



Niagara Anglican

A section of the Anglican Journal

NEWS • PERSPECTIVE • REFLECTION • FOR A GROWING CHURCH • FEBRUARY 2010



■ On Wednesday February 17 we begin the Season of Lent, a time of Prayer and opportunity for Niagara to seek God's will as we 'live the Vision'.

Catching contemplative fire in Niagara

STUART PIKE
RECTOR, ST. LUKE'S BURLINGTON

Spiritual but not religious? Many people these days describe themselves in this way. We have fewer people visibly practicing a religious discipline in their lives and this is reflected by fewer people in Church pews. However, it seems that more and more people recognize that they are spiritual beings, and many are searching for a spiritual path.

Many who see themselves as "spiritual but not religious" feel themselves to be adrift, without an anchor and without support in their spiritual journey. They feel like they have no community, yet the concept of "Church on Sunday" is so far from their reality that it leaves them cold. The Church has recognized that we simply aren't reaching the majority of our society even though so many are hungering for something spiritual.

» CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

More than re-arranging furniture

MICHAEL BURSLEM
ST. GEORGE'S GUELPH

On our way to Cairo we visited Canterbury. One Sunday we wheeled my mother to the 8 o'clock service at her parish church, St Mary Bredin's, commonly known as SMB. When we went in through the back door, which is now the main entrance, I was surprised to see other changes. Firstly the doors automatically opened for us, as we entered a wide annex the length of the church, which usually has no seating. For the Christmas Carol Service, it was full of chairs, all of which were filled.

» CONTINUED ON PAGE 9

At the heart of the Vision

CHRISTOPHER M. GRABIEC
EDITOR

The bishop has recently completed his cross-diocese tour and met with 22 different groups about the living out of a new vision in the Diocese of Niagara. We have just finished a very successful synod and day during which we could all explore the nature of this vision and perhaps discover where each of us fits into that vision. Christmas... New Year... Epiphany... Winter... now where do we go?

Winter is traditionally a time when people batten down the hatches, and gather in the warmth of their homes. A time when perhaps outside activity is not at its height and time for reflection is more available.

» CONTINUED ON PAGE 11

Bishop promotes Community Justice Camp



MICHAEL BIRD
BISHOP OF NIAGARA

At Community Justice Camp, Anglicans from across Niagara, the province and the country will gather in locations throughout our Diocese with our ecumenical and secular justice partners as people who continue to walk in the darkness of this age and cry out for the blessings of justice, freedom and peace that is the promise

of God to the whole human race.

Social Justice is a vital part of our Christian mandate that calls us to action to transform our lives and to alter the structures of society that diminish this gift of hope and leave people living in unjust circumstances. I have a great deal of personal interest in and passion for justice-making, and I am pleased to share in partnership with you and our many community partners who have aided us in this exciting ministry.

Community development is the theme of our camp. Community development in its simplest form is a process of coming together as community, developing trusting relation-

ships, naming the justice issues to be addressed and together taking action for change. We must act collectively if we are to build a society where we are all in right relationship with one another.

Through theological reflection on shalom; justice; koinonia, that is fellowship, communion and community and kingdom/reign of God/heaven on earth, participating in the plenary sessions and immersion group experiences designed to engage your head, your heart and your hands you will learn how to integrate justice making into your life and that of your parish and community.

Along the way there will be many opportunities for fun, fellowship,

music, creative and life changing worship, contact with local issues, site visits, outdoor activities, training and organizing workshops, and storytelling.

At Community Justice Camp, the wisdom lies in the group—the learning is lateral—the grace abundant. Everyone is potentially, or already an expert... a mentor... a disciple... a friend.

Together we will create the space, the ways and means, for the Spirit to move, making change, growth and transformation possible.

» READ MORE ABOUT COMMUNITY JUSTICE CAMP, PAGES 6-7

HARRRPa Mia! at Christ's Church Cathedral

PATRICK MYERS
SUPERVISOR/YOUTH COORDINATOR, JAMESVILLE COMMUNITY CENTRE

What is HARRRPa Mia! you ask? Good question! HARRRPa Mia! is an ABBA extravaganza with dancing, karaoke, costumes, prizes, wine, Greek appetizers, a cash bar and lots of laughter. This will be HARRRPa's biggest fundraiser of the year—a night focused on the atmosphere of the play and movie Mamma Mia. Finger foods will be donated by local restaurants,

and the sounds of ABBA will be heard all night long. Prizes and a silent auction will also be held during the night. HARRRPa Mia! will take place on Friday, February 19 at Christ's Church Cathedral, 252 James Street North, Hamilton. Doors will open at 7:00 pm. Dress in your best Mamma Mia or disco costume!

HARRRPa Mia! proceeds will assist in the community development projects of HARRRP, a registered charity located in Hamilton,

Ontario. HARRRP was formed in 2006, originally composed of friends of Christ's Church Cathedral and St. Mary's School. They entered into partnerships with individuals, groups, agencies, corporations, and organizations in order to provide free activities, programs, meeting space, and opportunities for people of all ages living in low income communities in Hamilton's north-end. Programs can be found at the Jamesville Community Cen-

tre, McQuesten Community Centre, Jamesville Breakfast Club, St. Patrick's Breakfast Club and Sanford Avenue School.

Please come dressed in your best disco outfit, cut a rug, and sing Dancing Queen for all to hear! Tickets are \$30 each and are available at the Jamesville Community Centre 905-525-3069, McQuesten Community Centre 905-523-2301, or contact Nancy Clause at 905-527-1316 extension 330.

PARISH NEWS



To my parish family

JOY RUSSELL
ALL SAINTS' CHURCH RIDGEWAY

We had Fr. Rob for such a short period of time, but he has already made a difference, and that difference will carry us through the tough times ahead.

Father Conway touched our hearts in a way that only he could. He was one of the kindest, soft spoken, gentle people I personally have come into contact with, and will never forget how he managed to shepherd us by just being there.

Fr. Rob, as he asked us to call him, was open to listening, and brought many of us back to our roots in making the new liturgy fall in with what we were raised with. It was uplifting to be on our knees to pray, if that is what we were comfortable with, but we could stand or sit if that was more what we wanted to do. He just had that quiet guidance that was not forceful but was there. What a gift that was.

Throughout the rest of our lives he will return to our thoughts when-

ever we hear an echo chant, and remember his quiet manner and loving smile.

We will remain a strong family congregation and give support to one another in holding our church together through the tough times ahead. Remember to give strength and support to his loved ones.

Father Conway was our Parish Priest for a few short weeks, but he made a difference, and we will sorely miss him.

Responding to the call

ANNE WASHINGTON
ST. JAMES, DUNDAS

In times of economic hardship it is understandable that we focus on our own needs and wants, temporarily blocking out cries for help from people living in far worse conditions of poverty, fear and hopelessness around the world.

In the midst of this economic downturn, along comes the call from the Primates World Relief and Development Fund (PWRDF) to sponsor 50 refugee families as part of its 50th anniversary celebration. What a motivator to refocus priorities and spur us on to do what must be done to uphold the values of our faith and not "pass by on the other side!"

Can this call be answered financially at this time? St. James' Church, Dundas and Christ Church, Flamborough decided it could be done if we shared the work and the costs particularly as PWRDF would provide funding to cover living expenses for a sponsored family for about 3 months of the year long commitment. What an opportunity!

So, our two parishes have now been approved by Citizenship and Immigration to sponsor Muhand Saleam and his family, Palestinians

who fled from Bagdad to escape the discrimination, violence, kidnapping and murder that threatened Palestinians who were not Iraqi citizens after the U.S.A led invasion of 2003. They journeyed to the Al Hol refugee camp located on the northern border of Iraq and Syria. The living conditions were very difficult with poor housing, tents, polluted water, sandstorms, snowstorms, snakes, scorpions and extremely limited access to health and educational services.

To get the job done, we have structured a Core Refugee Sponsorship Team comprised of passionate, dependable volunteers from both parishes. We have met with Muhand's uncle and family who live in Hamilton who came as refugees from Iraq three years ago. They have translated a letter from Muhand to us and have emailed our messages to him in Arabic. Muhand, his wife Asma, four year old son, Mohammed and daughter Sidra born in the camp in August 2009, are most anxious to come but even though Carolyn has made contact with the Visa office in Damascus a couple of times, the process cannot be hastened. A police check is needed before the exit permit can be granted enabling their departure.

As well as arranging fund raising events, members of the team are gathering furniture, household items, clothing, baby items etc. Affordable, safe housing is being explored as are medical, dental and other social services. There's a lot to do but we have the will to do it supported by the clergy and parishioners of both parishes.

A major aspect of sponsorship is to learn about the culture, customs and conditions from which the family comes. Hence, interesting and informative sessions with Carolyn from PWRDF, Gloria a worker with Amnesty International who has been in Al Hol Camp, staffers from Settlement and Integration Services, Hamilton, experiences from previous sponsorship projects and individual study have been done to help prepare us to welcome Muhand and his family to share the freedom and bounty of Canada.

This is an exciting, challenging and joyful time to join together to help people in desperate need as well as support PWRDF celebrate its years of dedication to the cause of justice and help for all in need.

Can we do this? We have determined that we can. If you can join in this celebration give Carolyn a call. She'd love to hear from you, I'm sure!

The light of the Christ Child shines brightly at St. George's Lowville



SUSAN WELLS
RECTOR, ST. GEORGE'S LOWVILLE

This year I was profoundly aware of the contrast between the nativity scene that adorned both my living room and the nave of the church, and the reality of that first Christmas Night in Bethlehem. The nativity scenes which we display appear so calm, so sacred, so serene. The animals are well behaved, the straw is clean, the scene appears to be just perfect—nothing out of place. Yet the reality was quite different; as the star shone brightly over the manger on that first Christmas Night, the scene below was anything but serene and sanitized. If we engage our senses we discover that, although it was cleaned regularly, this barn like any barn was filled with the aroma of animals. Even the straw which lined the manger was not immune to the smell. That night the manger scene was dark, only lit by the odd lantern and the star above. It was evening in Bethlehem and the temperature had fallen. The scene in the city was hectic and busy with many travellers bartering over so few rooms and places to lay their heads.

It was into this chaos that the Son of God was born. Jesus' incarnation was not into a brightly decorated Church but into the chaos and mess of the world. He came to bring light and peace in the midst of our troubled lives and our troubled world.

Since February 2008, the parishioners of St. George's, Lowville have felt like they have been in a state of chaos, much like the people of Israel did when they were wandering in the desert. In fact, after a service on February 24, 2008, presided over by our Bishop Michael, the parish was exiled. We lost all access to our church. For the next several months, we held services first in an old school house with no running water and then, thanks to the generosity of the good people of Lowville United Church, were able to hold our services in their church. Then, in May of 2008, a court ruling allowed us back into our church but only for 10 hours a week.

Although, it was great to be back, you can probably imagine how difficult it was to do the work of a parish and maintain the building in only ten hours a week. (The other people, who had chosen to leave the Anglican Church of Canada (ACC), had control of the building the rest of the time but, for whatever reason, chose not to use the building.) It was discouraging and disheartening to watch this building, built to the glory of God and for the extension of God's

Kingdom here on earth, sit empty. We often felt like we were betraying our 152 year ancestry of serving Christ in our community. That being said, members of the parish continue to be actively involved in ministry in the prison, nursing homes, the hospital and helping with other projects, including the "Walk to Bethlehem", sponsored by the Milton Area Christian Churches Working Together (MACCWT).

At several levels, our journey felt like we were wandering in the desert, trying to come to terms with what all this meant. Why did friends choose to leave the church (and us), rather than to continue to seek a place within it? Why were we exiled from the building our ancestors built? These past 2 years have given us a chance to deal with our sense of betrayal, desertion and confusion and have given us a chance to heal, to seek Christ in our new situation and to begin to discern what God's mission is for us. We are "Striving to Service Christ."

Finally at an arbitration meeting held on December 7, between the Wardens of those who chose to leave the ACC and the Diocese, an agreement was reached changing the way the time in the parishes was allocated and setting down criteria by which expenses would be shared. For St. George's, this meant that we were granted, full use of our Church building for two years or until the ownership of the building is ultimately determined, whichever comes first and given the recent ruling in BC, there is a possibility that this will be a permanent situation.

All of a sudden our exile was over, our wandering was finished and with full use of the building, we are able to begin to plan for the future.

On December 7th, while still in Advent, preparing for the coming of the Christ Child, our whole ministry situation changed. This Christmas, we felt the coming of Christ's light in a new and profound way. Our hearts continue to be filled with the light and hope and joy and peace that this Christmas Season brings. We can see the end of our wandering, we can see the promised land!

We have been reborn, not into the stylized cleanliness of the Nativity scene, but into the chaos and mess of Christ's world. Now the real work begins as we, with the help of the Missioner for Milton, the Rev. Canon Margaret Murray, re-examine our skills, our passions and seek to discern how Christ will lead us in serving the people of Milton

We are so grateful for the support of Bishop Michael, Synod Council, the rest of the Diocese, and others from around the world. Your support has been felt and cherished. Your prayers have carried us through our time in the wilderness.

What can one person do?



SHARYN HALL
ST. LUKE'S BURLINGTON

This is the theme of a new initiative at St. Luke's parish in Burlington. A number of parishioners have responded to the Bishop's Vision of 'Prophetic Social Justice Making', by forming a group to promote and facilitate advocacy of issues in the com-

munity and in the world. We are tackling the bewildering question of what one person can do to support justice and well-being for all people.

The Advocacy Information Group will inform parishioners and others of ways in which they can be a voice on behalf of people whose voices are not being heard. Advocacy can be as simple as signing a petition on a website or as active as joining a citizens' group arguing for affordable housing.

It can be difficult to separate advocacy from charity; neither should overshadow the other. Support is necessary for food banks, seniors'

programs, homeless shelters and overseas relief efforts. Local organizations and international relief agencies are worthwhile ways to help neighbours near and far who are struggling for daily food and shelter. Compassion and charity are intrinsic to the mission of Christ.

Charity meets the immediate needs of people, but does not necessarily meet the need for change or justice. Asking why people are suffering can lead to advocacy on their behalf. The possible issues are numerous and varied. Our Advocacy Group has decided to focus on the Millennium Develop-

ment Goals (MDGs) of the United Nations as a means to provide information about organizations tackling these challenges.

During this year, each MDG will be the focus for a month in the parish. In February we will gather information about Goal #6: Beginning to reverse the spread of HIV and AIDS, and the incidence of malaria and other major diseases. The central event for this Goal will be a parish breakfast on Saturday, February 20. The guest speaker, Elizabeth Rennie, will describe efforts to persuade our federal government to honour its commitment to send

medicines to countries devastated by disease.

Tentative plans for March and April focus on Goal #3 (Promote gender equality and empower women) and Goal #4 (Reduce by two thirds the mortality rate among children under five). The MDGs are relevant to local issues as well as global concerns, but they present only some opportunities for advocacy. Information and education can open avenues for advocacy in many surprising ways. The first step is learning how we can inspire and support each other to change the world, one person and one day at a time.

Epiphany Carol Service worth the Trek



SUE CRAWFORD
ST. MICHAEL'S CHURCH

It was a dark, cold and treacherous snowy drive to the Church of the Epiphany in Oakville on January 3. The snow was falling and Ministry of Transport road works crews were scarce on that stretch of highway between Hamilton and Oakville. I thought of the Wise men. Did they encounter similar difficulties on their way to finding the Christ Child? At

least they had a built in GPS. I had the Golden Horseshoe road map book. Their roads would not have been as clearly defined or as straight or busy. They would probably have gone for kilometres before seeing another camel or person. It wasn't much different on the QEW. Was the only treacherous occurrence Herod's invitation to return and bring him word that he too might worship the "king"? Whatever obstacles or delays, our caravans made it safely to our destinations and we were equally rewarded.

David Meanwell, music director of the Church of the Epiphany and the choir presented a most delightful and magnificent evening of lessons

and carols to celebrate the Epiphany of our Lord. What better place to celebrate the Epiphany of our Lord! Three of the six carols chosen were "old" favourites of mine. Memories flooded back from my school days in England singing in the choir.

It was all I could do not to sing along. "Joseph Gentle, Mary Mild", the first carol, set the tone for the service. A good friend had accompanied me to the church. After every carol we would turn to each other and smile or nod our heads. The gesture confirming that we were enthralled and enjoyed that particular carol. An added bonus was the Very Reverend Peter Wall, Dean of Niagara, who joined the choir for the evening

as a guest soloist. The program also enabled the congregation to join in several carols. My very favourite, the plainsong "Of Eternal Love Begotten", certainly confirmed that I had made the right decision to venture out that evening.

It was a wonderful way to begin the year. I had unfortunately missed several Advent Carol services because of commitments and general pre-Christmas activities. Perhaps some people are wondering why someone would drive all the way from Hamilton on such a dreadful evening. Was I out of my mind? Did someone ask the Wise Men the same question? Their trek took months longer. They didn't

really know what to expect. Perhaps I didn't either but I knew the organist well.

I had been in attendance at a dinner party where the event had been discussed and thought it would be a great opportunity to hear David play and listen to his choir. I was not disappointed. He certainly generates a magnificent sound from the small organ. I can only guess what he would do if he had a pipe organ at his fingertips.

Many thanks to the greeters and the Reverend Suzanne Craven for making strangers feel welcome to their church. I am sure Joseph and Mary were as welcoming to the Wise Men.

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www.ancasteranglican.org

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Beyond 'niceness'



MARNI NANCEKIVELL
DIRECTOR OF TRANSITIONAL MINISTRY

Recently the headlines featured a story of a dog from British Columbia who saved its young master from the attack of a cougar. Pictures were broadcast of the Golden Retriever, showing blood around its neck from the dog's time trapped in the jaws of the cougar. After news of this attack and rescue spread, all sorts of wonderful things were attributed to this loyal dog—by both its owners and members of the media. "Angel", was said to truly have lived up to her name, as a messenger, sent from God.

As a dog owner, I know that in this culture, we frequently ascribe human behaviour and motivations in our canine "family members". Our dog, Theo, for example is a tad quirky, therefore he fits right into the Nancekivell-Malashovsky household. (For example, he impetuously rattles the 6 pack of empty beer bottles in the kitchen at our house to let us know not only that he is hungry, but that specifically, he would really like a morsel of cat kibble through his way.) But even I believe there ought to be a limit to how much we anthropomorphize our pets.

For example, not too long ago, I heard about another dog owner who insisted that his dog is a "Christian" dog. You see, his dog is a *nice* dog. Apparently she never growls at anyone. She doesn't even bark! If she wants to go out into the back yard, she gently nudges her master's arm. She sits and cocks her head sweetly to ask to be fed. Being such a nice dog, this owner insists must mean that his dog is Christian.

I have great difficulty with my friend's assumptions about his dog, even if he intends simply to be light-hearted about his dog's "blessed" characteristics. My difficulty is not with the impressive canine manners of this dog, but rather, with my friend's assumption that "politeness" or "civility" constitutes what it is to be a Christian.

Now, like any member of a Christian community, I have seen behaviour that is both inspiring and appalling exhibited by church members. During my time in ministry, I have met a number of wonderful saints. However, I have also seen people manifest a public smile at a meeting that has covered up private scorn. Similarly, I have witnessed polite meetings full of smiling and nodding, which have been followed by parking lot meetings where both actions and individuals have been torn to shreds. This is not, I believe, the way we should be with one another in Christian community.

We undervalue what it is to be a follower of Jesus should we reduce our communal Christian life to the

state of insipid "niceness". In my experience, both as a settled parish priest, and as one who has served in a number of Interim ministries, each individual congregation is marked by its own patterns and characteristics. But there are two particular marks of Christian community, to which I believe, each congregation is called.

Soul Listening

Author/consultant Lawrence Peers quotes Jean Stairs who writes, in her book *Listening for the Soul*, the following:

"As we live our ordinary routines, experiencing moments of difficulty, surprise and play, we can develop in ourselves and others the habit of listening for the soul... It is about letting our ears be awake and attentive to the voices of yearning, weariness and supplication in the form of words, holy screams for new life, or sighs too deep for words."

Peers says that if we are too wrapped up in being "nice" with one another, arriving too quickly at consensus by pretending to agree rather than engaging with one another in depth, we can become locked in a habit of shallowness that thrives on appearance rather than authenticity. Without authentic communication, will miss the important points of "soul listening", and therefore our process of community discernment will be impoverished.

Truth Telling

There are times when being truthful can be painful. Those of us who tend to avoid conflict do so precisely because we fear truth telling. Because some things are difficult to hear, or difficult to say, we shy away from telling the truth. Often, we are protecting not our partner in the conversation, but ourselves, from moments of awkwardness within relationship.

If we tell the truth to one another, with care, we trust that we can embrace the differences within community. There becomes then, a depth of conversation that goes far beyond the patina of "niceness", and then genuine moments can emerge. These can be God moments, but alas, too often, we're so wrapped up in being "nice", that we don't let God into the conversation.

Taking Risks

I believe that we, as individuals, and communities of faith are called to take caring risks in our behaviour. Often a congregation will have a Code of Conduct, or a set of Holy Manners, some kind of Behavioural Covenant that will guide it in these risks. If we risk truly encountering one another, we can practise telling our own truth, as we listen to one another's souls. Let us attend to the Spirit in our midst as we cultivate a climate "beyond niceness" in our congregation. Let us "be" with one another in a way that makes it clear that we're *truly expecting* for the God of Love to "show up" in our midst.

Not only on Sunday



ANDY KALBFLEISCH
ST. JAMES, DUNDAS

By the seventh day God had finished his work. On the seventh day he rested from all his work. God blessed the seventh day. He made it a Holy Day because on that day he rested from his work, all the creating God had done. This is the story of how it all started, of Heaven and Earth when they were created. Genesis 2:2-4 (MSG)

To the Creationists among us this makes absolutely perfect sense. The world was made in six calendar days and the seventh was a time for rest. In Exodus the Third Commandment tells us the same story. For us the seventh day is Sunday, but it is usually shown as the first day of the week on most modern day calendars. As we have discussed before in previous articles, Sundays aren't what they used to be since our secular selves have convinced our religious selves that Sundays aren't really that special after all.

It has been said that if you go to any Anglican church across Canada on any given Sunday you will feel at home in the comfort of sameness. In many instances this homogeneity is no longer the case as many have moved beyond the sameness of the BCP and BAS. Some parishes incorporate themes, styles and phrases from New Zealand and the Iona Community to name a few. Yes the shape of the service generally remains the same, while the subtext has been gently altered by adding, omitting and modifying historic language to reflect a more con-

temporary 'get with it' feel.

So what does this have to do with Sunday? Actually everything. Many of us have accepted these incremental changes in Sunday worship perhaps begrudgingly, but accepted them nonetheless. As our attendance and financial statistics continue to waver perhaps now is the time to rethink why the other six days, the traditional days of 'creation' and 'work' shouldn't be viewed as special in and of themselves. After all isn't any gift from God precious? OK, the Old Testament is very specific about this, remember the Sabbath and keep it holy. And so, for the most part we do, even if after church we slip over to the LCBO or the grocery store to pick up something that we forgot to get on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and so on.

What if we turned this model on its head, as Jesus did in so many of his teachings? In fact, in many if not most instances, he challenged the rigid dogma of the Old Testament. He left the essence of his ministry summarized in the Two Great Commandments, "Love the Lord your God with all your passion and prayer and intelligence." This is the most important, the first on any list. But there is a second to set alongside it: "Love others as well as you love yourself." These two commands are pegs; everything in God's Law and the Prophets hangs from them." Matthew 22: 37-39 (MSG). No mention about Sunday here! Seems that His is a 24/7 approach. And we might say 'yes I do—through prayer, meditation and scriptural reading every day.' And that is good, but as a structured institution we are still fixated on Sundays—Old Testament thinking in a New Testament world. Yes we have created holy and sacred spaces in our modern day temples (churches) where we can gain assurance, reassurance and comfort in

our communion with Jesus Christ. But it's not just about us, as Jesus taught over and over. What about the people who can't, for whatever reason, join us on Sundays? Or those who don't have a clue what happens behind those closed doors every Sunday morning? The true ministry is outside those closed doors not just on Sundays but every day of the week, and every week of the year.

We need to learn from our secular selves. Just as we broke down the barriers to Sunday shopping, Sunday sports and Sunday entertainment, our religious selves need to break down those very same barriers to seeing corporate worship opportunities beyond just Sunday. Stated another way; historically many in the church fought vigorously against Sunday shopping, Sunday sports and so on to rigidly adhere to The Third Commandment (Old Testament thinking in a New Testament world). But the truth is, as followers of Jesus, it doesn't matter since we are commended to follow his two commandments 24/7, that is all seven days a week, not just on Sundays. If we are to aspire to this goal we need to look at things differently—not just squeezing a 'contemporary' service into an already crowded Sunday morning, but looking beyond Sunday to the other six days of the week so we can truly claim, as a corporate church, that we are following Jesus in every way we can. What about scheduling that contemporary service on a Saturday or a Friday or anytime except Sunday? Or even more innovative, consider holding that service in a different venue altogether—outside those closed doors. You never know, we might see a whole lot of people we have never seen before and after all isn't that what it is all about—spreading the Gospel to those who have yet to hear it.

Catching contemplative fire in Niagara

» CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

In this, we are failing in one promise of our baptismal covenant, to "...proclaim by word and example the good news of God in Christ."

This is one of the reasons why the Church of England started exploring Fresh Expressions of the Church which reach out to those for whom regular "Church on Sunday" just isn't cutting it. The idea of Fresh Expressions is not to find the perfect way to change the Church that will work for everybody, but to find many different ways to be the Church with each expression designed to reach some segment of the population.

Contemplative Fire is one Fresh Expression of the Church which will not be the answer to everyone who is "spiritual but not religious", but it definitely will be an answer for many such people who want to move further in their spiritual journey. Contemplative Fire supports those who are interested in the contemplative practice of stillness and holy listening, while

providing a community of people also travelling along this path. Individuals will practice their own discipline of personal contemplative practice: Centering Prayer, Christian Meditation, Yoga, Vipassana or other. But in addition, they will regularly gather in a larger group—in a home, in another meeting place, or even in a Church, to be a community which lives and grows in a rhythm of being gathered and being dispersed. The love of God shown to us in Jesus Christ is the heart of the community. A variety of ways of gathering will provide the support that each individual needs, so that they have a chance to talk together, to learn, to grow and to reach out compassionately to others, following the example of Jesus.

Contemplative Fire started in the Diocese of Oxford in England and it is the Fresh Expression in which I have been most interested for almost two years. A year ago, just when I thought it was time to kindle a Contemplative Fire on this side of the Atlantic, I discovered that we had a Canadian Pioneer who was bringing it to the diocese

of Toronto, the Rev. Anne Crosthwait. She is working full time as the leader of the Canadian community of Contemplative Fire. Through Anne, I have learned more about how Contemplative Fire is finding expression in the Canadian context and together we have been planning its beginnings in the Diocese of Niagara. This past week we hosted Anne at the first meeting of a Core Team which will kindle the fire here and we should see its start within a few months.

Although Fresh Expressions are primarily designed to reach out to people who aren't currently being reached by traditional Church, they might also really deepen the spirituality of a faithful cradle Anglican. Contemplative Fire is for anyone who wants to come and see what it's about. Please find out more about it by going to the new Canadian Contemplative Fire web site at www.contemplativefire.ca and watch to see Niagara catch Contemplative Fire this year. Perhaps Contemplative Fire will be the next step in your journey to deepen your faith.

Feet | How Beautiful!



JERRY SALLOUM
RETIRED VICAR

"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 darkness 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 pres-

ures 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!

Truth and reconciliation

LEN FORTUNE
ST. JUDE'S, OAKVILLE

If we deny that God's grace can cover the sin of Hitler, can we really be sure that His grace will cover our own sin?

Duncan Campbell Scott
Canada's Indian Affairs Superintendent

Seven ambassadors from the Diocese of Niagara, who were metaphorically anointed during the last November's Truth and Reconciliation Conference in Orillia, met recently at Hamilton's Christ's Church Cathedral to compare notes on the historic three-day event.

More than 100 participants from Anglican, Presbyterian and United churches in Ontario and Quebec sought guidance in promoting the healing of residential school survivors and their families, and in providing education to non-Indigenous people about this sad chapter in Canadian history.

The ambassadors traded ideas designed to make the greatest positive impact in the healing journey—a journey that all agreed wasn't going to be easy.

The Venerable Michael Patterson of the Niagara Diocese—who joined the group briefly—reminded the gathering of the "real disconnect within the national picture... and of the "malaise and apathy" that exists among some of the population.

Ambassadors agreed that it's critical that Canadians remember the thousands of Native children who were taken from their parents and placed in residential schools run by the Anglican, United, Presbyterian and Catholic Churches.

The prime directive of the schools was to "kill the Indian in the child"—

a chilling component of the government's assimilation initiative.

At the November conference, Darlene Ritchie, a Toronto Council Fire Commissioner charged that the Canadian government's strategy aimed at First Nations was... and still is: "Legislative genocide."

In the schools, as each conference speaker reinforced, the child was reprogrammed: His / her culture demeaned, their language forbidden and their parents barred from visiting them. Many were physically and sexually abused.

Marie Wilson, one of the three commissioners appointed to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) asked "What would you do if these were you're kids?"

Wilson insisted that the TRC is seeking truth—"We're not on a witch hunt"—and she allowed that there is some good truth that will be uncovered in her five-year journey.

On the last day of the Orillia conference, Marlene Brant Castellano—Trent University Professor Emeritus—passionately implored her fellow Anglicans to champion the TRC initiative with an all-out fervor.

The over-riding conference impetus was a blend of Rev. David MacDonald and Brant Castellano's insistence of seizing the opportunity—spearheaded by the TRC—that has the potential of reshaping the church and the country while showcasing the strength of Christian values and Indigenous spirituality.

Each Niagara Diocese ambassador is working on a strategy to spread the story/stories of the residential schools tragedy. The group will meet monthly to monitor each other's progress.

Rev. Cheryl Gaver, Ruth McKeown, Rick Mt. Pleasant, Rev. John Hesketh, Rev. Val Kerr, Ellie Johnson and Len Fortune attended the Hamilton meeting.

Carry each other



ELEANOR JOHNSTON
ST. THOMAS, ST. CATHARINES

Imagine two mature hippies who think Bach when someone mentions music and who have previously attended precisely one rock concert: Our Lady Peace, early '90s. Mrs. is inspired to attend a U2 concert in late August. After long hours on the Internet, Mr. finds someone in the States willing to sell two tickets in the gods, as it were, of the Rogers Centre. They reach their seats as the warm-up band finishes. The seats are useless; after Bono begins "It's a Beautiful Day," the crowd stays on its feet for the rest of the show, clapping, singing, laughing, crying, shouting, waving open cell phones like candles in the dark.

Imagine three young musicians in a charismatic church in 1980's Dublin; its leaders said they had to choose between rock music and Christ. They left in order to challenge both religious and rock cultures; they chose to sing for peace and justice. When they made the big time, U2 applied their Christian values by lobbying for those so poor they can't even imagine being able to afford a ticket to a rock concert let alone a lobby group.

In *We Get To Carry Each Other: The Gospel According to U2*, Greg Garrett describes the world's most popular rock group as eager to learn about and overcome injustice. Bono, the song writer and lead singer, tells of a trip to Nicaragua where he attended mass "and the priest asked all those who had lost a loved one for the revolution to come forward and call out the name of your loved one. And all these people

stood, and called out the names one by one, including sons and daughters. And with each name, the congregation would cry, "Presente!"—meaning they were present. If you are not committed to the poor, what is religion?" Bono has a great passion for spirituality and justice and a tremendous talent for using symbolic words and actions.

On an American tour, Garrett wrote, "the band had campaigned for a national holiday to recognize Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. In Arizona, particularly, there was a lot of angry talk, and even some death threats. One was very specific, and the FBI took it seriously. 'Don't play Arizona,' this threat said, 'and if you do, don't play "Pride (In the Name of Love)" because I will blow Bono's head off.'" The band chose not to be intimidated. "Bono remembers, 'I sang with my eyes closed... I looked up, at the end, and Adam was standing in front of me.' To see Adam move across the stage to play his guitar while shielding his friend is to see Jesus' words, 'No one can have greater love than to lay down his life for his friends,' and U2's words, 'What more in the name of love?' come to life."

Of interest to anyone who has ever despaired at the propensity of church communities to squabble, Garrett portrays the tensions in the band as similar to those in a typical church or family. U2's difficulties are, not surprisingly, more colorful than most. Bono has had fist fights with the others during concerts and has left them furious on stage while he body surfed a crowd. On the other hand, Adam, the non-Christian in the band, the one with the biblical name, is an alcoholic who sometimes couldn't make it to concerts. He has been held together by his brothers in the band and become the one who takes most care of his friends, the one who most often gets to carry the others.

"One Love, one blood, one life: you got to do what you should. One life, with each other, sisters, brothers. One life, but we're not the same. We get to carry each other."

You've got to pay close attention to Bono's lyrics. I thought he sang, "We've got to carry each other." It's "We get to carry each other." Garrett explains that the distinction is deliberate, "Faith and community should create in us awareness not just of this God-given sense of obligation to work for justice, but also awareness of the joyful privilege of being coworkers with God."

Note the difference between the previous sentence and Bono's lyrics. The former is an abstraction typical of the way theologians so carefully articulate beliefs. Bono's are powerfully compact, rhetorical, surprising; he taps the vital essence of our faith, touches our hearts, and calls us to action. We get to pay close attention to his lyrics.

In the second half of the concert in Toronto, U2 had the crowd sing "Amazing Grace," gave a sermon on how Canadians should fight for peace and social justice around the world, paid tribute to Myanmar's Suu Kyi, and projected a video of Bishop Desmond Tutu's call for racial equality. As the summer evening darkened and the elevator's lights on the side of the CN Tower played a fugue with the lights onstage, U2 performed song after song, persuading the 52,000 people singing along that "Love is a temple, Love a higher law." "Elevation"? For sure.

"Acrobat," a 1991 song, contains words that speak to the Christian church: "I'd break bread and wine, if there was a church I could receive in." Bono calls us to make our Eucharist sing in a way that people outside the church can accept and join in. So we get to carry each other.

COMMUNITY JUSTICE CAMP

Countdown to Community Justice Camp is on

COLLEEN SYM
SOCIAL JUSTICE COORDINATOR

The journey began in May 2008 when Bishop Bird accepted the invitation of the Anglican Church of Canada to host a justice camp.

To date there have been four Justice Camps. Each has followed the same basic outline. Bring together a diverse group of people of faith, to date predominantly Anglicans, and spend a week getting to know each other, becoming trusting of each other, worshipping and learning about justice together. The week gets divided up in this way:

- Day 1 Building the Learning Community
- Day 2 Introducing theme and concepts
- Day 3-5 Engaging the world through immersion experience
- Day 6 Reporting, integrating and celebrating

Community development is the theme of our camp. Community development in its simplest form is a process of meeting, trusting, naming and acting. When people come together as community, develop trusting relationships, name the justice issues to be addressed and together take action for change, transformation of the unjust structures of our societies to just communities is possible. This is the mission of the Church.

Dr. Christopher Lind has written that “a formal secular definition of justice would be to give to everyone that which is their due. In contemporary Christian theology, another way of thinking about justice is to understand it as ‘right relationship’”. Community Justice Camp is about the creation of communities where we are in right relationship with each other.

Peter Clutterbuck, a leading social



activist around the province’s poverty reduction strategy and Executive Director of the Social Planning Network of Ontario says, “The Niagara Anglican Diocese has been at the forefront

of our cross-community poverty reduction campaign, most recently joining low income advocates in a major event calling for increased social benefits to allow people to eat healthily. Justice

Camp is another example of how the Diocese and the Anglican Church supports building leadership for the creation of a more just and equitable community and society.”

Day 1 | Building the Learning Community

Community Justice Camp will get underway on the evening of May 9. Participants will come together to share a meal and start to build the learning community. There will be a welcome and overview of the week by The Rev’d Canon Terry DeForest, Chair of the Planning Coalition and introduction of the key support vol-

unteers for the week. As well, we anticipate an address by Bishop Bird regarding his personal learning goals and expectations of the week.

The learning goals for Community Justice Camp are to have participants acquire new skills and to build their capacity to become leaders in the justice mission of the Church. This

will be done through considering the concepts of charity vs. justice, their strengths and limitations as they relate to outreach; learning tactics for discerning and interpreting local needs in a way that leads to action; learning techniques for grass roots organizing and developing a justice-oriented approach to outreach; striving to be

prophetic, and; sharing best practices for community building, advocating and lobbying on the many issues of social justice we find in our world.

The approach to learning at the camp will be to educate for social transformation through critical analyses and hands-on experience. It will be an opportunity to learn from each other and to experi-

ence in community the interconnection of faith, theology and spirituality with real people’s lives and struggles.

An important part of the participants’ work on the opening night will be to map their personal justice journey and identify their personal learning goals. These will be revisited in a process of evaluation on the final day of Camp.

Day 2 | Introducing Theme and Concepts

Session 1: What is community development?

- Introduction
- CD in 3D

Introduction to community development

Citizens for Public Justice (CJPJ) defines public justice as the political dimension of loving one’s neighbour, caring for creation and achieving the common good. Public justice is particularly the responsibility of government and citizens. It involves seeking out and implementing just policies that allow everyone to live in dignity and participate in community.

Using the CJPJ *Dignity For All: the campaign for a poverty free Canada* as an example, we will explore what the concept of “community” means to us and reflect on how seeking the elimination of poverty is about developing a better national community for everyone.

Facilitator: Karri Munn-Venn, Socio-Economic Policy Analyst with Citizens for Public Justice

Inspired by the Old Testament call “to seek justice, love kindness and walk humbly with your God,” (Micah 6:8) and driven by the belief that, working together, we can build a better world, Karri is an enthusiastic advocate for positive social change.

Karri has over fifteen years experience in the international development

community and a strong background in policy analysis, network coordination, and government relations. She currently co-chairs the Global Economic Justice Program Committee of KAIROS and sits on the International Affairs Committee of the Presbyterian Church in Canada. She was also the Coordinator of the Canadian Council for International Cooperation’s Americas Policy Group for several years. Karri has lived and worked in Brazil and Ecuador and travelled extensively throughout Latin America. She has seen many issues—poverty, insecurity, environmental destruction—that have been a part of the Latin American reality, gain prevalence here in Canada. As a Policy Analyst with CJPJ, the focus of Karri’s work is on poverty reduction, taxation, and other socio-economic issues.

Karri has a Master’s Degree in International Affairs from the Norman Paterson School of International Affairs (Carleton University) and an Honours Bachelor of Arts Degree in International Studies and Political Science (York University). She speaks French, Spanish and Portuguese. She and her family are members of Knox Presbyterian Church, Ottawa.

CD in 3D

In the second part of “what is community development”, campers will join their

immersion groups and together create a play-doh sculpture that shows what community development means to them. After an opportunity to view each others sculptures, each group will be asked to report back on what their sculpture means and what the contributions of the group members were to the process of creating the sculpture. The sculptures will remain on display throughout the camp.

Session 2: From charity to justice

We believe now more than ever, in these tough economic times, that we, as Anglicans and all people of faith must look to the future as people of hope standing in solidarity with those experiencing injustice. Through acts of charity so many of us work with devotion at trying to meet the needs of those individuals at the local community level through the operation of community centres, daycares, breakfast programs, thrift shops, food banks, overnight shelters, hospitality programs and other social services. We know that we cannot do enough. Because charity is not enough.

This interactive workshop will have participants explore the concepts of charity vs. justice, their strengths and limitations as they relate to community development and Church outreach efforts. Through Bible study and reflection, we will review how the gospel calls us to transformative justice. Participants

will develop tools to enhance their community development efforts by adopting a justice-oriented approach.

Facilitator: The Rev’d Canon Maylanne Maybee, Deacon, Coordinator for Justice Education and Networks, Partnerships Department, Anglican Church of Canada. Maylanne was born into a diplomatic family and spent her childhood in Australia, Washington DC, and Beirut Lebanon as well as in Ottawa. She received a degree in French Language and Literature from Trinity College, Toronto and studied education and theology at Oxford University.

When Maylanne first became involved in urban ministry in the early 1980s—working in a Toronto neighbourhood of low income people—a deep recession was affecting all of Canada. Food banks were a new phenomenon and downtown Toronto churches were opening shelters to accommodate those in “crisis”. Within a short period Maylanne was convinced by the evidence—and with support from her peers, made a personal decision to stop putting energy into “charitable” responses to poverty and homelessness, and set about instead to seek systemic and long-term solutions that had a greater potential to make a difference in people’s lives.

Session 3: Being right is not enough

This workshop will talk about the build-

ing blocks of community organizing to increase social justice.

Many people who work for social justice feel that injustice can be corrected by doing good research, having the facts and presenting them in a clear and eloquent way to decision-makers. When the decision-makers (in government or in business or even in our own institutions) say ‘no’ to us we often go away feeling we didn’t do a good enough job, or feel frustrated because the decision-making system isn’t ‘fair’. We have been raised and conditioned to believe that government and organizational decision-making is ‘fair and rational’ and... it’s not. That’s why there is injustice—because the people who hold decision-making roles can make decisions that benefit some and do not benefit others.

To hold decisions-makers accountable we have to organize a base of community or collective power that backs up our definition of what is ‘right’ and demonstrates to decision-makers that if they are not ‘fair’ they will lose their jobs, lose votes, lose profits, lose support. The workshop will use participatory activities to illustrate the principles of community organizing.

Facilitator: Mike Balkwill is a community organizer (the job Obama made famous) with thirty years experience.

Day 3-5 | Engaging the world

At Community Justice Camp the goal is to engage with the people who have lived experience of injustice and with those who devote their time, talents and skills to fostering change. People like our Immersion Group leaders who will be facilitating face to face and hands-on encounters in communities across the Diocese that embody a justice focus over a charity focus, including urban, suburban/town and rural sites and dynamics.

The goal of the immersion days at Community Justice Camp is to engage your head, your heart and your hands in local justice issues. Here's what we have been working on... Biographies of the facilitators will be available at www.justicecamp.ca.

Poverty

Jessica Duarte and Jacque Keefe will be leading a group whose focus is on poverty. Their group will be exploring issues related to poverty and poverty reduction in Hamilton. They will explore such things as homelessness, issues facing the working poor, the unemployed and those living on social assistance. Potential site visits include St. Matthew's House, Salvation Army, Welcome Inn, Mission Services, Good Shepherd Centre, Hamilton Food Share.

Environment

Susan Curran and Bill Mous will be leading a group whose focus is on the environment. Using sustainable methods of transportation (walking, cycling and mass transit) this immersion group will explore how people have advocated for environmental justice in their community, and learn how to be empowered to do so in our own; recognizing that our faith calls us to action that is both local and global, individual and corporate, responsive and prophetic.

Food Security

Blair Richardson and Janice Toth will be leading a group that will acquire a deep and comprehensive understand-

ing of the extent to which food insecurity exists in Canada; its social costs, its relationship with poverty and its root causes. Through face to face encounters with policy-makers, academics and social service agency staff, participants will explore then critique solutions to food insecurity and hunger.

Housing

Murray MacAdam and Dennis Hurst's group will learn there's no place like home... people in our society who "couch-surf", live in a shelter, or in a rundown apartment, know this only too well. In the housing and homelessness immersion group you will meet the faces behind the housing crisis issue first-hand, including low-income tenants, community centre workers, homeless shelter staff, housing advocates, and non-profit housing providers. And by visiting a housing co-op and swinging hammers at a Habitat for Humanity build, you'll be part of the solution.

Aboriginal Justice

Val Kerr and Ellie Johnson will be leading this group. The First Nations immersion experience will look at Residential Schools and the aftermath of these schools, First Nations Land Claims, Native Friendship Centers as well as other service agencies serving First Nations people in and around the Niagara Area. We will travel to Brantford to visit Six Nations Reserve and the Residential School there.

Welcoming the Stranger

Deirdre Pike and Bill Carrothers will be leading a group that explores how we create inclusive and equitable spaces in our communities for those who are marginalized for a multitude of reasons. Through engaging in local newcomer programs, support places for people who are economically marginalized, and LGBTQ Positive Space training among other opportunities, participants will return to their com-

munities with a fuller understanding of what it means to live, walk, and work from an anti-oppression framework.

Building Neighbourhoods

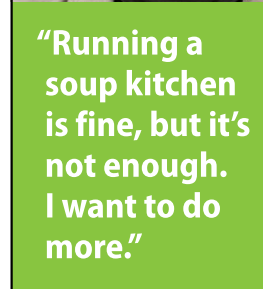
Diane Baltaz and Sue-Ann Ward will be leading a group that as a learning community will visit the Working Centre in Kitchener, the Dragon Centre, Jamesville Community Centre, McQuesten Community Centre, Wesley Centre, and STAR in Hamilton, to tour facilities and speak with a variety of stakeholders about grass roots community building efforts that strengthen residents' connections to economic opportunity, positive social networks, and effective resource sharing. Hands on opportunities will include food preparation and enjoyment as part of a community kitchen project. The group will also have occasions for discussion with members of neighbourhood Community Planning Teams, as well as with representatives from the Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction and the Hamilton Community Foundation.

Empowering Communities and Coalition Building

David Derbyshire will be leading a group that will gain an understanding of the Asset Based Community Development model. The group will explore how the communities have been attempting to build social capital within a number of neighbourhoods in the City of Hamilton. The group will explore the origins and development of a number of "local planning teams" made up of residents, service providers, institutions, places of worship, business and industry who are working together to focus on the strengths that exist within a neighbourhood and how they can be brought together to address the challenges. With the permission of a couple of these Community Planning Teams the group will gain a better understanding of how they are working to make their neighbourhoods a better place to live, work and raise a family.



"I'm tired of talking about the problems in my neighbourhood. I want to act!"



"Running a soup kitchen is fine, but it's not enough. I want to do more."



Live the Change you want to see

Community Justice Camp

May 9-14, 2010
905-527-1316
www.justicecamp.ca

Hosted by the Anglican Diocese of Niagara in Hamilton, Ontario



"I'm going because I can't change the world alone."

Day 6 | Reporting, integrating and celebrating

Sharing our Learning and Collecting the Wisdom

This is the opportunity for participants to report back on their experience, share their learnings and apply them in a way that allows them to use their skills as agents of change.

Each Immersion group will identify a problem or issue they encountered in their immersion experience and formulate a solution. The report back to the camp plenary will be through the presentation of a community development project by each group that incorporates

the learnings from the plenary sessions Sunday and Monday and from their immersion group experience.

The Immersion groups will each design a community development project that will identify:

- the issue;

- the goals of the project;
- community development methods to be used;
- the necessary resources to carry out the project;
- how the project will engage and support the empowerment of the community;

- how it will accommodate diverse needs, and;
 - the expected outcomes.
- Each group will have 15 minutes for their presentation. No PowerPoint presentations allowed. Extreme creativity encouraged.

Community Justice Camp part of the Vision

MICHAEL PATTERSON
EXECUTIVE OFFICER

When Michael Bird, became the Bishop of Niagara, one of the first acts of his episcopacy was an act of justice. The Government of Ontario was about to begin its consultation on a Poverty Reduction Strategy and the Bishop wrote to MPP Deb Matthews, then Chair of the Cabinet Committee responsible for the Poverty Reduction Strategy.

In his letter to the Minister, Bishop Bird identified that the mission of the

Church calls Anglicans in the Diocese of Niagara to both loving service of our neighbours and to action to transform the structures of society that oppress our neighbours. "As people of faith", he wrote, "we seek the development of a just society where all can flourish, even the most vulnerable, poor and dispossessed." The letter ended with a request that Minister Matthews hear the communities' call for social justice.

This was in May 2008. That same month, the Bishop accepted the invitation of the Anglican Church of Canada

to host a Justice Camp which is going to happen this year.

We know that Prophetic Social Justice Making has been at the front and centre of the vision that has been emerging across the Diocese. This has been a process that has called members of the Church away from a posture of maintenance to one of mission, a vision of vibrant, abundant, hope-filled life in the Church.

Participation in Community Justice Camp will help us to live out the essence of what Christ called us to do—feed the hungry, clothe the naked,

and love our neighbour. The Church, as community, is called to respond to the needs of the neighbourhoods in which we reside. We are a community called to be the voice of the marginalized and silenced and powerless.

Our cathedral, for instance, is located in one of the poorest neighbourhoods in the entire country. Poverty, homelessness, substance abuse, unemployment are epidemic. If we were to be preoccupied with internal matters of survival, we would, in effect, risk closing our doors to these pronounced needs in our

communities and at our doorsteps.

The Church can no longer "hide" behind the big oak doors and carry on as we always have. These doors need to be flung open and those of us behind them need to come out into the community and offer the care, compassion and power of Christ's gospel of social justice.

During *Community Justice Camp: Live the Change You Want to See* scheduled for May 9-14, 2010 the doors across the Diocese will be opened wide for the Church to be in community and community to be in the Church.

Eight O'clock



MICHAEL THOMPSON
RECTOR, ST. JUDE'S OAKVILLE

Tomorrow morning I will wake up, put the kettle on for tea, and start the process of getting ready to go out the door. I will do all that in the dark, because it's that time or year. The darkness doesn't make it any easier.

I will be the first or second person to arrive at the church. Maybe the Assistant Curate will be there ahead of me. He usually is. It will still seem awfully early to me in either case.

Gradually, people will gather out of the still-quiet world into the circle of light and warmth, into that community unique, I think, to Anglicans—the Eight O'clock Service. In some churches, the Eight O'clock takes place at Eight-Thirty. In the first parish I served as rector, it was at nine.

The Eight O'clock is hard to love in anticipation. It is the reason I go to bed before the game is over Saturday night. And sometimes I envy (just for a moment and only a bit) the few people I see as I drive the five kilometers between our home and the church on Sunday morning. Especially in the summer, when I am about to spend the best part of the day indoors. For three months over the course of three summers, when I served the summer community of St. Peters on-the-Rock, Stony Lake, I could go for a swim in the dark cool waters of that lake after the Eight O'clock.

In some places with lots of clergy, being at Eight O'clock is optional for those not actively involved as president or preacher. A warden some years ago persuaded me that I'd be missing something important if I missed the Eight O'clock, even if all it did was sit and listen. So even when others are in charge of leading worship, I show up.

One Sunday not long ago, I was so thoroughly surplus to the event that I did not need to administer chalice or paten. Others took responsibility for sharing the bread and wine. I sat with my eyes closed and listened to the footsteps of the faithful. It was a holy sound, those feet clacking and squeak-

ing (leather or rubber) on their way to and from an encounter with the Holy, kneeling along a padded step, leaning on a carved oak rail. Or standing, knees long past kneeling. The sounds people make as they move are—well—moving.

Mostly Anglicans don't sing at the Eight O'clock. Sharing the peace is about as gregarious as it gets, and sometimes—and for some people—even that ancient liturgical encounter is too much. That isn't to say that there is no sense of community. This is, after all, the most stable worshipping community in almost any parish, and if someone is absent for more than one Sunday, people notice, and phone. But the community doesn't *impose*. It doesn't require anything but presence and the lightest touch of participation.

If the whole Body of Christ were like this, it would just be wrong. But it would be no less wrong if this gathering stopped happening, if in the stillness of the early morning, there were no still place to celebrate the eternal mystery of life and death, gift and loss, dream and memory. We need this meal on the menu, this community sustained by minimal discourse and ancient roots.

Tomorrow morning they will gather, as they have gathered for centuries of mornings. Born out of a profound attachment to the mystery of the incarnation made known in the ordinary holiness of bread and wine transformed, born into a world in which the Office—Morning Prayer—dominated prime time, this is the gathering that has kept alive the weekly ritual in which the offering of our lives is blessed, broken open, and shared, becoming, by the power of God's Holy Spirit, the living presence of Jesus among us.

Over the next few weeks, Lent will shorten the nights and lengthen the days. Eight O'clockers will notice. By the time Easter arrives, we'll be waking up in daylight, and our bodies, our eyes will help us prepare for the mystery by which life's triumph over death intersects with vernal Equinox. If the Eight O'clock is a hard pull through the dark months, there are rewards in the spring.

You may not be an Eight O'clock person, and if you're not, there are rich veins of spirit and truth in the

other times and ways that the people of God gather for worship. Your children may enliven a later celebration, or the buoyant song of the church may support and enliven your journey.

You may not be an Eight O'clock person, but if you have a sense that the space you enter has already, this day, been warmed by human encounter with the Holy One, it is because the Eight O'clock broke open the first day of the week to the presence and purpose of God.

Among the elements of our Diocesan vision is "life-changing worship". On the faces—some lined with age, some youthfully fresh—that I encounter at Eight O'clock I wonder if the change isn't the kind of change that a rivulet can make over a decade. I've seen the floods that change the landscape instantly—in what the Bible calls "the twinkling of an eye". And "life-changing worship" can sound like some kind of instantaneous transformation—the "first-kiss" spirituality whose transformative authority comes from freshness, surprise, and the unexpected. But, having woken up for north of twenty-six years with the expected Eight O'clock ahead of me, with its familiarity and sameness, its grooved and holy sameness waiting for me in the circle of light we enter from the darkness, I know there is life-changing authority in something we have done so often that it becomes second nature.

Second nature. Transformed nature. Not, as it turns out, the same old thing, but the same thing turning out to be new. In the silence and sameness of Eight O'clock, I wonder if we can find the long and patient transformation that habit shapes into holiness, that fills early Sunday mornings with ordinary people so deeply habitual in their acknowledging of the world of the holy that, almost without knowing it, they stand against the terrifying dark emptiness of the night with the fragile, flickering and ancient light of the merest candle in their hands.

Tonight I will probably go to bed earlier than I otherwise might, and tomorrow I will get up earlier than would otherwise make me happy. For all that, the universe and its Holy God will give me a gift in the morning—a circle of light and warmth, of habit and hope, of long faithfulness and quiet buoyancy—will give me the gift of Eight O'clock.

Fasting to Fun | U can do it

HOLLIS HISCOCK
RETIRED PRIEST, BURLINGTON

A FUN-ny thing happened to me on Christmas Day. While sitting around the tree, opening gifts, littering the living room with wrapping paper, sampling decadent chocolates and other 'non-fattening' delights, while anxiously awaiting the royal feast of turkey, duck, roasted vegetables, Christmas pudding and blueberry crumble, it dawned on me that Lent was only 54 days away.

In the midst of a gala celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ, surrounded by a supporting cast of characters, like Rudolph, Santa Claus, the Grinch and other lesser inanimate beings, here am I thinking about Lent and fasting, and asking what every teenager is not tweeting about, 'why can't Lent be more like Christmas?', and, 'what can we do to make fasting more fun?'.

I resisted pursuing this deep theological dilemma until all dreams of 'sugar plums dancing in my head' had been replaced by the stark reality of an overstuffed Christmas body and spirit. However, as much as I tried I could not shake my quest to find FUN in FASTING.

During the day, it exploded into my thought processes like a runaway freight train rattling down a steep grade at breakneck speed. Even sleep could not eradicate its ever present pervasiveness, haunting, taunting and probing me to find the answer at the end of the rainbow.

Then I had an epiphany moment. The answer appeared like a bevy of angels bursting into song in the dead of night in the middle of nowhere, scaring the living daylight out of several drowsy, slumbering, unsuspecting sheep guards.

The solution to the puzzle of getting FUN out of FASTING simply required an application of the mathematical principles of subtraction and addition.

Take the word FASTING, subtract the second, third, fourth, fifth and last letters. This leaves only FN. Then add U between F and N. Presto! We have changed FASTING to FUN! The difference is U, so only U (YOU) can put FUN into FASTING this coming Lent.

The gospel writer Luke (4:2) added a little fun comment when he reported on Jesus' fasting in the desert. He concluded that after going without food for 960 hours Jesus was hungry

'when it was over'. What a journalistic insight and commentary! Was the writer attempting to add a little levity or fun to ease an extremely tense situation? I like to think so.

When Jesus the teacher spoke about fasting, he funned with his listeners.

As a kid in Nazareth, in company with his boyhood buddies, he probably mimicked and snickered as the sombre faced, haggard looking, food challenged, black coated religious leaders paraded, with great fanfare, around the local places of worship and the streets to make certain that other people could see that they were suffering through their fasting, and proud of it.

This image must have been welded on Jesus' memory, because later in life he would advise his followers that God was not impressed when they paraded their 'acts of righteousness' before others in public places.

So He tells His followers 'when you fast, do not look sombre, as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show people they are fasting, but when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so it will not be obvious to others that you are fasting'. In other words, put some fun into your fasting. People will not know that you are fasting, but God will. The hypocrites may get their rewards from gloating people, but the better and longer lasting reward system is sponsored by God. Jesus seemed to want people to lighten up and have FUN while FASTING.

Lent 2010 is rapidly speeding towards us, and soon the call will go out for us to take a long hard look at what we are like and make changes if necessary, to pray more, to become more acquainted with the Bible and its message, to give more to those in need and to FAST.

If you decide you are going to fast this Lent, it may be from certain foods and other physical, enhancing pleasures, or it could be to fast from certain attitudes which are preventing us from being the kind of individuals God wants us to be, or it may be fasting from 'non God like behaviours' towards other people, or all of the above. Big choice to make.

But remember, whatever you do this Lent, only U can make FASTING FUN!

Following in His footsteps



GRAHAME STAP
(NO LONGER RETIRED) RECTOR, ST. SIMONS TEMAGAMI

I bring you greetings from the north. Today the sun is shining and it truly is beautiful. It is joy be out walking and breathing the fresh air. However, all is not well in the north. We are plagued by strikes, shortage of doctors and

small town hospitals closing.

Why is this happening? I believe it is because we have lost track of what is important in the lives of people. We have lost track of the Christian fact that we are our brothers' and sisters' keepers. When God asked Cain "where is your brother Abel?" and Cain replied, "I do not know, am I my brother's keeper?" The answer is and must be YES. We must put people before the bottom line. We must stop the few greedy top executives taking home salaries up to 184 times greater than the ordinary worker. And we

must stop putting our own comfort before the need of others.

We rebel at the new health tax and the thought of harmonizing the GST and the PST drives us to distraction as we see our standard of living slowly becoming less and less. But standard of living does not count for much when you have a heart attack and the closest hospital is one and a half hours away or strike pay runs out or your child has a temperature of 104 and the line up at the clinic is forty people long or you cannot pay the rent and feed your family.

Poverty is a sin but so is our

unwillingness to accept an increase in taxes that will help pay for our social programs and our apathy in letting the government know that we will not accept any person, through no fault of their own, having fallen on hard times not getting the help they need to rebuild their lives.

I believe the Diocese of Niagara is on the right track and I applaud the vision of Bishop Michael for the church to become a beacon of light in a sometimes cruel and violent world. But for the vision to become a reality we all must be a part of "rethinking how

we do the church" and it must be with a united front that we move into a new era of moving out into the community and into the face of government.

Jesus came as a tiny child born in a stable worshiped by the Magi who gave wonderful and very expensive gifts because of their belief that these gifts would help Jesus with what he had come to do. We do not know what became of these gifts but we do know Jesus came and ate with outcasts and sinners. How can we who follow in his footsteps do less? But as always it is only my opinion.

More than re-arranging furniture

» CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

The real shocker was that the church had been turned sideways, to face the "south" wall. All the pews and choir stalls had been removed, replaced with comfortable stackable chairs in semi-circles. The furniture consisted of a small table, a preacher's podium, a grand piano on one side and a music 'ensemble' on the other. The service and hymns were projected onto a screen behind the podium, with monitors on either side, and several in the annex for the overflow congregation. The Holy Table in the chancel remained as it was; with chairs facing it for the 8 am communion my mother attends. On the left of the chancel still stands the organ console, facing into the 'nave.' On one Sunday we went back to what my mother calls the 'happy-clappy' service, at which I took the photograph (at right).

All this did not happen without dissension. An elderly gentleman asked what I thought of the alterations, and I replied that I thought the church was ready for the 21st Century, which did not meet his approval. But, let's face it, most people today find a Gothic church, with pews all facing one way, towards the altar, rather morbid: they only go to church for weddings and funerals, and there seem to be a lot more of the latter I find, as I grow older. Also, in the traditional church, one sees only the backs of heads, but in this new arrangement one sees faces, and in University term time, a lot of young faces, which our traditional churches are sadly lacking.

However, it will take a lot more than re-arranging the furniture to fill our empty churches. There must also needs be the proclamation of the good news of Jesus Christ, for which SMB is most noted in Canterbury. This is not to say that Christ is not preached in other churches in the city. On Christmas Day we went to a very grand service in the cathedral, set to Mozart's Coronation Mass. The aisles and choir were packed with people from all around the globe—we were invited to say the Our Father in our own language. The archbishop, Rowan Williams, preached on the necessity of having a relationship with God, and then to serve him, and one another, with humility. Afterwards he stood outside the great west door in the chill air, to shake our hands and to wish us a happy Christmas. Those present may have been filled with awe by such magnificent surroundings, but when we went out of the cathedral precincts we were back in the world to which Jesus Christ means nothing. In Canterbury, as in Cairo, those outside the church just don't have that relationship with God that the archbishop spoke of. And really, do we?

The sad thing is that we in the church may have misrepresented the good news that Jesus came to give us. We've taken it to mean that God saves us, and only us, from hell. But, as Bishop N.T. Wright has said, that's not what the Gospel writers said. But God has surprised us by his new creation in Jesus, perceived only by faith. If it were our faith in him that gets us into heaven, we would have something



to boast about, especially to those of other faiths, but Paul says we're saved only by grace; nothing to boast about.

Who's in this new creation, then? That depends on how we read the scriptures. Some say only those whom God has chosen, to whom he has given his grace. Everybody else is out. Others say that it depends on us: have we made a decision to follow Christ, and have we accepted him as our savior and lord? Still others say that God has opened his new creation to everybody living on earth, past, present and future. Robert Farrar Capon has written on all of Jesus' parables, and miracles, which he terms acted parables, to show that Jesus actually taught the

latter. He writes that the apostles and early church believed the same, but which the Western church has somehow misconstrued.

If this be true, and I'm inclined to believe it is, it turns the whole idea of Evangelism upside down. The Good News is not telling others to become like us, but to go out to serve the world, to demonstrate that God loves all people, just as much as he loves us. But here's the rub. Yesterday, after the service at All Saints' Cathedral, Cairo, we went to the terrace at the Marriott Hotel for lunch. Outside the hotel gate, sitting on the sidewalk, was a lady with two small children, all poorly nourished. A pound would

have bought them a little bread. We've seen so many people like her that we passed them by and spent over 200 pounds on our lunch. Was that good evangelism? I think Micah would have said no. He wrote, "He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" Micah 6:8. I felt condemned, like Dives in the parable of the rich man and the beggar at his gate.

So, it will take a lot more than re-orienting chairs to draw people into our churches. The Lord says people need to see our good works, and to glorify our father in heaven.

Atwood and God | Margaret's Fludde



FRANCEAN CAMPBELL-RICH
CHRIST'S CHURCH CATHEDRAL

No, this is not a book review. From far and wide others have written about Margaret Atwood's recent *The Year of the Flood*. But readers of the *Niagara Anglican* might be intrigued, as I was, by these opening words:

Who is it tends the Garden,
The Garden, oh so green?
'Twas once the finest Garden
That ever has been seen.
And in it God's dear Creatures
Did swim and fly and play;
But then came greedy Spoilers,
And killed them all away.

None too Atwood, you'll agree. They are from *The God's Gardeners Hymn Book*, and there are musical settings for them, a CD, available if one is persistent enough to track it down on the internet. Atwood acknowledges that the clearest influence on the Gardiner hymn lyrics is William Blake, John

Bunyon, and others, including the Anglican/United Church Hymn Book, the 1971 "Red Book" as we know it. Readers of another of Atwood's recent books, a collection of Massey lectures, *PayBack and the Dark Side of Debt*, might recall that Atwood says she earned good marks in school in Bible studies. One would not be surprised then, not only by the many hymns, but by the many references and citations in the Flood story to the Hebrew bible, the Old Testament—from an earlier edition than our now common NRSV, probably the King James, judging from the language. And there is at least one reference to Jesus—so far.

By so far, I must confess that I have read the book only once, and quickly—a huge injustice to what is obviously an important work by an important writer. Moreover, it is not at all an easy book to read, in my opinion, and will take at least another, more comprehensive reading if I am not to make a fool of myself. However, of one point I am clear: The Year of the Flood is a devastating prophecy: an overwhelming accusation of how human beings have destroyed the earth, and a horror dream of what could follow the present crisis—of Atwood's choice: a universal pan-

demical that leaves dead bodies everywhere and a few scattered survivors of diverse moralities.

And that's where we come in. Our Vision, going back more than a year, to Bishop Michael's message at the Bishop's Company dinner, says it all, and challenges us all, on many fronts, including the environment, under the general title of excellence of ministry. Did we listen? And did we hear? Atwood invokes the creation stories of Genesis and of Noah and his family, but it is a dry flood, and no less purging of human sin of destruction of the earth, the beauties of nature, and the natural order of things. None of this is foreign to us and to our times. Atwood and her writer-husband, Graeme Gibson, are noted for their promotion of many causes in defense of justice, of wildlife, of human rights and of just about everything that our Vision encompasses in the 'flower petal' symbol: Remember it? Have we really followed through? Or do we, through sinful self interest and inertia risk the Waterless Flood?

But hold on: all is not doom. God's Gardeners, an amorphous group of Faithful Companions, led by a biblical type—could be Abraham, Moses, non-specific: Atwood calls him Adam One—sheds comfort

and wisdom throughout the account of humankind's progress in rebuilding society. The Gardeners live and work on rooftops, growing herbs and vegetables and rejecting meat in most forms though they, too, must protect themselves from authoritarianism and commercialism—survivors from the evil pre-flood world. From the Gardeners, too, one is persuaded that indeed, some human virtues survive, not the least of which is hope—and if the reader perceives—love.

The Gardeners also have their saints—drawn from real-life persons such as Dian Fossey, martyred for her lifelong devotion to chimpanzees, and some historical ones such as Saint Julian of Norwich, the fourteenth century visionary who said that "every little thing... lasts and ever shall, for God loves it." And Saint Rachel (Carsen), who devoted her life to the "Feathered Ones". Adam One mourns the loss to this world of a long list of birds and beasts—but not truly lost in the eye of God. Some of the reviewers of *The Year of the Flood* describe the Gardeners as a cult—not unlike some of the less recent back-to-the-landers, one supposes. I disagree, and I hope I am right. I believe the Gardeners are symbols of hope and of love.

There is enough suspense to stop the breath of any casual reader. There is torture and violence to fulfill the expectations of those who expect it. If the message of this significant work of Margaret Atwood's is intended to forecast, to warn, to horrify and to frighten, then it probably succeeds—unless one is able to remember it is basically the product of one human's mind and imagination. If there are no comforting words to close the cover and turn off the light, then so be it. There is, at least, at the close, a hint of voices, coming from a distance, singing. And there are these words, a hymn:

The earth forgives the miner's blast
That rends her crust and burns her skin;
The centuries bring Trees again,
And water, and the Fish therein.
The Deer at length forgives the Wolf
That tears his throat and drinks his blood;
His bones return to soil, and feed

The trees that flower and fruit and seed.
Give up your anger and your spite,
And imitate the Deer, the Tree;
In sweet Forgiveness find your joy,
For it alone can set you free.

What Anglicans can learn from The Meeting House



JOHN BOWEN
ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST, HAMILTON

Anglicans love to hate The Meeting House. Wherever two or three Anglicans are gathered together, there you will find four opinions as to what is wrong with The Meeting House (TMH).

For those who have never heard of it, TMH is a church belonging to a little-known Mennonite denomination called Brethren in Christ. It is best known for two things: meeting in cinemas around the GTA (seven at the present time, including Ancaster's Silver City, and more projected), and the 45-minute sermons by their long-haired middle-aged hippy preacher, Bruxy Cavey. On any given Sunday morning, maybe 8,000 people, mainly under the age of forty, show up at one or other of their "sites."

Some, of course, would think that 8,000 people showing up for worship, even in a cinema, would naturally be a good thing. What could there possibly be to criticize? Well, for a start, from an Anglican point-of-view, it is not liturgical worship. There is a lot of singing (led by a local worship band), followed by a pastoral prayer and announcements, and then a 45-minute sermon, broadcast on the big screen from the church's headquarters in Oakville. Then we go home. So there is no liturgical shape or content to the service. Neither is the service (usually) Eucharistic. I was there once when there was a Eucharist, but it was in the last five minutes, tacked on at

the end almost as an afterthought, and again with virtually no liturgical framework.

It is a selling point for TMH that it is not "religious." Check out the website, www.themeetinghouse.ca, and the first thing you will see is "Tired of religion? Are you tired of religion but still interested in spirituality? Are you cynical about institutional approaches to God while still being open to exploring your faith? Welcome to The Meeting House—a church for people who aren't into church. We'd love for you to join us as we explore issues of importance in a decidedly irreligious way." And certainly the cinema setting, the relaxed atmosphere, the video clips and loud music, the buzz and laughter and good coffee, are not what we associate with traditional church. But if you want to become a member of TMH, the requirements (including re-baptism if you were baptised as an infant—a normal Anabaptist requirement, by the way) begin to sound suspiciously like those of any other church.

Then there is the fact that The Meeting House is drawing people away from other churches—unintentionally, it is only fair to add. I know firsthand that there are Baptists and Pentecostals who prefer TMH to their own churches. It would be very surprising indeed if there were no disgruntled Anglicans lurking in the back rows of Silver City on a Sunday morning, coffee in hand. It is hardly fair to call it sheep stealing if there is no intention to steal, but losing members to another church always creates bad feeling.

But, if we are honest, there is one thing that irritates us more than all of these combined: it is that The Meeting House is successful. Successful in attracting people—a lot of people, and a lot of young people at that—

successful in holding on to (not all but many) of them, and successful in opening and filling new churches. If there is one thing that rankles with us, it is that kind of success. (Harold Percy experienced the same animosity some years ago, when Trinity Anglican Church, Streetsville, began to grow significantly.) The basic principle is this: if it is successful, they must be doing something wrong. If they were doing things properly, they'd be shrinking, just like all the respectable churches where things are done right.

It's hard to stop that kind of bad feeling once it gets going. But I want to suggest that, if we can suspend our suspicion of a church like TMH for a moment, there may actually be things we can learn. Maybe there is something those disaffected Baptists and Anglicans are getting there that we didn't give them and we should have done. I want to know: Why are they growing? Why do people like it? What is their real appeal? Here are some of the things I observe:

Leaders minister according to their gifts

Contrary to the popular impression, Bruxy Cavey is not "the pastor" in charge of TMH. I am told he couldn't administer his way out of a paper bag. But he is a very gifted preacher. The "lead pastor" of TMH is actually a man most people have never heard of and wouldn't recognise on the street, called Tim Day. Bruxy Cavey is answerable to Tim Day. Tim Day (I assume) is a good administrator, but probably isn't that wonderful a preacher. Each does what he is good at. Neither tries to be the one-man band in ministry that most clergy are expected to be, and that prevents many clergy doing what they do best.

They take Christian education seriously

The weekly bulletin contains an outline of the sermon with spaces for people to take notes. Then, at the midweek home groups, the sermon is discussed. A friend who went to TMH for a time said something to me once about Gnosticism. Knowing he had never had theological education, I asked him, "How do you know about Gnosticism?" "Oh," he replied, "Bruxy just preached three sermons about Gnosticism." The sermons are not pabulum, even though they are delivered with winsome humour and much contemporary illustration. They are meant to be taken seriously as Christian education, to develop mature, thoughtful Christians.

They emphasise lay-led home groups

I have heard Bruxy Cavey say that Sunday morning is a "dietary supplement" and that the main source of nurture and pastoral care takes place through the midweek small groups—significantly called "home churches." I don't think Anglicans could ever think of the Eucharist as a "dietary supplement." But the emphasis on the importance of small groups is a crucial one—and not just because it is easy to get lost in the crowd in a large congregation. Whenever the church has experienced renewal—whether through St Francis and his twelve friends, or the Wesleyans of the 1700's, or the charismatic movement of the 1960's—small groups have been crucial to its growth and vitality. We have neglected them at our peril.

They make use of a rented space that people feel comfortable going to

Most old church buildings are badly designed for present-day needs, exorbitantly expensive to maintain, and (not least) are very intimidating

for someone to enter who does not come from a church background.

They discourage spectator religion

A couple of times a year comes "Purge Sunday", when the preacher will say (in effect), "If you are a Christian who is just here because you find it entertaining, maybe there is another church that would suit you better. But if you are serious about your faith, you should join a home church, because that is where the real work of the community takes place." Would we dare to do that? What if those we "purge" should happen to be envelope holders?

They are modest about their identity

A couple of years ago, I heard Bruxy Cavey say to a group of Anglicans, "It may be that in a few years, God will say to TMH, 'Thanks very much. It's been a great few years, and you have served my purposes. But now I need you to shut up shop, because the Kingdom will be better served in the next few years by something else'." Most of us were shocked by the suggestion of a "successful" church voluntarily closing. But there was worse to come. He then asked, "Do Anglicans feel that way about their tradition? Could the day ever come when God's purposes might be better served without the existence of an Anglican Church? And how would you respond?" It's a good question—but a tough question.

Let's face it. The Meeting House is doing some things well. That doesn't mean they are perfect—and they are the first to acknowledge their weaknesses (something else we could learn from). But what is to stop someone creating a church which combines the best of The Meeting House with the best of the Anglican, liturgical, Eucharistic tradition? It could be done. It would certainly count as "innovative ministry."

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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

Proofreading: Bryan Stopps

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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 Perkons
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

■ The Reverend Matthew Griffin has accepted the appointment as Priest Associate at St. John's, Ancaster, effective February 1.

■ The Reverend Will Alakas accepted the appointment as Rector of Holy Trinity, Welland, effective January 25.

■ Canon Geoffrey Jackson, Senior Development Officer at the National Office, died suddenly due to heart failure on January 5. Our thoughts and prayers are with his wife, Elizabeth,

and the bereaved family. Funeral service was held at All Saints, Waterloo, on January 12.

■ The Reverend Robin Graves accepted the appointment as Rector of Transfiguration, St. Catharines, effective December 1.

■ Our deepest sympathy to Arch-deacon Michael Pollesel, General Secretary, on the loss of his wife, Gini, on December 28.

■ The Reverend Canon Desmond Fleming passed away on Decem-

ber 26 surrounded by his loving family. Funeral Service was held on Wednesday, December 30 at Christ's Church Cathedral. The Reverend Canon Desmond Fleming was ordained deacon in 1955 and priest in 1955 in Ireland. After ministering in Ireland, he began his ministry in the Diocese of Niagara in 1966, serving St. Christopher's, Burlington; All Saints and St. Monica's, Niagara Falls, and St. Stephen on the Mount, Hamilton. Please remember

Audrey Fleming and family in your thoughts and prayers.

■ The Reverend Krista Hilton was issued a bishop's permission as Honorary Assistant at St. George's Church, Guelph, effective December 15.

■ Our deepest sympathy to Dale Tiller, spouse of Canon Mark Tiller, and family, on the death of Dale's mom, Dorothy Burt, in early December. A family service will be held.

At the heart of the Vision

» CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

The Lenten season certainly encourages us to enter into a journey of reflection and ever-deepening spirituality. A few words about Christian reflection.

Many years ago, I discovered an eastern Christian philosophy based on Christ's directive "to pray always and never lose heart" (Luke 19:1) and St. Paul's countless exhortations to pray without ceasing. The philosophy espoused by the holy Staretz (earliest eastern Christian monks) said that it was possible for the Christian to pray with every breath throughout their entire lives. It was based on a Jesus prayer. For our purposes it's not important to delve into that philosophy—except to acknowledge that the early mystics and spiritual directors saw this as possible and a value.

In the Western church prayer became the work of the monastics. Eventually they would develop what was known as the liturgy of the hours. They would stop many times

during the day for Matins, Readings, mid-day prayer, Evening Prayer, Compline, Eucharist and more. In so doing the monks struggled with the same issue of how to make one's life a prayer.

These are just some examples of what ancients believed was at the heart of the Christian life. Today, in Niagara, we are trying to discover a new way of being Christian in the world around us. We are trying to find relevance for ourselves and to bring meaning, ministry and peace to a world around us. Our old systems don't work anymore. People have fallen by the wayside. So, we feel that the Spirit of God is saying that we need to move in new and exciting, if not painful directions. But how do we truly know those directions if we are not a people of prayer? From the very life of Christ and the writings of the earliest Christians, we learn that prayer is at the heart of our very existence. Without prayer, there is no faith, no church.

Over the years (generations) we have learned to excuse ourselves from prayer by "reciting and read-

ing" prayers—as if God really needs our recitations. I'm sure that God is happy that we take the time, but I am also convinced that the Lord of the Universe, truly desires to speak at the deepest levels. So what does that mean to us today?

One of the most important forms of prayer and perhaps the easiest is the daily examen. It requires that we take time toward the end of the day to look over, ponder and reflect upon what has happened. Most of us will discover moments when we have really had the opportunity to live out our call to love sisters and brothers around us. It's important to thank God for those moments and for the strength that we have been given to live the Christian call. We will also discover moments when we have been uncharitable, unforgiving, unbending, dishonest or divisive, and for these moments we must ask forgiveness. We must also ask for the strength to ask forgiveness from those that we have hurt in the process. This kind of prayer or examen, allows God to speak to our actions. It

allows God to help us grow beyond our failings and to strengthen the goodness implanted within us as Baptized followers of his son.

There are many other opportunities to allow God to speak in the silence of our hearts. Of course that means that occasionally we need to spend some time in silence reflecting on our lives and on our relationship with our divine Creator.

What is important is that if we are to succeed in any kind of renewal, or in any kind of living of our vision then it needs to be rooted in the will of God. In order to be rooted in that will we must individually and collectively seek God's guidance. That guidance is sought through prayer. The winter, as well as the upcoming season of Lent, is a wonderful time to learn how to "pray unceasingly". It's about becoming a reflective person who allows God to permeate our thoughts and our actions. If that were truly the case, then our vision will be God's vision and God's will—will be done. What more can we ask or imagine?



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Renewal and renewing



PETER WALL
DEAN AND RECTOR, CHRIST'S CHURCH CATHEDRAL

When we recite the Creed Sunday by Sunday (whether we should do such a thing is another fascinating conversation which could be another column...) we end both commonly used versions, the Nicene and the Apostles', with a statement about the 'catholic church'. It becomes part of the 'marks' of the Church—One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic—to use the formula from Nicaea. Those 'marks' and their recitation became an important part of the work of the Council of Nicaea in the early part of the fourth century. When we use the word 'catholic', we are not referring to any particular kind or branch of the church, rather we are speaking of the 'nature' of the Church—that it is one, worldwide, indivisible, eternal church, broken into many parts and pieces (denominations and churches) but all connected together through Jesus Christ and the work which God has done in reconciling the world through Christ.

These are deep and important doctrines of the church; doctrines which we affirm and support each day by our prayers and our presence. When we Anglicans talk about our catholicity, we often think of the world-wide Anglican Communion—those links which we have with Anglicans everywhere, links which bring with them a unity borne out of particular understandings and assumptions about polity, theology, and ecclesiology. The catholicity of the church is important—it links us not only to other Anglicans but to millions and millions of Christians the world over. One of the gifts which the last half century has given to the church is a common lectionary, a lectionary which links us to one another through a calendar of readings which is remarkably similar Sunday by Sunday, day by day, and feast by feast. Just as Anglicans are linked together by a common sense of worship—it is not the actual words which are so important, as it is a common understanding of shape and intent—so it is that common elements of our community worship—the lectionary being one of the hallmarks—makes us one in the catholic church.

Often we find certain aspects of the lectionary troubling or bother-

some. Too many readings (four for each Sunday and principle Feast, as a rule; three for weekdays and minor feasts), or readings which are too long, or readings which seem unconnected, even readings which are 'not nice' or are 'unpleasant'. The lectionary is constantly being revised and there are now some very attractive options available to us; lectionaries which are being developed for the use of the whole church. While it may be tempting to simply set our own readings, I believe that this must be done with great care and caution; perhaps the inherent benefits of a 'common' and ecumenical lectionary can trump our own local needs.

Similarly, with the liturgies which we develop; we are blessed with abundant great resources for liturgical celebrations. We, many of us, have the creative talent in our own parishes and communities to experiment with creating our own liturgical texts. While this is a wonderful gift, we also need to be aware of the 22 eucharistic prayers which we already have at our disposal (which are all 'authorized' and therefore eucharistic prayers which, again, the 'whole church' uses) and we need, I believe, to plumb their depths as well. One of the great hallmarks of Anglicanism is that we pray in the same way, honoring the same shape of the Eucharistic celebration, while using, sometimes, differing texts and canons.

I have an acquaintance who, having long since stopped going to church, rails at me occasionally about the fact that when he was young, one could go into any Anglican church anywhere in the world and hear the exact same words said, often, with the same accent! Needless to say, he finds the changes he encounters not to his taste! I totally reject his argument; indeed, I believe that the church is greatly enriched by its diversity of voices, of languages, of modes of expression. At the same time, the catholicity of the church does speak, I believe, to an underpinning of 'common prayer' which finds its expression in the agreed shape and intent of the liturgy which is shared throughout our church.

In these days when there seems to be so much upon which we can and do disagree, there is much to be said for those things which we share in common and which unite us together, not only with fellow Anglican, but with our brother and sister Christians throughout the world. This is good news!



Canterbury Hills Camp | 50th anniversary celebration

DAVID LINN
DIRECTOR, CANTERBURY HILLS

Singing your favourite Grace in the Dining Hall. Eating a nourishing meal off melmac dishes. Looking forward to an exciting Evening Program (EP). Ending the day gathered around a campfire, logs snapping, sparks flying, singing once again: fast songs, action songs, slow songs, and finally taps, followed by a rousing "Thanks for the day, campers!"

Bring back memories? It should for hundreds of former Canterbury Hills Camp staff and campers from all across our Diocese. And as we celebrate 50 Years of Summer Camping at Canterbury Hills in 2010, this experience can be yours once again. Just imagine the 'bow!' filled with 300+

'campers' reliving these and other memories of their time at Canterbury Hills. What a gathering it will be!

On Saturday, May 15, 2010, all former camp staff and campers are invited to our 50th Camp Anniversary evening. It will begin after 4:00 pm with an opportunity for camp alumni to wander the grounds and revisit some of their favourite places, connect with former friends and colleagues, and discover some of the new additions to our facility. At 5:30 pm, the bell will gather us once again in front of the Dining Hall for a traditional camp supper. Afterwards, there will be a selection of EP's to choose from, and the evening will conclude with the mandatory campfire. Can you picture a better way to spend a spring evening

reconnecting with 'the good old days' at camp, and perhaps sharing those memories with your children, family or friends?

Absolutely everyone is welcome. The cost is \$50.00 per adult (\$15.00 registration and a \$35.00 tax receiptable donation to our Summer Camp Fund). Young people 16 years of age and under may attend (with their parents) at no charge, but you have to take them home! Register online at www.canterburyhills.ca or by calling 905-648-2712.

In the true tradition of summer camp, the event will 'go' rain or shine, so mark your calendars now, register soon, plan to bring appropriate clothing and gear, and get ready for a night to remember!

Some thoughts early in the New Year and a new resolution

GEOFFREY PURDELL-LEWIS
ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST, HAMILTON AND PUBLISHERS ADVISORY BOARD

And I said to the man who stood at the Gate of the Year, 'Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown.' And he replied, 'Go out into the darkness, and put your hand into the Hand of God. That shall be better to you than light, and safer than a known way.' So

I went forth, and finding the Hand of God, trod gladly into the night. And He led me towards the hills and the breaking of day in the lone East.

This poem was written in 1908 by Minnie Louise Harkins (1875-1957) and was immortalised by King George VI in his Christmas 1939 address. Christmas is a time of light and celebration. But darkness was all around

on December 25, 1939, as citizens of the United Kingdom and Commonwealth—and very many others too—faced a second world war. Germany had invaded Poland in August of the same year.

We have our darkness today—things which we cannot always see or control—terrorism; many in this world living in poverty; fear as well

as subjugation; lawlessness and scant regard for life in our own land; economic uncertainty, and joblessness and all that it means. Our Anglican church is seeing a major loss in membership—around 57% since 1961 to the present (Rev. Gary Nicolosi), and we are racked with many dissensions. From one perspective there are no easy answers and yet there is one very

simple one—we have seen the dawn of redeeming grace—put your hand into the Hand of God, that shall be better to you than light, and safer than a known way. We need to find the Hand of God and tread gladly into the night.

God is the author of all Creation, God is in charge, God is to be trusted, God does not make mistakes, and God does all things well.