian nationalists in Kosovo threatened the Serbs living in these areas. During EU negotiations to relieve these tensions, Germany recognized the independence of its wartime ally, Croatia, despite the warning of the EU chief negotiator, Lord Carrington, and the UN Secretary General that this would make peace impossible. They were proved right. Serbia did not cause the Yugoslav civil wars and the charge that they were Nazis is ludicrous.

Because of the propaganda campaign, in 1995, with US and NATO

support, the Croats were able to attack the Krajina Serbs. They killed 14,000 and expelled 200,000 into Bosnia and Serbia. There was no international protest! Again, in 1998, in support of the Kosovar Albanians, the US flew 38,000 combat missions over Serbia for 78 days. By the end of the war, 900,000 Serbs had been ethnically cleansed from Croatia, Bosnia, and Kosovo.

NATO launched attacks with Cruise missiles and bombs on a sovereign state, a founding member of the United Nations and the Non-Aligned Movement, and against a people who were at the forefront of the fight against Nazi Germany. I consider these actions unworthy of our great country, one which God has so richly blessed. We believed so many lies about the Balkan wars, that we should be ashamed of ourselves. We let the liars get away with it, and they gave us more lies, this time about Weapons of Mass Destruction in Iraq. These same people are now asking for 700 billion dollars to deal with a crisis in the financial system, which they created by their own laissez-faire deregulation. How many more times shall we sit by passively and let them lie to us, make war on innocent civilians, and distort the monetary system to favour the rich and powerful? Truly, we deserve the world that we have. Forget about blaming God. The present world is the best one that we have let God make!

## The Amazing Grace Project

On Sunday, November 23 (The Reign of Christ), Anglican churches across Canada will gather to sing "Amazing Grace". It's the "Amazing Grace Project", an opportunity to express our unity in Christ and our common hope. It's also an opportunity to raise some money in support of the Council of the North – the Project leaders (staff and committee members in Communications and Information Resources at General Synod) is asking that each participant contribute a toonie for ministry in the Canadian North. Finally, each participating congregation is asked to make a video recording of their rendition, and forward it to the Project team at 80 Hayden Street – the National Office.

The Amazing Grace Project has a website – <http://www2.anglican.ca/amazinggrace>, with videos of a number of groups and individuals singing Amazing Grace, along with background information on the Council of the North, the Feast of the Reign of Christ, and on the hymn itself and its composer. Here is what the website says about "Amazing Grace":

*"Amazing Grace" was written by John Newton (1725-1807), who worked as a captain in the slave trade for many years, before surviving a catastrophic storm at sea in March 1748 when he was an ordinary passenger on board. He vowed that if he survived he would change his life.*

*For the rest of his life, Newton*

*observed the storm date as the day "the Lord sent from on high, and delivered me out of deep waters." After leaving the slave trade and working as a tide surveyor for nine years, Newton was ordained as a Church of England curate at the age of 39. The hymn we now know as "Amazing Grace" was first published in a collection known as the Olney Hymns in 1779. (Among his other well-known hymns are "Glorious Things of Thee Are Spoken" and "How Sweet the Name of Jesus Sounds.")*

*In 1780 Newton moved to the Parish of St. Mary's Woolnoth in London where he remained until his death. Newton's sermons were heard and admired by William Wilberforce, the English MP and campaigner against slavery. Newton died in 1807, the same year that Britain abolished the slave trade with the passing of the Anti-Slavery Bill. (Slavery itself remained legal in Britain and its colonies until 1838.)*

The Amazing Grace Project can be, for Canadian Anglicans, a visible celebration of our unity in a time of considerable tension, and an accomplishment in support of ministries in Canada's North. If you haven't heard about it in your parish, you may want to offer your leadership. There's lots of help on the website under "Get Involved".

On Sunday, November 23, let's celebrate the song, the story, and the power of God's "Amazing Grace".

## Make a real difference - share your Christmas with a family in need...

Christmas is coming but it won't be an easy time for hundreds of families that will be registering with St. Matthew's House Christmas Adopt-a-family program early in November. If you, your family, parish, choir or group are looking for a special way to share your Christmas with a family experiencing hard times, St. Matthew's House offers you an opportunity to make a real difference.

Last year St. Matthew's House Christmas program helped 4,285 family members and individuals. Based on the numbers of families suffering from the impact of poverty in Hamilton - at least one in five -, unemployment and financial hardships, we expect to help as many or more families to enjoy a happier Christmas. Too many of them are at risk of becoming homeless.

Three ways you can sponsor a family:

- Provide the food for Christmas dinner for a family of two to five people or for a larger family.
- Or, provide new unwrapped toys for children or gifts for teenagers.
- Or, sponsor a large or small family by supplying Christmas dinner as well as one new gift for each child according to the size of family chosen. St. Matthew's House suggests gift certificates from A&P, The Barn, Food Basics, Fortinos or No Frills to cover the cost of meat or main course (for the size of family chosen.) You can also supply potatoes, vegetables and dessert.



As a suggested guideline, you should be able to sponsor a family of four for \$150. - \$175. If it is not feasible to provide food or gifts, you can help sponsor a family by giving a donation to:

**St. Matthew's House Christmas Adopt-a-family Program**  
**St. Matthew's House**  
**414 Barton Street East, Hamilton, L8L 2Y3**  
*Income tax receipts will be provided*

St. Matthew's House provides sponsors with first names of family members, plus ages and sizes of children. Sponsors will bring the food and gifts to the Christmas program site located at: **The Wentworth Campus, Mohawk College, 196 Wentworth St. North, Hamilton on December 10, 11 and 12** for distribution to families.

Families registered at St. Matthew's House are eligible for assistance from only one agency, thereby avoiding duplication.

Please call **Debra House** at St. Matthew's House (905) 523-5546 until October 31. After November 3, please call the Christmas Program (905) 522-4584 if you wish to sponsor a family or to obtain more information. Thank you for remembering children and families most in need at St. Matthew's House this Christmas. We send our best wishes for every blessing to you and your loved ones this Christmas season.



**St. Matthew's House**  
 Helping People Most in Need Across Hamilton

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Understanding the feelings of others

I greatly appreciated Eleanor Johnson's letters about Lambeth (*Niagara Anglican*, October 2008). They are a salutary reminder to all those who take the conservative view of same sex relationships that when we discuss this issue we are not talking about airy-fairy abstractions but about real,

flesh-and-blood people in real, loving, committed relationships.

This means that those holding the conservative view need not only to be clear about their orthodoxy, but need also to put their pastoral care where their mouths are—in a word, to be equally committed to orthodoxy. That will mean being willing to give sacrificial and long-term pastoral care to those they counsel to break off same sex relationships. Eleanor Johnson has

given us a sobering reminder of this.

Having said that, I wonder if she would consider the challenge of using the same literary technique to help us understand the views and feelings of other misunderstood minorities. It would be helpful, for example, to read a similar correspondence between a lesbian committed to celibacy (on the grounds of what she would say is biblical faithfulness) and a friend, over the same-sex votes at recent synods.

Such sisters (and brothers) are constantly marginalized and ridiculed—not to mention being deeply hurt by the attitude of their church—and Eleanor's approach might help in fostering greater understanding and love for them.

Would that be asking her to stretch her sympathies too far? I hope not.

JOHN BOWEN  
*St. John the Evangelist, Hamilton*

# The gift that keeps on giving

CHARLES STIRLING  
CHAIR, PUBLISHERS' ADVISORY BOARD

I feel called, to offer the full support of the PAB (Publishers Advisory Board), to commend and encourage Chris Grabiec and John Janisse of the Dunham Group for their limitless work. Both of these men have contributed hours of time, (much of which is not charged to the Diocese,) in the production of its leading paper, your own *Niagara Anglican* and the Diocesan Web Site. It has not been an easy task. The Government of Canada, through Canada Post has continued to raise its charges for deliv-

ery; I suppose hoping to end this kind of Christian communication for its carriers in the face of a very multicultural religious experience. The PAB, of which I am Chair, has been studying and working toward the expectation more folk will come to be on the computer web. The accomplishment of this would end delivery charges and people could receive the *Niagara Anglican* on their web sites, with no delivery cost. For those without the web, parishes could produce copies for those folk and see that they get them. This, of course, is still in the near future, but is coming for certain.

The *Niagara Anglican* and its classic web site is widely read by people around the world, who check our web site in large numbers to share in its first rate communication. Indeed communication is important to your PAB members, who dedicate their time, and who come from different backgrounds and theologies. In fact, it is an intense working group, who work to understand one another in spite of our differences. In that way we are a dedicated and formidable group, who have a grip on the issues that challenges the Church these days, and communicate to you

the wider thoughts of the Anglican Church.

This also comes as an appeal to support the *Niagara Anglican*, who rarely receives any financial communication from the diocese. In spite of this, it operates economically and justly as a communication that respects an independent editorial policy, in the same way as the national, *Anglican Journal*.

Will you help to keep your *Niagara Anglican* alive in your diocese? Send your donations to the *Niagara Anglican*, 252 James St North, Hamilton, Ontario L8R 2L3, and keep alive the gift that keeps on giving.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1 »

# It was not my Father

I tell our children, "If wishes were horses..." But last week I wished it had been him. What a fine surprise it would have been, his showing up so unexpectedly. Nine years ago, or eight, such a thing was possible, not



The power of the darkness to define the day is somehow broken.

inconceivable. Seven, even, though by then his health was very fragile, the heart that would soon stop already weak and tired.

It was — of course — someone else, some shape and size of person who stood there for those minutes. He had no idea who he wasn't. I knew who he wasn't, though. He wasn't the man who carried me into church three weeks after my birth, to be baptized. He wasn't the man (a bit older now) who played along with my plan to go live with my grandfather, then followed in his car for the (few) miles it took me to get homesick. He wasn't the man with whom I engaged in that most common of relationships — mutual storming between snarly adolescence and melancholy mid-life. (It got better.) He wasn't that man, but his mere

similarity, present across the room, brought memory and grief alive — and sombre gratitude.

The Sunday of Labour Day weekend is "Decoration Day" at St. James' Cemetery, Clandeboye. Every year, on Saturday, my father went to the market and came home with armloads of gladiolus, then kept them in water in the laundry tub until Sunday afternoon, when we would go to place them on the graves of his ancestors. We started with those most distant in time and blood, and ended with his mother, Eulilia, who died before I was born, and his father, James Eli, who left the smell of scotch mints and tobacco in my commandeered bedroom when he visited. My father taught me that walking around a grave, and not on it, was a sign of respect.

November is the month we clean the cave-troughs, gathering the wet, cold, decaying remnants of summer with freezing hands. It is a darkening month. In November the lake is slate-grey and the ground is hard. There are no breezes in November, only wind. Of our summer gardens, only the grasses remain. It is the month of my father's birth, and of his death. In this month, his older brothers and sister, with his mother and his father, welcomed him to this earth. And in this month his one surviving sister stood with his wife, his children and

their children gathered again to place him in this earth, fifty feet from his father's grave.

We are mortal. And more brief than it appears, setting out. We remember how endless the summer between grade one and grade two seemed on the luminous last day of school. And then, just like that, we find ourselves scarfing candy floss and riding the merry-go-round at the fall fair. November is the month all of that becomes so very clear. It is a looming month, an outcropping of granite, a long shadow of how things end. We mark its starting with All Saints' Day, and All Souls'. We keep two minutes' silence, hear again of Flanders' Field, and honour those whose entered into the darkness of war and did not return. We light more fires, wear more sweaters, and, I suspect, carry more sadness in our souls.

It is in this month, in this darkness, in the face of our brevity, our mortality, of our losses and our loss, in this month of decaying summer remnants and iron skies that we will celebrate a feast of victory at the Reign of Christ. We will hear tidings from Ezekiel of God's particular interest in the lost, the strayed, the injured. And we will hear from Jesus that what makes us recognizable to him is not that we are successful, powerful, or even undamaged, but

that we find and realize our capacity for kindness to others. The reign of Christ is vindication for the lost and broken, for those who for the sake of love have been willing to entertain the heartache that is its inevitable companion.

And this year, Advent will begin as November ends. Having spent a month contemplating the end of things, the setting sun, the darkling western sky, the song will call out to us, "People look east!" At the far end of the month, we will light the first candle of the Advent wreath, an act combining trust and defiance. Not because of any other sign — lengthening days or lightening skies — but because of a promise made, because of a new birth both long ago and just around the corner, the power of the darkness to define the day is somehow broken.

November is the month I think of Bruce Cockburn's song, "Closer to the Light", written in response to the death of Mark Heard, a gifted and spirited Canadian songwriter:

Gone from mystery into mystery,  
Gone from daylight into night:  
Another step deeper into darkness —  
Closer to the light.

It was not my father. But it was a moment more than empty.

## The Niagara Anglican

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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  
Proofreading: Bryan Stopps

Submissions

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## The Diocese of Niagara

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

Bishop of Niagara: 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

## PEOPLE IN THE NEWS

■ Ordination to the Priesthood: Sunday, November 30th – 4 p.m. – Christ’s Church Cathedral – Preacher: The Very Reverend Peter Wall, Dean of Niagara and Rector of Christ’s Church Cathedral. Candidates to be announced.

■ Congratulations and best wishes to Pat and Ed Jenkins, from the Ridge Parish, who will celebrate their 50th Wedding Anniversary on November 8.

■ The Reverend Canon Terry DeForest has been appointed interim pastor at St. John’s Church, Stewarttown, effective October 24.

■ Congratulations to the Reverend Rob Hurkmans and Mrs. Sally Hurk-

mans, on the birth of their daughter, Petra, on October 10 in Welland.

■ Congratulations to Archdeacon John Rathbone, Diocesan Archivist, and Honorary Assistant at St. Stephen on the Mount, Hamilton, on being awarded the Senior Achievement Award from the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration. Archdeacon Rathbone was chosen as one of twenty five recipients in the Province of Ontario and presented with the award on October 8 in Toronto.

■ Gordon Askwith, a long time and faithful member of the diocese, died on October 6. A Memorial Service was held at St. Luke’s, Burlington, on October 17.

■ The Reverend Martha Tatarnic appointed Diocesan Administrator of St. Hilda’s Church, Oakville, effective September 15.

■ The Reverend Canon Dr. Brian Ruttan appointed interim pastor at St. Andrew’s Church, Grimsby, effective September 15.

■ Deepest sympathy to Kim Waltmann, member of staff in the Finance Department, on the death of her father, Ken McConnell of Bobcaygeon, on September 8. Funeral service was held at Knox Presbyterian Church, Bobcaygeon, on September 13.

■ Congratulations and best wishes to

Archdeacon Peter Moore, and Mrs. June Moore, of Guelph, on their 50th Wedding Anniversary which was celebrated on September 13.

■ The Reverend Melodie Edwards issued a bishop’s permission as Honorary Assistant at St. David and St. Patrick’s Church, Guelph, under the direction of the rector, effective September 10.

■ Congratulations to Debbie Young, member of staff in the Finance Department, on the birth of her first grandchild: Ethan James, born September 10, to proud parents Kelly and Gord.

■ The Venerable Michael Patterson

issued a bishop’s permission as Honorary Assistant at Church of the Incarnation, Oakville, under the direction of the rector, effective September 8.

■ John Wilson’s lay reader’s license renewed at St. Luke’s Church, Smithville, under the direction of the rector, effective October 1.

■ Happy 50th Anniversary to the Reverend Donald Coombe and Mrs. Doris Coombe, who celebrated this significant anniversary on October 18.

■ Congratulations to Canon Mark McDermott who retires from full time ministry and as rector of Grace Church, Milton, October 31.

# Rainbows: Helping children through challenging times

WENDY HART  
ST. JUDE’S OAKVILLE

*“Red and yellow and pink and green, purple and orange and blue. I can see a rainbow; see a rainbow; see a rainbow, too.”*

Does anyone remember this song about rainbows? It was actually used to promote Jell-O gelatine in the sixties and seventies. Hard to imagine such a little ditty being so popular – but not so hard to imagine why the symbol of a rainbow might be used to promote something as colourful as Jell-O. After all, a rainbow is vibrant, it’s the sunshine after the rain, it’s the brilliance coming out of the clouds, it is diverse but each band of the rainbow is connected to each other, and it inspires hope.

No wonder we see the symbol of the rainbow in so many cultures and religions – from the rainbow in the story of Noah’s Ark to the tales of pots of gold at the end of every rainbow in Irish folklore. Often though we see rainbows as a sign of better things to come after the flood,

the rainstorm, a symbol that offers hope and support after a loss, a death, a divorce or an unpleasant experience.

That is what Rainbows Canada is all about, an international organization celebrating over 20 years of experience with grieving children and young adults. Rainbows has helped to fill a void in the lives of many families – when we, as adults, are so often overwhelmed by grief and loss, we often don’t understand how to help our children survive emotionally as well.

Rainbows mission statement says that “Rainbows is an international, not-for-profit organization that fosters emotional healing among children grieving a loss from a life-altering crisis.” Rainbows connects with children, their families, their friends and community by educating and building public awareness about the growing number of children experiencing a significant loss or issue in their lives; the organization provides grieving youth with support and loving listeners, provides training for volunteers to work

with youth and fosters a spirit of diversity and inclusiveness by being open to children of all races and religions, serving as an advocate for all children and youth who face life-altering crises. Best of all, Rainbows is volunteer-driven, with no annual fee and no cost to youth participants or their families.

At St. Jude’s Anglican Church in Oakville, the idea of starting a Rainbows community outreach program began in spring 2005 with a conversation about children’s needs. This was followed quickly by some phone calls to the Rainbows Canada Office in Barrie, and in quick succession a presentation from the Regional Rainbows Director in Hamilton, the selection of a number of volunteer facilitators, some training of the facilitators and the launch of St. Jude’s Rainbows in January 2006.

The children who participated in the Rainbow sessions at St. Jude’s were between six and 12 years old (primary school aged). The program has been so successful it has expanded to include two

high school students in 2008.

So what do Rainbows participants at St. Jude’s find?

“What they find is a safe and supportive environment to process their feelings about a painful event in their lives,” said Wendy Hart, Director of Family Services at St. Jude’s Anglican. “The children can also build self esteem and learn positive coping skills to last a lifetime. The most important thing they learn is that it doesn’t have to hurt forever.”

This is accomplished through a unique 14 week peer support program that helps children share their stories and feelings with others who are experiencing or have experienced the same struggles, feelings and emotions. One of the most important learning tools gained is the development of a language that helps each child identify how they feel about what is going on in their personal lives – and this time is “me” time. Children are provided with individual attention and support that is given for them only. Children also learn

that the program is confidential and their privacy is respected.

“The key to Rainbows success is that it is a mentoring program, not a counselling program,” said the Reverend Dr. Michael Thompson, Rector, St. Jude’s Church. “We know from our daily lives at work or school how important it is to have a mentor, someone who grounds us, supports us and encourages us. At Rainbows, the children connect with each other, just like the bands in a rainbow, and actually become very close and caring towards each other – even if many of them were strangers at the beginning.”

The future objectives for Rainbows at St. Jude’s is to continue to grow and flourish, including training more facilitators so that more and more children can participate.

The next series of Rainbows is scheduled to start at St. Jude’s in January 2009. For more information, please contact Wendy Hart at 905-844-3972.

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## All signs come from God

GRAHAME STAP  
RETIRED PRIEST

Two people I know released a CD recently. There are some great songs on it; one I particularly like is called *Saints and Sinners*. However, there is a line in the song that I wonder about, “I remember the lessons of Sunday School and I cant help thinking maybe I was a fool, for I see no signs of a greater plan just the joy and the sorrow of my fellow man.”

Both of these people profess to be atheists and I know that tragedy has affected one of them but that is their story and not mine. For me there are two questions that come from this line. One, why do we always seem to be looking for a sign to prove the existence of God? Two, if we see a sign why do we not share it with others.

Jesus said, “Why does this generation ask for a sign? Truly I tell you, no sign will be given to this generation.” Mark 8:12

We are fortunate that we live now

and not in that generation; for if we look there are signs all around us. The fall colours are a sign of the presence of God. We know they come about because of the shortening days and the colder temperatures but why? We may be able to explain and understand the nature that God put in place, but this does not change the fact that God made it so. The rainbow is another example. Again we know it is the result of the sun shining through the rain but God in Gods wisdom made it so. We need to stop being so blasé about things around us and give credit to God for such wondrous beauty that truly show us the presence of the one who created all things.

Secondly when we come to see the beauty of God in all things, why do we hoard it to ourselves? Why do we not let all people see and feel the presence of God in the beauty of our world?

What happens when we don’t see the signs of God? We start to doubt the existence of God or blame God for the sorrow in our lives; we forget that God never

takes, God only gives. When someone close to us dies we feel the pain of loss and we wonder why the person has died especially if they were a young person. We tend to blame God when perhaps what we should do is thank God for being there in our time of need and for holding the one who has died in God’s arms.

Of course this does not stop our pain but it does help us to know that we will, one day, meet again with the one that has died and it will be as if it never happened. We will laugh and talk together and know the wonder of God’s Grace. As Jesus said, “In my Father’s house there are many dwelling places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you?”

So let us see the signs of God in all things including the joy and sorrow of our fellow man. Let us open the doors of our churches wide so that all may enter and know God is truly alive and well; let us share all the signs of God and help all to know we are all blessed.

# November reflections Feet: "How Beautiful!"



**ALAN COOK**  
ABC AND AUGSBURG FORTRESS.

"Since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely and run with perseverance the race that is set before us..." (Hebrews 12:1)

## Biographies of the Saints

When I lived in the L'Arche community of 'Daybreak' in Richmond Hill during the 1990's, I loved the daily services (often led by the community's pastor, the priest and writer, Henri Nouwen). We used the 'missalette', a booklet with the readings for the daily mass. The lections are often linked to the story of a saint, whose biography is printed at the back of the booklet. Reading these stories each day I became more conscious of the "great cloud of witnesses" who have "run the race" before me, and on whose shoulders the church now stands. The Roman church of course teaches their stories because they invite believers to go to the saints as intercessors on their behalf. As a Protestant, I was taught to reject this belief, but we seem to have thrown out the baby with the bathwater. For most of us, I suspect, our knowledge of the cloud of witnesses is rooted in our contemporary parish and the saints of the Bible, with little in between.

Occasionally we try to make up for this, for example ABC's *Canadian Church Diaries* print the saints' days, but few would regularly look into their biographies. How can we find out more about our Christian heroes? For *All the Saints* is a large compendium of the readings for all the saints' days which includes their life stories and the appropriate collects. It has recently been reissued in a beautiful edition by ABC (\$74.95). It's also available on the CD-ROM of the Anglican liturgy, which makes all the liturgies available for legal reproduction in bulletins, overheads or PowerPoint. Children love to read these stories, too. Eerdmans publishers has an excellent line of illustrated stories of the saints. I found *The Legend of St Christopher* (\$20.95) for example, to be a dazzling rendition of the story of the 'Christ-carrier'. Augsburg Fortress is now the

Canadian distributor for Eerdmans' religious books, so we always have a good stock ready for you.

## Death and bereavement.

November is of course the season to reflect on our mortality. Western culture has distanced most people from the realities of death and dying but our hearts yearn for meaning even if society does not encourage that. Of course, the Church speaks out against this to offer hope and support in the light of the resurrection. Granger Westberg is a Lutheran pastor whose little book, *Good Grief* (\$5.50) remains a best seller after nearly 30 years. James E. Miller's *Winter Grief and Summer Grace* (\$16.50) and *Seasons of Grief and Healing* (\$7.50) are gentle guides through the grief cycle with spiritual encouragement that hit just the right note.

Personally, I was profoundly influenced by Henri Nouwen's life, ministry and death in how I understand my own mortality and that of others. Nouwen's writing in his final few years focused on death itself following a near-fatal accident. In 'Our greatest gift' (\$14.95), he proposed that embracing death as a gift, not a curse, can liberate not only our own hearts and minds from fear but also those of the people around us. Children need help, too, and I recommend Abbey Press' *Elf-Help* series (\$8.50 each). These good-natured, illustrated paperbacks help children address many issues, including the deaths of a pet, grandparent or friend. Mary Bahr's *If Nathan were Here* (\$9.00) is a new story that I would recommend about a boy coping with the death of his best friend.

## Advent resources

So as winter approaches, we turn our hearts and energies to the hope of Christmas. (Wasn't C.S. Lewis right in the *Narnia* books to suggest that it would be a terrible thing to have winter with no Christmas?) Without wanting to add unnecessarily to the commercial frenzy, we at ABC and Augsburg Fortress want to remind you that we stock all the worship supplies you will need: bulletin covers, extra communion wafers for the Christmas services, Advent candles, choir music, children's books and videos, books that will inspire and shape your life of faith, and lots of giftware. Do come into the stores in Toronto and Kitchener for a visit (addresses and lots of other information is on our website, [www.afcanada.com](http://www.afcanada.com)) or call me at 1-800-265-6397. I'm your priest in publishing!



**JERRY SALLOUM**  
RETIRED VICAR, DIOCESE OF NIAGARA

"How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!" (Romans 10: 15 KJV)

The Lord has a remarkable habit. He takes the ordinary and exalts it. For example, he takes the insignificant town of Bethlehem and catapults it into prominence. He takes earthen vessels like Angus, Beulah or Elmo and fashions each one into His dwelling place. He takes water and converts it into wine. The Lord's touch on people, places and things renders what is ordinary extraordinary.

A while back, I happened upon some Bible passages that make reference to various parts of the human body. There they were: heart, mind, hands, tongue, eyes and mouth. While each was interesting, none sustained my attention more than the parts described as "beautiful". I discovered two passages that describe feet as beautiful. And so I asked myself, "Why would God call feet beautiful? Is He seeing something beyond the purely physical, beyond bunions and blisters? Why did He not in like manner exalt the "mind" or the "tongue"? Why choose feet? Here are some random thoughts:

We refer to feet, not only literally, but also sometimes figuratively and symbolically as well. For example, falling at someone's feet symbolizes homage. Sitting at someone's feet implies a readiness to learn. Casting something at someone's

feet indicates an offering. Washing someone's feet expresses servanthood and humility;

I understand that the Old Testament word for "foot" can also be translated "base" or "pedestal" and suggests a firm and secure foundation upon which a person or object finds support and rest;

The word translated "beautiful" (used to describe feet) is the same word used to describe the beauty of the trees in the Garden of Eden and the beauty of two Old Testament women, Rachel and Rebekah;

It appears that scripture describes feet as "beautiful", not because of how they look, but rather, because of how they are used. In Proverbs, "feet that are quick to rush into evil" and feet that "never stay at home" are not seen as "beautiful". By contrast, in Romans and in Isaiah, the feet of them that "preach the gospel of peace", that "bring glad tidings" and who guide the feet of others "into the paths of peace" ARE described as "beautiful". Such feet ignite a spontaneous utterance of joy from a Father whose passion for His children to come home is evident on most pages of Holy Scripture.

"How beautiful!" expresses the delight that overflows from the heart of God whenever feet become the means by which the Good News of the Gospel is spread among a people who walk in darkness and in the shadow of death.

I wonder about the God who made heaven and earth, who fashions a plan of salvation for a wayward people, and then chooses from among those very people messengers to deliver that plan to others. To assign such an awesome task to people with feet of clay, whose feet have stood in valleys of dark-

ness and despair and have been covered on repeated occasions by the dust and grime of this world, who themselves need a Saviour, means inserting a weak link into an otherwise strong chain. Nevertheless, this is what God did and continues to do. The good news is that the feet of those who bear the weight of responsibility for the most important message to ever travel our information highways are declared "beautiful", not because the messengers are necessarily successful or perfect, but rather because they are faithful.

How beautiful are the feet of those who "bring glad tidings of good things" despite the strong pressures from a society in which truth is regarded as a matter of personal opinion and deity is invoked to enhance personal comfort. How beautiful are the feet of people who have the courage to declare a gospel considered by many to be outdated and irrelevant!

How beautiful are the feet of those messengers who regularly confront minds with the best that this life has to offer and who incline these minds toward contemplating the mysterious, the truly good and the truly lovely. How beautiful are the feet of those who regularly, and sacrificially, stand up to offer comfort and encouragement to others, often when their own lives are filled with personal fears, doubts and discouragement.

Over the many years that I attended church as a layperson and as a minister of the Gospel, I have been richly blessed by pastors and colleagues, messengers of the Gospel who have faithfully, graciously and uncompromisingly guided the feet of their people into the paths of peace. How beautiful indeed!

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1 »

## Bishop Michael sends a message

It was the beginning of his message to us, here in our churches, our own diocese.

But there was another – two others. The famous Walk of Witness in support of the Millennium Development Goals – known now as MDG – highlighting the will to reduce poverty, provide education, empower women, address the problem of HIV/AIDS and other diseases and to support environmental sustainability and global development. What a sight that must have been! More than 650 Anglican bishops, a sea of red and white, placards and all, marching through the famous streets, past the memory-laden buildings of the old empire and commonwealth, making a single statement, "one of the greatest witnesses of faith..."

One thing above all else that his time in Lambeth taught him, he said, is that no diocese in the Anglican Communion is more blessed and

more rich in resources for ministry than this diocese of ours. "I believe that we need to move beyond a culture of survival... and restore a sense of passionate spirituality; we need to build new enthusiasm for the study of the scriptures and to discover who we are as Anglicans. We need to reconnect the things we say and do on Sunday with the witness we want to offer to those in our society who have written us off as irrelevant..."

Then came the essence of Michael Bird's time at Lambeth. He told the story of Joseph, traced through the records of the mission of Dr. Bernardo. Joseph, whose blind father took to the streets to play the violin to support his family. Both his parents died; the children were left homeless. The Bernardo homes bore a sign: 'No Destitute Child Ever Refused Admission'. Joseph was Michael's grandfather.

A few of us from the Cathedral who went to Cuba, to our sister diocese, back in 2001, remember a saying '...millions of children around the world are hungry... none of them live in Cuba'. Would that we could make such a claim for our diocese, here and now.

Bishop Michael concluded: "I am filled with passion, enthusiasm and great hope for the work that God is calling us to take up in the weeks and months to come. I ask for your prayers, your support and your partnership as we begin to move this vision forward and usher in a new era of strong growth and vitality in parishes across Niagara... may God bless us as we continue the mission of bearing witness to Christ's message of hope and love to the world he came to save."

For a moment there was silence. Then as one, we all stood up and applauded our bishop as he enters the second year of his consecration. Message received.

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

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# Getting to know you

Kay Spicer Mighton O.N.  
 Author, Cook, Former National President of the A.C.W. – and More!

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

How many people have any idea of the number of faithful, committed Anglicans who are doing their best for their parish churches, this Diocese of Niagara, and beyond? From youngsters supporting programmes in their Sunday schools (or whatever children's ministry may be called in their churches) to men and women of "certain years" who bring those years of experience to ministries of all shapes and sizes, the people of Niagara share an energy and dedication to fulfilling the words they pray, in whatever way they are able.

**Formation for Life**

Kay Spicer Mighton, a member of St. George's Church, Lowville, is one such Niagara Anglican. Growing up in the United Church of Canada in Saskatchewan, Kay was an active member of the UCC's Canadian Girls in Training (C.G.I.T.), which opened many opportunities to Canadian girls. Kay remembers teaching Sunday School at the kindergarten level: "The son of the local fire chief didn't like church. When we asked him why, he said, 'The man in the black dress swears; he says God and Jesus!' Once we got it all sorted out, he liked church!"

Kay graduated from High School at 16. "My parents weren't wealthy, but I felt very privileged because I went to the four year degree course in Home Economics at the University of Saskatchewan. It was wonderful! There were twenty in my graduating class, and fifty-five years later the bond with my best friend there is still strong."

To raise tuition funds, Kay worked in the summers. "I had wonderful jobs, especially two summers in the ice cream shop. I thought, 'If one scoop is good, two are better! Everyone loved my milkshakes, but the boss said, 'You have a lot of paying customers, but I don't make much money!'" Kay was also a clerk in a hardware store, and then worked with the man who graded butter in the area. She also made all her own clothes.

**Creativity and Learning**

At university, Kay met her future husband. They lived in Regina, then Edmonton, where their first child was

born. An opportunity brought the little family to Etobicoke, and two more children arrived. Working from home while the children were growing up, Kay's "Home Ec" training led her to free-lance work in food marketing and promotion, writing articles for Canadian Living magazine and preparing food for photography. (Few people have any idea of the work involved, let alone the tricks that may be used, to present attractive photographs of food!) "I became very interested in food and nutrition. Fifty years ago, when I graduated, people didn't even know the word 'nutrition'! I've loved (that work)."

Kay remembers her son, Bob, coming "home with his friends, draining a three-quart jug of milk, then asking, 'Is this a reject?' – a dish that didn't make it for a photo and could be eaten!" Another story: "I had put twenty little cakes on the dining room table (for a photo shoot the next day), and told everyone, 'You're not to eat the cakes!' In the morning, there was a little handful out of many of them. I had to arrange them at the studio to hide the damage!"

Kay worked on a cookbook for the Canadian Diabetes Association, which led to a "real awareness of diabetic needs, glycemic and gluten problems," and a new interest in writing cookbooks and developing recipes. Dedicated to her family, one of Kay's cookbooks was called "With Love from Mum."

Kay began travelling across Canada, speaking on radio and television for food organizations, and at events such as the Ontario Plowing Match, the Royal Winter Fair, and the CNE, where for twenty-one days straight Kay hosted the A & P Theatre Kitchen.

**New Beginnings**

Through these busy years, Kay "got caught up, as many couples do, in affluence of life: cottage in the summer, ski hill in the winter... Church fell by the wayside." Thoughtfully, Kay admits, "I regret it now..." Then "things fell apart, and the marriage was over. The 50s, 60s, 70s were very prosperous times. We had two salaries – then I was on my own. I felt a real sense of God's guidance in my life." Kay would not be alone for long. "Friends in a Baptist Church in Toronto displayed Christ's

love. They would scoop me up – I loved going to worship and doing things with them. (I found) such refreshment that I came back to the Church."

Adult baptism is important in Baptist practice, so though she had been baptised as a child in the United Church, Kay was baptised in the Baptist tradition. "That experience brought me back to liking myself again. I felt the love of the Lord – and I still say that is the most glorious thing we can share."

God had more in store for Kay. When she met Jim Mighton, a publisher, a new relationship began to blossom. Jim's friends teased him: "We hear you're seeing someone!" "Yes," he would reply, "a student." Little did his friends guess that the student in question was 53! Kay had been accepted at the University of Western Ontario in the Master of Journalism programme. She was the oldest in her class: "It was a unique experience. I worked hard, had a one-bedroom apartment in London, but Jim's daughter lived in London, which was convenient!" Like many who return to school as mature students, Kay poured her energy into achieving her goal – but also had some good times with new friends.

When Jim introduced Kay to Anglican tradition, she appreciated the new experiences. Soon another challenge faced them both, when Jim suffered a heart attack while they were at his cottage. "Here was this lovely man in my life, a gift from God. I prayed," says Kay, "and made the decision to look after him."

In January, 1987, when Jim had recovered, they were married at Islington Baptist Church, Toronto. They built a new home on a lot in Campbellville, "with the kitchen of my dreams," laughs Kay. Then, "We spent a summer looking at churches, tried St. George's, and became members. It was a very grand, happy time; we really enjoyed life at St. George's. I became involved, especially with the A.C.W. (Anglican Church Women), even becoming the national president!"

Bishop Ralph Spence awarded Kay the Order of Niagara for her work in A.C.W. leadership. "(Bishop Ralph) was so helpful and gracious (during her presidency). He came when we were meeting here, and preached at the service. He recognised the import-



ance of women's service, and called us 'Active Christian Women!'"

**Food, faith, fellowship and family**

She continues, "My faith has grown, it's growing all the time. It's not finished, at all! The liturgy means a great deal, and Bible study. When Jim and I took a trip to the Holy Land, and I saw the Sea of Galilee and (other places), it all became so real!"

Chuckling, Kay says, "I put my fascination with food and Bible study together. The Bible is full of food! Jesus used bread and wine to nourish us physically and metaphorically. Food, faith, fellowship and family are all terribly important in the Bible..." Kay's interests and her faith come together: "I certainly believe in the resurrection. He was not an apparition – because he ate with the disciples! He loved to be entertained – he'd go to anybody's house for tea. In the resurrection story, he's barbecuing fish on the beach!"

Her blue eyes twinkling, Kay exclaims, "People, especially women, are so surprised! It's fun to make the connection. The food experiences humanize Jesus... when (we) accept him in everyday experiences, barbecues, wedding feasts, or dinners."

**Courage and Hope for the Future**

Kay comments on recent events at St. George's, Lowville. "Our Church became a broken church. We stayed with the Diocese, and I have not one regret! Restoration is happening. We have a Christ-centred group; the

fellowship is extra-ordinary. We are blessed because we know the Diocese is behind us, supporting us, especially Bishop Michael, (who) has been so gracious. We in turn support and appreciate these difficult times in the Anglican Church of Canada.

"We're going to weather the storm. I know it and I think God knows it! When you go through times like this, you don't take anything for granted – you grow and mature. We are blessed with the Reverend Susan Wells as our administrator over the time of restoration. Her pastoral care has been outstanding. The Church needs to be God-guided and Christ-centred."

Between them, Kay and Jim have six children and ten grand-children, living all over North America. They like to travel: "We've taken wonderful trips together, and visited places I never thought I'd see, Thailand, Malaysia, Israel, England." Everywhere she goes, Kay collects recipes. She has a herb garden, including two hundred lavender plants. Her cookbooks are published through Mighton House.

From her early years in a small Saskatchewan town, Kay Spicer Mighton has taken her God-given gifts and parlayed them not only into a treasured career, but also into a living, active faith that finds vital connections between the Bible and modern life. She continues to offer those gifts to the world. Niagara is blessed in her ministry, and, like Kay, can look forward with hope and trust in the love and wisdom of God.

**Please remember to support St. Matthew's House this Christmas**

To read how your gift can make a difference, see the ad on PAGE 11.

The Reverend  
**D. Linda Corry**  
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**CARL SNEYD**  
DIRECTOR OF STEWARDSHIP AND EDUCATION

Parishes can be busy, vibrant places, filling all sorts of needs for our members, adherents and those we reach out to in our surrounding communities.

A strong component of the successful year round stewardship program in a parish is education and information. We try and communicate what we are doing and how we are doing it in various ways: bulletin inserts, web pages, newsletter articles, spoken announcements, signs and posters, photo boards, and so on.

Too often, though, we hear from our own members "what this parish needs is an active (*fill in the blank*) group, when the (*fill in the blank*) group has been meeting regularly for the past year and a half. Or a person expresses an interest in becoming a reader, server, chalice bearer but doesn't no how to go about it. Or a new member wonders what really goes on with, at or in, the oddly named "Altar Guild."

One way of keeping the information flowing and having a little fun at the same time is by having a "Ministry Fair". A date is selected, often after church on a September start-up Sunday or during a slow time in January or February (as long as alternate snow dates are available). Music, hot dogs, chips, veggie trays, popcorn, balloons and streamers can help create a more relaxed, festive air.

With the advent of inexpensive colour printing from home computers, signs and posters are easy to make.

Each active group or ministry

in the parish is invited to set up an information table, with members there to explain exactly what it is their group does and where and when and why. Some of the groups will show some of the items that they work with on a regular basis or have created recently.

Opportunities to talk to members of the different groups are available and potential recruits can be encouraged to join up. Videos or slides can be shown. Give-aways are always popular; energy saving kits from the Green Team, bookmarks from PWRDF (which help explain exactly what the P, the W, the R, the D and the F stand for), information quizzes ("What's the difference between a retable and a reredos" at the Altar Guild table) or small, easily done information brochures or flyers, are good examples of this.

Newcomers and even parishioners are often surprised at the wide variety of groups and programs offered even in the smallest parish. Long serving parishioners are often surprised that the wide variety of groups and programs are not "closed shops" and that they really are allowed to join, if that's where their interests lie. People may discover that there isn't the active (*fill in the blank*) group they wondered about and decide to start one.

Each person's interests, time availability and personal skill set changes over time.

Ministry Fairs offer a way for people to find out about different ministries in their church community and how they can offer their time and talent in new and different directions.

## EVENTS

### Monthly dinner

St. James, St. Catharines  
WW2 meatloaf, bubble and squeak, rolls, pumpkin pie.  
Cost: \$5.00 per person  
November 5, 5:00 PM-7:00 PM

### Christmas Market Bazaar

Church of the Incarnation, Oakville  
Come out and join the fun. Craft tables, attic treasures, raffle, silent auction, fun for the kids and so much more. Bring a friend to our tea and lunch room and enjoy a delicious lunch. A fundraiser for Home Suite Hope.  
November 7

### Grace Christmas Bazaar

Grace Church, St. Catharines  
Look for meat pies, homemade sweets, bottle draw, children's toys and puzzles, used books, used DVDs, all kinds of hand work from our ACW members and much more. Come and have fun.  
November 8, 10:00 AM-2:00 PM

### Christmas Bazaar

St. Columba, St. Catharines  
We are very proud to offer our largest fundraiser. Our famous meat pies, homemade preserves, hand crafted items, candy table, collectibles, penny sale, raffle, and of course our bake table and tea room where you can enjoy a delicious lunch. Children's corner provides some fun for the kids and allows them to buy special gifts for Mom or Dad!  
November 8, 11:00 AM-3:00 PM

### Remembrance Day

St. George's, St. Catharines  
Choirs from St. Barnabas and St. George's and other choristers will be presenting a Choral Requiem at St. George's Church, 83 Church St., St. Catharines.  
November 9, 10:00 AM

### Music at St. Luke's - Vocal Horizons

St. Luke, Burlington  
Choral Passions 'Music to reach into

your heart' Sung by the Vocal Horizons Chamber Choir. This sixteen voice singing group has a varied repertoire that will appeal to all music lovers. Be prepared to listen to songs by composers ranging from Mozart to Andrew Lloyd Webber. As usual calling 905-639-7643 will reserve tickets for you. Series tickets are \$90. Seating is limited so please order your tickets early to avoid disappointment.  
Cost: \$30.00 per person  
November 15

### Annual Holiday Bazaar

Church of the Resurrection, Hamilton  
Handcrafted Jewelry, 'Delicious Baked Goods', Great Christmas Gift Ideas, "Treasures", Beautiful Christmas Decorations, Hand Knit Children's Wear, Much, Much More! Come and enjoy and make a great start on that Christmas shopping! - Then relax in our Lunch Room.  
November 15, 10:00 AM-2:00 PM

### Christmas Bazaar

St. John's, Ancaster  
Bake table, White Elephant sale, luncheon area, treasures table, book nook, private vendor's tables, children's area St. Nicholas himself  
November 15, 10:00 AM-2:00 PM

### Christmas Fantasy Bazaar

St. George's, St. Catharines  
Crafts and fully decorated Christmas trees, bake sale, foods of the world, attic treasures, gift baskets, knitting crocheting and sewing, book sale, cafe for a bite to eat and so much more!  
November 15, 10:00 AM-2:00 PM

### Christmas Bazaar

St. John the Evangelist, Niagara Falls  
Christmas crafts, gift Baskets, deli and bake tables, knitting and sewing tables, penny auction, jewellery, toys, luncheon and much more!  
November 15, 10:00 AM-2:00 PM

### Parish Family Bowling

St. Cuthbert's, Oakville  
Inter generational bowling afternoon. Kids, youth and seniors! Five pin, fun-spirited, rotational bowling (with or without bumpers).  
Cost: \$12.00 per person (3 games and shoes)  
November 16, 1:00 PM

### Choral Evensong with High Tea

St. John's, Ancaster  
There will be a High Tea starting at 2:45 PM before the Evensong performance. High Tea will include homemade scones with Devonshire Custard and strawberry jam, fancy sandwiches, homemade goodies and tea served in china cups and saucers. At 4:00 PM St. John's Choir will sing a service of Evensong followed by a short organ recital including music in honour of Canada Music Week. The recitalist will be Canadian composer Jeff Enns, Director of Music at St. James Lutheran Church in Elmira.  
Cost: \$15.00 for High Tea  
November 16, 2:45 PM

### Winter Wonderland Fashion Show

St. David's Parish, Welland  
Join us for a fun social evening with fashions and accessories by Tabi, refreshments, and door prizes.  
Cost: \$8.00  
November 19, 7:00 PM

### Eucharist and Parish lunch

St. John, Elora  
St. John's would like to extend a warm welcome to all to join us for Eucharist and then a parish lunch!  
November 20, 11:30

### St. Luke's Annual Turkey Supper

St. Luke, Smithville  
No need to cook tonight. Come out and enjoy turkey and all the trimmings including, a drink, and pie or Christmas pudding.  
Cost: Adults \$13.00, Children (5-7) \$7.00, Children under 5 are free  
November 20, 5:00 PM-7:00 PM

## The Silly Season

**JOHN RIPLEY**  
INTERIM RECTOR HOLY TRINITY WELLAND

By the time that you read this column the "Silly Season" in Canada will be over. In the United States it will shortly reach a climax. I refer to the politics of democracy in action as practiced in both of our countries.

I used to be a political junkie. I used to enjoy the thrust and parry of political candidates and parties as they vied for the attention of the voter. I would watch the debates. I would devour the propaganda disseminated by the various parties. I would stay up on Election Day and wait until the last vote was counted somewhere in British Columbia. Sometimes I was happy. Sometimes I was angry. But I was always engaged. I no longer anticipate the "silly season" with enthusiasm.

I am no student of politics, but I do understand at some ephemeral level the realities that are the political process. Power is the ultimate goal. An election becomes a "no holds barred" experience in the quest for the vote. Lies and lavish promises become the stock in trade of the aggressive politico. Every attempt

is made to cast the opponent in a negative light. Any semblance of civility goes down the drain. Rather than bringing out the best in our system, the campaign brings out the worst. All candidates proclaim their's is the way. Armageddon will surely result if the voters do not put the right party in power (a little hyperbole, but, it is a political piece after all). Pretty cynical, eh!

Cynicism inevitably results when you find it difficult to put any stock in the words that you are hearing. The "dyed-in-the-wool" conservative, as is the "dyed-in-the-wool" liberal, is impervious to anything that does not mesh with the party line. Their minds are very clearly made up - don't confuse them with facts. It is the vast majority of the voters who are really not stamped with a party label that must attempt to sort out the wheat from chaff. That becomes an almost impossible challenge when you have to deal with spin and image shaping. The gap between the truth and the message becomes wider with the result that facts get lost in the white noise of obfuscation. Oh how I envy

those who live with answers and not with questions - life becomes a lot easier. Certainty is comfortable, ambiguity is stressful. It is so tempting to retreat to the comfort zone of certainty. What, then, becomes the foundation of certainty?

So much of what we have to deal with in life demands our trust. In politics it becomes increasingly more difficult to trust the messenger and the message. Somewhere in all of the rhetoric is the truth. How we approach the "truth" in politics often becomes a function of our experience. Our world view is shaped by our experiences in life, but, those experiences exist within our inherent psychological predispositions. Few of us have the time, nor the inclination, to engage in a quest to discern the absolute truths in life. Often we just accept. Acceptance, without empirical evidence, is called faith. Whether our faith is rooted in conservatism or liberalism there exists for each of us truths that are rooted in trust. So the ultimate question becomes who, or what, do you trust? The real challenge is to make that determination.



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### CHRISTMAS TREE SALE

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