



# Niagara Anglican

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



■ The Cathedral Baptismal font stands as a sign of our unity as a diocese and our common mission to society around us.

## 175 years and Cathedral is moving ahead!

During a time when many people in the world around us feel that the Church is losing significance, the Diocese of Niagara begs to differ. As much discussion happens we have discovered that we have a vision and we know that many in the diocese are trying to live that vision. The Cathedral is no exception.

While it's true that we are celebrating our 175th anniversary, more importantly, the Cathedral wants to both support and drive the next 175 years not only for the Cathedral itself but for the diocese in general.

The building itself, while undoubtedly a magnificent architectural gem, becomes more vibrant daily as we discover the kinds of ministry that we must address today and into the future.

Our cathedral houses a strong congregation of dedicated people who not only use the cathedral as their parish, but understand that they have a ministry to the entire diocese.

As we push into the future, the cathedral will continue to be and become ever more a model of worship and ministry. Our vision as a diocese challenges us to explore meaningful worship and develop a sense of excellence in ministry. We are working diligently at both. The Cathedral is situated in the most impoverished area of Hamilton and over the past few years under the leadership of The Dean and the Cathedral staff, particularly the Cathedral Vicar the Reverend Sue-Ann Ward, we are on the journey

to responding to poverty in every way possible. We are in fact leaders in that response. People in the diocese know of our liturgical excellence. We open our doors to every diocesan celebration that we can and we open our hearts to every person who comes through our doors.

We're asking parishes to consider being adopted by the Cathedral for a Sunday and to come and participate and contribute to our celebration of Christ among us. If your parish has not yet chosen a Sunday—urge your rector to do so. There are many other events this year that we hope you will support. On May 8, the neighbourhood around the Cathedral is invited to a special community BBQ from 11:00-

3:00; on May 19 The Three Cantors will thrill another great audience at the Cathedral, and watch in September for a spectacular Flower Show, September 17-19, beginning with Choral Evensong on Friday night.

Please remember that this is YOUR Cathedral and we who celebrate there are the care-takers. Support us, help us, teach us, and suggest to us... we want to be the model church in our diocese and the church that offers support to every other parish. Please support our events and call us with your suggestions. Together we will re-form the face of our church and offer significant ministry to our society. Together we will proclaim the reign of God—a reign of justice and goodness on this earth.

### We are safe here

**ANDY KALBFLEISCH**  
ST. JAMES'S DUNDAS

This was one of the most glorious Easter weeks in memory. Sue and I had the opportunity to worship in five parishes across two Dioceses and share the Eucharist celebrated by two Bishops. At every service there was a broad cross section of ages present with children and youth playing integral roles in each service. I am filled with hope! Where there is hope there is life and where there is life there is Jesus. Alleluia, praise be to God!

But now that our Easter celebrations are behind us, will we revert to our otherness or will we continue to proclaim at every opportunity, both inside and outside our churches, "Christ is Risen, Alleluia!"?

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### Feet washing

**HOLLIS HISCOCK**  
RETIRED PRIEST, BURLINGTON

Had my feet washed for the first time on Maundy Thursday 2010. Well, my feet had been washed innumerable times throughout life, like daily or more often, but this was my initial experience as a participant in what the Christian Church calls "The Washing of Feet".

Our Bishop invited us clergy to a special liturgy on the day before Good Friday, and encouraged everyone to share in the washing of the feet ceremony. I thought about it and concluded that during the year which the Bible calls my "three score years and ten", perhaps the time had come for me to expose my "footsies", and receive any benefits forthcoming from this two millennia tradition.

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### We must make the decision

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

At the General Synod next month, members will consider a strategic plan for the national life of our church for the next nine years—"Vision 2019". In an online introduction to the plan, Dean Peter Elliott of New Westminster identifies the Anglican Communion's five "Marks of Mission" as a critical dimension of the "vision" in Vision 2019.

For Vision 2019 to take hold across the whole church, those Marks of Mission will need to become a set of lenses through which we explore our various ministries as servants in the mission of God.

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## Relationships and trust | The starting place



**RICK JONES**  
ARCHDEACON, SECRETARY TO SYNOD

I just received an email from a friend in the Diocese of Rupert's Land who was very excited by the fact that a committee of the Synod will be looking at the vitality and viability of all the parishes in the diocese. This follows on the news of the completed Diocese of

B. C. study that called for the closure of some parishes and restructuring of others. The Diocese of Toronto has a strategic plan in the making, Ottawa, Ontario and Huron as well as others I may not know about. This is simply to illustrate that in light of declining membership and resources in many dioceses the leadership is taking a hard look at the future, most have decided to create a "grand plan". We in Niagara have taken a slightly different approach and under the leadership of the Bishops Asbil, Spence and Bird and the support of Synod Councils over the years, we have been closing and amalgamating

parishes at a pace that makes us the Canadian leaders in restructuring for mission in a changing context. Rather than wait for the "grand plan" we have been working with parishes and regions at the grassroots to help them come to terms with the mission field and their resource situation.

The examples of Niagara Falls, Hamilton Mountain and Hamilton East and Stoney Creek are some areas in our diocese that parishes have been challenged to look in the mirror and at the neighbourhood to see how best to deliver Anglican ministry in their unique contexts. In all these cases,

parishes have voluntarily closed, or amalgamated with others for the greater good of the ministry in the area. (Thirteen closed, and eight amalgamations into four new parish units and one informal merging of a closed congregation with an existing neighbour, all this within the last twelve years alone.) This has been accomplished by skilled Diocesan leaders, parish priests or interims and strong parish leaders with vision and compassion for the big C church and not just their individual parishes.

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# Roots Among the Rocks



*A journey through faith, life and irreverent discovery...*



**JUDY STEERS**  
ASK AND IMAGINE

It sounded like a dream job, but Carolyn Pugh, 19, from St George's Guelph didn't want to get her hopes too high.

The 'dream job' was a chance to spend four months this summer as part of a young Anglican theatre company touring across Canada. Over twenty people applied for the six roles in the cast of *Roots Among the Rocks*.

Throughout January and February, Pugh completed a rigorous application process, including a letter, application questions, self-reflection, resume

of performance experience and, the most challenging part, choosing, performing and uploading a 5 minute audition piece on to YouTube, to be viewed by the selection team. "It was the most unusual application process I have ever done!" Pugh knew that the competition would be fierce for parts in the theatre company. She had done a lot of theatrical work in high school, and learned how to prepare an audition piece. But she had never imagined doing something this big. She was short listed for an interview—which in itself was conducted in an unusual way—on a Skype conference call with production team members in different parts of Canada.

*Roots Among the Rocks* will be directed by Toronto-based professional playwright, director, and Anglican youth minister Jenny Salisbury.

Ms. Salisbury and musical director Peter Reinhardt (a Lutheran youth minister) interviewed a short list of twelve applicants before they made their final selection.

The play is being developed this month and the premiere will be at General Synod in June in Halifax, N.S. The actors will spend the rest of June, July and August touring across Canada, with stops planned in Hamilton, Ottawa, Winnipeg, Saskatoon, Sorrento, Calgary, Vancouver and other places. Many of the young company are excited that they will also be doing a 'side trip' to perform two shows in St John's Newfoundland just after General Synod.

The play will examine how Christians can find life, faith, and authenticity in an ever-changing world, said Ms. Salisbury. The selected artists will

build the show using a process called collective creation, where they draw on their own stories, group improvisation, and interviews.

"Our church is very much at a place of change," explained Ms. Salisbury. "It's at a place of trying to find its voice in a new world and its voice in a new century, and we wanted to bring together young people to create a show that's speaking about their experience of faith."

It's not a bad summer gig. *Roots Among the Rocks* artists will receive a salary, and their room, board and travel. Performers will also take a two-week break at the end of July. All this can happen thanks to support and funding from Huron University College, the Anglican Foundation, private sponsors, other foundations, and most significantly, the Ask & Imagine program, which runs in cooperation with Huron in London, Ont.

Ask & Imagine is in many ways the creative crucible for *Roots Among the Rocks*. It's a 10-day leadership development program for Anglican and Lutheran youth and leaders that runs twice a year in London, Ont. 2009 marks the 10th anniversary of Ask & Imagine, so the organizers decided to create this theatre tour as their first-ever alumni project. The tour will provide an opportunity for young people to share their gifts and speak to the church in compelling, prophetic ways.

Meanwhile, in March, Carolyn Pugh spent an anxious week after her interview waiting to hear. She said "I got a message that the director had called, but with my schedule at university, we played telephone tag for several days before we actually connected. Early one Friday morning, Pugh did make contact and was 'amazed and excited' to find out that she was chosen for the cast. "I've been involved in Anglican Youth Ministry in our Diocese since moving here with my family from Kingston 10 years ago. I've gone to youth synod,

to NYC and to YLTP; it was through one of my YLTP mentors that I heard about this opportunity and I really wanted to apply. The day I found out I was chosen, I couldn't stop smiling all day!" Pugh's cast mates include Magdalena Jennings from Montreal, Michael van der Kamp from Saskatoon, Karyn Guenther from Vancouver, John-Daniel Steele from Edmonton and Melissa Glover from Prince George. Many of the other cast members have professional acting or performance backgrounds and all are between 19 and 21 years old. They all come from a strong faith background and all but one are Anglicans.

Pugh's summer of a lifetime will be bracketed by Niagara Youth Ministry experiences—she will be a mentor at Youth Synod in May, and on the leadership team for Niagara Youth Conference at the end of August. Meanwhile, she is enormously excited about her summer job. She is especially looking forward to meeting everyone and beginning the creative process, and also to going to the East coast for the first time in her life. The cast will begin the tour with their toes in the Atlantic Ocean in June and drive across Canada to wet their soles in the Pacific after their performance in Victoria at the end of July. After their break, they return to London to perform and lead workshops at the Canadian Lutheran Anglican Youth (CLAY) gathering. "I can't wait to see what the show is going to look like at the end of the creative process! I hope that the people who come to see *Roots Among the Rocks* will be really opened up—to new ways of seeing themselves or the church."

Performances in the Niagara area are planned for Hamilton at the Cathedral, and in Blythe. A link to the tour schedule will be available on the Niagara website in mid May.

.....  
Judy Steers is on a steep learning curve as the Producer of *Roots Among the Rocks*

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# Kindness and the courage to love



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

It was about this time, a year ago, at the coffee hour. I was approached by a tall young man. "How's your garden doing?" he asked. "A disaster", I said. "I could help you with that", he said. "Thanks, but, well... I should do it myself..."

The next Sunday he asked again. I thought he might be looking for work; everybody knew my garden was a mess. I had had a landscaper in the past but not that year, and had neglected things, rather. So I made a little inquiry or two and got laughed in my face. "He doesn't need the work", they said; "he's a professional."

"What time would suit you?" he asked. I hesitated. "I'll come around about ten Saturday morning. You have tools?"

And that's where it began. Tom came and cleared the grounds, came again, mowed the weedy lawns, dug in the compost, shopped for flats of impatiens and pots of hanging begonias, did odd jobs, shared lunch and then, regularly, checked the time and took off like the wind to tend to his own affairs. Bless him, and bless his kindness.

Another time, I needed to track down the whereabouts of a relative, somewhere in the area, I knew not where. Timidly I asked one of our number, a distinguished medical specialist, if he could help. Before the day was out I had the name, professional status, address and telephone number, and no questions asked. Another kindness.

And the little things: I got locked out of my house in midwinter—no coat, and in near panic. A phone call from a neighbour's, and Patrick, of the Dean's family, who have a key, hastened to my rescue, let me in and returned to his job.

There's one thing about churches: there is always someone who is an

expert, or knows how to find out something. It's the same in a newspaper office, which was my working environment at one time: someone in the newsroom would know, would have the answers, or find them. But the church is different. The answers, and the help, are unlimited, and kindly.

And all those others: the doctors, the lawyers, the theologians, the business people, the retired accountant giving years of auditing for the Cathedral, the organist teaching and encouraging a gifted young student, the bankers, the archivist, the needle workers, the bread makers, (Dick who bakes the bread for the Eucharist and would tell you how) the gardeners, the pastoral visitors... the list goes on. Not just volunteers: they are servants, our servants, as we are theirs. And there are those who help each other privately, personally, one on one, known only to God, and to each other, secret servants.

We do all this, and perhaps we succeed, most of the time. Our efforts at Outreach are remarkable, especially in view of economic and budget problems that we face. We have been told that we must absolutely stay within our income. But we could do better. We could find a better balance between Outreach and Inreach—the charity that begins at home. We could be more alert to opportunities to help each other. For example, we have yet to fulfill a resolution to have a nurse, even a nurse practitioner, available to help bridge a gap. We could enlist a qualified person to assist in financial planning—another gap between the individual and the Bank. And transportation: Why should any person need to take a taxi, or walk long distances, or wait on icy corners for a bus, when a fellow parishioner could as easily offer a ride, and make it a habit?

Our Cathedral is a leftover, a survivor of the early days, old fashioned perhaps, like my grandmother who always wore a long black dress, buttoned-up bodice, long sleeves, and a sort of neckpiece—wide, embroidered, a touch of elegance. The ladies of the Cathedral worked long and hard to raise the money to supply the needs of the church while serving the

poor, wherever they were. Just ask the archivist, Canon Katharine Greenfield.

And the Cathedral even now tries very hard to meet changing times—the needs of today in the depressed area around it—the poor, the hungry, the lonely, the outcast, those in need of clothes, those who are in jail—as our Lord charged us then, and now. The Cathedral even tries from time to time to fit itself into the shape and style of the very early church—the house church of St. Paul's day—the intimacy of the altar, the communal meal, the presence of the worshiper, the nearness of the leader, the church in the round. It does not always work, and it reverts regularly to pews in rows, the pulpit 'up there', the habits, the distances from the altar. Short of building a new church it reminds us of the original Peace, when you turned to the person with whom you had been at outs, forgave each other, and then shared the holy meal.

Then there is the grandeur of the Cathedral in Paul's name, the creative expression of its designer, Sir Christopher Wren: Our dear bishop, Michael, speaking to us on Good Friday, described his feelings when he entered St. Paul's on his recent visit to London (our whole cathedral could scarcely fill a single transept of St. Paul's); amidst the splendour, taken aback by two simple pieces of wood in the form of a cross in the centre of the nave, confronting the visitor, recalling the passion story of the courage of the women standing near, the compassion, the "surrounding love that nothing could destroy". Michael quotes the Scottish theologian, William Barclay, to describe the scene: "perfect love that casts out fear."

"Be Good. It's Good for you" reads a headline in the Globe & Mail; it seems that science is catching up with simple wisdom, with examples of peoples' lives that have been improved by acts of generosity—both the giver and the given. Organ transplant?

"What's Love got to do with it?" sings Cindy Lauper. "What's Love Anyway?" a poet asks. My own thoughts go like this: To be loved is a right; to love is a gift. Love is a kindness. Thanks be to God.

# Quo Vadis

**JERRY SALLOUM**  
RETIRED VICAR

A movie that had a profound spiritual impact on me in my early years at university was a biblical extravaganza you may have seen. It was the 1951 Hollywood production of Quo Vadis, a title whose origin is taken from Simon Peter's question to Jesus found in John 13: 36, where he asks "Where are you going?"

The story was built around the struggle of an early Christian community against the vicious attacks of pagan Rome and its evil emperor Nero. Deborah Kerr plays Lygia, a believer who is in love with a Roman soldier Marcus Vinicius, played by Robert Taylor. Near the end of the movie, groups of defenseless Christians are herded into a large Roman arena to provide entertainment for the emperor and for a large crowd that had gathered to watch believers be fed to lions. As a type of finale, the frail heroine, with her lover forced to watch, is tied to a stake to await a similar fate. Her muscular servant is given the responsibility of defending her against a single powerful bull. As the crowd cheers in anticipation of what all expect will be a lopsided battle and a most predictable outcome, the animal attacks. Death seems inescapable for both servant and heroine. Repeatedly, the servant stands between the bull and the heroine, stopping repeated charges. In the animal's final charge, the strength of the servant proves superior to his adversary. The beast is killed. Frail Lygia is saved. And the fickle crowd explodes in enthusiastic applause.

When the actress was interviewed soon after the completion of Quo Vadis and asked if she feared for her life that day in the arena, she was reported to have replied that she had no fear, since she knew she would be rescued. She had studied the entire movie script beforehand and knew how the story would end.

Like Deborah Kerr, we exist in an epic story. And like Deborah Kerr, we also have a deadly adversary to which the Bible alludes on frequent occasions. Among its vivid descriptive references is the metaphor of "a roaring lion looking for someone to devour".

Our final demise, like Kerr's, appears inescapable. The triumph of sin and the inevitability of death appear certain, but for the intrusion of a single warrior. He is the "second Adam", the divine Warrior, Jesus Christ the Righteous, our Advocate, who is our only shield and defense against our adversary. And, as with our heroine, a single strong Warrior is all the safety we need.

In a very real way, that climactic scene in the movie Quo Vadis captures the mood of the present. There is a sometimes not-so-clear but very present danger lurking for all of us. And that danger is made all the more dangerous because it lurks, not in an arena surrounded by a taunting crowd, but rather amid what appears to be prevailing safety. However, our capacity to escape debilitating fear of this imminent danger is, as with our heroine, based upon two important facts: firstly our knowledge of our Defender's reputation, and secondly, because we have studied God's written script, our foreknowledge of our story's ending. In terms of importance and significance, that story is orders of magnitude greater than the story depicted in the movie. Its conclusion is triumphant and not tragic. This is so, not because of our personal sufficiency, but rather because of the sufficiency of our Defender. Our God has and will prevail against our enemy, indeed our greatest enemy, namely death itself. The resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead testifies to the ultimate glorious ending to our story. Christ's resurrection from the dead declares God's sovereignty over all things and confirms the certainty of our own future resurrection. Central to the Story of all stories is that death will not be allowed to have the final say.

*Jesus lives! thy terrors now  
Can no longer, death, appal us;  
Jesus lives! by this we know  
Thou, O grave, canst not enthrall us.  
Alleluia!*  
*Jesus lives! henceforth is death  
But the gate of life immortal;  
This shall calm our trembling breath  
When we pass its gloomy portal.  
Alleluia!*

# Jesus will find us no matter who we are



**GRAHAME STAP**  
RECTOR, ST SIMON TEMAGAMI

The weather has changed. After almost two weeks of wonderful sunshine and above normal temperatures it is now snowing and the sky is dull and overcast. Nothing we can do about it but accept that it is April and in northern Ontario in April it snows the warm temperatures and bright sun that we

loved was an anomaly. Records for high temperatures fell and according to the weather forecast by Sunday it will be bright and sunny again with highs above normal.

Sitting in my chair watching the BBC news and feeling down, why do we have to wait until Sunday for sun, I saw what is happening in Mongolia. It is their worst winter in history, deep snow, freezing temperatures, animals dying, and families unable to feed their children, more suicides than ever before and not much help from anywhere.

It made me realize that we usually have only concerns for our own well

being and unless it is right in front of us not much thought for what is going on in the rest of the world.

It made me think of Mary Magdalene weeping outside the tomb. Not thinking of her own safety, as the disciples were, but thinking only of her Lord and the need for him to be looked after even in death. This scene outside the tomb to me is essences of the reason God came in the form of Jesus to live with us. Mary did not find Jesus. Jesus found Mary. Throughout all of the Christian scriptures it is the compassion of Jesus for all things that stands out. Healing the lepers was not the point. Touching

those that, because of their disease, never felt the touch of another human being was the point.

Christ dying on the cross and rising from that death is the point. There is nothing we can feel or experience that God through Jesus has not felt or experienced before us.

I believe we can and must follow the example Jesus set for us and be compassionate to all. Realizing we cannot, by ourselves, save the world but we can do our bit and stand behind the vision of bishop Michael with our hearts, minds and wallets. We can help eradicate poverty in our own country; we can adopt a child in

a less fortunate country; we can visit the local nursing home and volunteer; we can... The list of all the things we can do has no end. The main thing we can do is be compassionate and realize that in our hour of need the compassion of Jesus will find us just as Jesus found Mary and that Jesus loves the people of Mongolia just as much as God loves us.

As for me I am going to put a coat on and take the dog for a walk and thank God for all my blessings regardless of the snow, which really is quite beautiful and makes the whole world look clean.

But as always it is only my opinion.

# The day it rained

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

One of this past year's Christmas joys was the receipt of a book, or rather a novella, *The Day it Rained*, written by a truly lifelong friend. Richard Renshaw, a priest of the Roman Church, has led a remarkable life, and I have been able to keep track of him for more years than he or I would like to admit. It is now my privilege to review his novella for our readers.

For a number of years, some time ago, Richard was in Peru, in a place called Chimbote, north of Lima. Not fluent in Spanish, Richard learned the language and undertook a book (*La Tortura en el Perú*, ISET, Peru, 1985), that was to influence prison reform in Peru.

This latest book was written in Montreal, and is available to readers. Janet and I have loaned it among our friends, who found in it a new vision of conditions in Chimbote and were deeply moved. It has been very easy to get caught up in the challenges that face Pancha and the people of her community.

Most of us have had some knowledge of the challenges and problems that beset the countries in Central and South America. Most lately we have been active in raising funds for Haiti, and for a period of time must continue our efforts, as the need is great. We must also seek reform for the sake of the people. None-the-less it is good to have some knowledge of other spots, and Richard has provided a focus for us of Peru and specifically the Chimbote area in the not too distant past. Although a novella, it is full of events and characterizations known to him, and this makes it very real.

As Richard says, Pancha, recently widowed and pregnant with her fifth child, finds herself caught in a struggle between despair and hope. Her people have lived hardship all their lives. She nevertheless touches and is nourished by the everyday beauty and the gift of life.

The people in this novella are fictitious. Richard clearly says any resemblance to persons living in Chimbote during the 1980s is coincidental. The location and many of the events are, however not fictional. Some liberties have been taken as the story presents a small part of life in Chimbote during those years.

The problems of Chimbote were extensive. To begin with, it was essentially a desert area, although some food crops were raised. To add to the challenges large numbers of people had come down from the mountains, over the years, to seek a better life, but became entrapped in situations of poverty in the communities around Chimbote.

The police were unhelpful and the prison overcrowded with people held on minimal or even no charges. Families and friends had to bring food, since the system of supplying it by the prison had broken down. Employment was irregular and young people spent what money they had on alcohol and parties, which of course could see them hauled off to prison should they be discovered on the streets after hours.

Rain was something uncommon and unexpected in the Chimbote area. In the Primavera community where Pancha lived it caused havoc. Her home among many others was destroyed and others severely damaged.

On top of this, the fisheries shut down since the fish had been dispersed

by the storm, and serious unemployment followed. Who could respond, who could restore order and help? The women of the communities, who else! An order of Sisters who lived and worked in the community and were able to order some urgent supplies and with the women of the community organized a kitchen to prepare food for the needs of their community. The fish plant and the union office were canvassed with little result.

Meanwhile, the men began to rebuild and restore the damaged homes. The main thought of each day dwelt on the need to keep the children alive and save the fight for another day.

All of the community worked hard and much was accomplished to the benefit of the people. Pancha, who was developing an increasingly serious cough, eventually saw a doctor, and was assured that he would take care of her and her infant and bear the cost himself.

The community developed a sign of hope, the Red Cross arrived with supplies and beyond that came UNICEF with the promise of aid for three years, perhaps even longer. Should that end, Caritas was prepared to continue the work.

Richard dedicates this novella to people in the settlements of Chimbote, who know life without embellishments and yet hold tenaciously to their faith in the future.

I had read the book twice and often think about it, especially the work of the women and their ultimate success and, of course, their infinite and infallible faith. The book is a very good read and is available at a cost of just \$20.00 which includes postage. Enjoy.

# How scared was I



**NISSA BASBAUM**  
DEAN, DIOCESE OF KOOTENAY

As a child, because my grandmother lived with us for long stretches at a time, I often slept on the couch in the living room. I also did most of my school work there. The upshot of this arrangement is now evidenced by my ability to fall asleep anywhere (not as helpful as this might sound) and my capacity to get work done even in the presence of endless distractions (remarkably helpful). Although I have many memories of my living room sojourns one, in particular, stands out.

While working diligently on an essay, I took notice of a mouse suddenly scooting by my feet, causing me to shriek at the top of my lungs and jump onto the couch to escape the creature (a little embarrassing, yes, but unfortunately true). At the same time, I became aware of gales of laughter coming from the kitchen, following which my father and my sister, practically hysterical, entered the living room. The mouse, they announced, was a fake, set on me as a bet between the two of them; my father, certain I would be unafraid of the thing, my sister, convinced I would jump at the sight of it. My dad, having lost the bet, was not pleased by my reaction. I, on the other hand, was just ticked off that I had been a pawn in their game of "I dare you"—and not a terribly bright one at that.

Fear is a debilitating emotion. Not only does it make us feel foolish but often it prevents us from realizing our dreams. As I write this column, I am aware that by the time it is published, I will have been in Kootenay for close to six months. Over this time period I have moved from an anxiety that just about paralyzed me (I could barely take my dog outside in the dark without being terrified of the night sounds) to a comfort with my surroundings almost equal to that which I had known in Ontario. My last article for the Niagara Anglican was entitled *Leap and the Net Will Appear*. It was a brave bunch of words that I really wasn't sure I believed and, after a week in Kelowna, I was convinced that words were cheap. It certainly didn't feel as

if any net was about to save me from drowning.

There are so many scriptural stories about journeying from one place to the next that it is cliché to suggest that one of the expectations of following God is that we allow ourselves to be taken to unknown places and guided into uncharted territory. In a conversation in John's gospel, Jesus phrases this to Peter as, "when you grow old someone else will fasten a belt around you and take you where you do not wish to go." At the same time, as cliché as this may be, it still bears repeating, since we tend to choose the comfort of the familiar and known before opting for such uncharted territory. What is more, we find numerous ways to rationalize this choice of the familiar, unable as we are to acknowledge the fear that lies at the heart of it. We are afraid of the unknown and we are even afraid to admit just how afraid we are.

Years ago when a fake mouse had me climbing onto the living room sofa, I was embarrassed by my fear. What's more, I obviously disappointed my father who apparently thought nothing so little would scare me. Times have changed. After only a week of being in Kootenay, I was an inconsolable mess at my first clericus and I told people not to be kind to me because I would only end up in tears. I couldn't wait to get out of the office and into the car to go home where I knew it was safe to collapse in a heap at the thought of it all. I guess sometimes the terror is so great that it becomes impossible to mask it. Perhaps the scariest part of admitting our fear is that everyone around us won't be able to handle it—and then, we wonder, where would we be?

Almost six months later, here is where I am. I wake up in the morning, grateful for the gift of being the Dean of the Diocese of Kootenay and the incumbent of the Cathedral of St. Michael and All Angels. I stand in awe of the reality that I no longer feel like a fish out of water and I thank God every day that I did not try to cover up how truly lonely and scared I was. While there are still major difficulties—not least of which is the physical distance between my family and me—in all of this, the insight has been to discover that admitting the existence of my fear was the first step toward taming it. The very act of acknowledgement turns out to be the net that needed to appear; having divulged the anxiety, there is no longer any water left to drown in.

# We are safe here

» CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

And when somebody asks us what on earth are we talking about, will we take the time to explain what we are saying and why it is so important not just for us but for them as well? Or do we withdraw into ourselves and mumble some platitudes, embarrassed that someone actually heard our outburst in the first place, or worse still, asked us what it was all about. Dave Walker the Cartoonist in Residence for the 2008 Lambeth Conference has a great illustration—a church built three levels underground showing the parishioners listening intently to the priest while on the surface people are carrying out their daily lives oblivious to what is happening below. The title of this cartoon is "We are safe here."

Perhaps I am terribly naïve, misinformed or out of touch with reality, but I keep wondering why it is so much easier for us to proclaim the secular message rather than the Christian one. Remember Y2K? We were all afraid that planes would come crashing down as the clock ticked into the new millennium, that elevators would stop between floors,

that stoplights would go crazy causing cars to crash and, heaven forbid, that our bank accounts would mysteriously be emptied. We were dealing with a human-made technology so we had every right to be worried. But alas nothing happened, perhaps because of the untold billions that had been spent to 'fix' the problem in advance or because there wasn't a real problem in the first place. And now we are busy with the next secular topic that has captured the hearts and minds of so many—climate change. Never mind that we are now dealing with God's creation and that there have been previous warming and cooling cycles over the millennia. We just feel that we must be so important that we have created this monstrosity through our desire to improve our living standards and the living standards of those who less fortunate than us. My concern is not that we are trying to deal with these issues, but that we have become so preoccupied with them that we can't find the time to undertake our Christian responsibility to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ.

Which brings me back to—Christ is Risen, Alleluia! If we were to

spend a fraction of our time sharing our Christian story with those who have yet to hear it or if they have heard it don't understand it, we might be doing more for the secular causes we hold so dear than we can ask or imagine. Why is it easier to organize and attend an earth hour vigil than to ask a friend or neighbour the question, "Will you come to church with me"? Are we afraid that they might say no? Are we afraid that if they come they won't feel moved by the experience? Are we afraid that our 'underground' safe existence may feel too much like a club to them and any other imaginable excuse why we can't do it? Frankly that isn't our call, it is God's.

Nevertheless from this Easter forward we will be moving towards Back to Church Sunday on September 26, 2010—a worldwide movement that invites us to ask the question, "Will you come to church with me?" If we approach this missional event with as much vigour, passion and enthusiasm as we do many of our secular driven passions, we may indeed see the Holy Spirit move in mysterious and unimaginable ways. Christ is Risen, Alleluia!

The Reverend  
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# St. John's Ridgemount celebrates 170 years of service

**CHARLES W. DAVIES**  
ST. JOHN'S RIDGEMOUNT

On May 16 at 10 a.m., St. John's Anglican Church, Ridgemount, will celebrate its 170th Anniversary with a Memorial Service to honour the lives of the families who chose to build our Christian house of worship. We will remember the departed resting in the church cemetery. Bishop Michael Bird will preside and preach with Archdeacon Ken Cardwell assisting.

Rev. John Anderson, first rector of St. Paul's Church, Fort Erie, supported construction of St. John's to serve the rural community of Bertie Township. The good shepherd window above the altar honours his memory.

The little white church, built in 1840 on the same design as the original St. Paul's, has weathered the years and still stands as a monument to Anglicanism. It was there before Canadian Confederation as well as before the American Civil War and the Fenian Raids, a proud part of Fort Erie's past. St. John's is worthy of recognition as a historical icon of faith and service.

The first confirmation, a class of '63, was conducted by Bishop John Strachan in 1846. As Bishop of Toronto it was his duty to serve all of Upper Canada, requiring him to travel from church to church by carriage or sometimes by farm wagon over difficult unpaved roads. In one year he

travelled over 2000 miles to the western end of the province.

Not only is St. John's the oldest standing church in Fort Erie, it has other historical connections. About a hundred yards down the road, on a ridge of land facing north, was Little Africa. It was so named because it was home to over 200 souls who had escaped slavery by travelling to Canada via the underground railway, crossing the Niagara River to freedom in what they called "the promised land". On that ridge, the only indication of their presence is the Black Cemetery which draws many visitors.

The land for the church was purchased from Charles Hibbard who farmed the acreage on which the church was built. He died shortly after construction in 1844 at age 67 and was one of the first burials in the cemetery. A person of historical significance who lived in Little Africa and worked the land for Mr. Hibbard was Josiah Henson whose dramatic escape from slavery was chronicled by authors such as Harriet Beacher Stowe. His autobiography, as told to others, tells of the hardships and dangers that he faced on his journey to our community where he spent four years before moving on to Dresden and there established an agricultural school to help his people to become self-sufficient.

Many of the first members of the congregation were Loyalists who



came to the area following the American Revolution. A plaque has been placed at the entrance to the cemetery to designate it as a Loyalist site. Some of the present members of the church are descendants of those early settlers.

On Memorial Sunday it is our custom to remember those who have gone to be with the Lord.

Several years ago it was discovered that two survivors of the Titanic disaster, are buried in the church cemetery. They are Elizabeth Mellenger and Madeleine Mann, mother and daughter. Madeleine was only nine at the time of their rescue.

This promises to be a memorable event. An historical display of pictures

and documents will be open to view in the church hall. A luncheon will be served to celebrate 170 years of service to the Lord and to the community.

A warm welcome is extended to everyone—those interested in local history and former members of the congregation who have moved from the community.

# Questioning the faith once delivered to the Saints



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

Ellis Peters, in her clever mediaeval mystery novel, *The Heretic's Apprentice*, puts into the mouth of the imperious Augustinian canon from Canterbury, Gerbert, "It's not for them (mere



Faith does change as we grow older and with each of our differing life's experiences.

lay people) to question or reason with independent minds, but to accept with unquestioning faith. Truth is set before them, they have only to believe... It is presumption to play human reason like a false light upon divine mysteries. Faith is to be received, not to be taken apart by the wit of a mere man."

Her detective sleuth, Brother Cadfael, in such company, was wise enough to remain silent about his reservations of St. Augustine's theology,

especially that part which described "humankind as a mass of corruption and sin, or looked upon the world as irredeemably evil." Nor could he accept "that the number of those destined to salvation as fixed, limited and immutable... nor indeed that the fate of any man was sealed and hopeless from his birth..." He saw through the imperfections of the world and its people to their beauty. In this he himself was somewhat a heretic.

Throughout history heresy has been taboo, though today more and more, not only laity, but clergy also, are re-examining and questioning what we believe. Here I must admit that only ten years ago I had a nose, as Gerbert's, for sniffing out heresy, and Bishop John Spong's visit to our church, St. George's, Guelph, was just too much. So much so, that my wife and I left for a safe, I thought, orthodox Evangelical church, a forty minute drive away, St. George's, Lowville. There, no dissent was allowed, especially if one questioned the judgment of the rector. To do so, one was given the cold shoulder. There was indeed so much acrimony before the schism came, that we felt that division could not be of the Lord. It was as if Satan had persuaded us to take our eyes off Jesus, and focus them instead onto the Same-Sex debate. Anyway,

we've found ourselves warmly welcomed back into St. George's, Guelph, where I'm now the librarian. This has given me access to such author's as Karen Armstrong, Marcus Borg, and again John Spong, which at Lowville I would never have admitted to have read.

St. George's, Guelph, is a free thinking church, where dissent from the faith is permitted, if not encouraged. Everything is open to debate, including the divinity of Christ and the Trinity. And yet we all accept such diversity, and one another, no matter what we believe. As Dr. Mounseer Anis, Bishop of Cairo, has said, "accepting diversity prevents dehumanizing others and gives space for religious freedom." This was said in context of Muslim-Christian relations; but it equally applies to all relationships, in the church and outside it. At St. George's, Guelph, no one is dehumanized for what he, or she, believes, or does not believe, and, to my knowledge, we all truly love one another with a Christ-like love. That's the real proof of orthodoxy, not a rigid assent to one interpretation of Holy Scripture. After all it's not what we think of Jesus that really counts, but what he thinks of us.

Recently a cartoon was printed off a wall dividing a dry desert from

a luscious garden with every fruit tree imaginable in it. In the wall were two gateways; one with "Right Religion" over it, the other with "Wrong Religion." Everyone, of all races and tribes were clamoring to enter the one marked "Right Religion," but no one the one labeled "Wrong Religion." Above were God and some angels. The caption read, "It's too bad that they just don't get it." Since both gates led into the same garden, it's not religion, good or bad, that is going to get us into heaven; but only Jesus Christ, who fulfills all religions. This upsets the Canon Gerberts; and myself not so long ago; but I believe that is where the Holy Spirit is leading us.

There's no part of the faith that's so sacrosanct that it cannot, or should not, be questioned, pulled apart, and put back together again. Faith is not like the multiplication tables. We may question whether six times seven is the same as seven times six, which equals forty two; but it won't change, no matter how we look at it. Gerbert understood his faith in that way; firmly cast in stone, unalterable, and never changing.

Faith, however, does change as we grow older and with each of our differing life's experiences. For my first thirty years, or so, my faith was in an

inerrant church; then for the next forty it was in an inerrant book, the Holy Bible; but, the shortcomings of both, certainly of our Western interpretation of both church and scripture, are only too apparent. Now my faith is in an inerrant God; but in a God I scarcely know, he, or she, is so shrouded in mystery. But we do see Jesus, the greatest heretic of all time, but the truest manifestation, or caricature, of God we've got, or will ever get. Both his life and teaching were so extraordinary that the first Christians said he must be as much like God as God. Later generations said he was God. What they, and we, know of Jesus, we assume we know of God. Life's goal, and the aim of these essays, is, in the words of St. Richard of Chichester, 'to know him more clearly, love him more dearly, and to follow him more nearly.' But even when we think we know Jesus, do we really fully know God? I find there is always something more about him that I have yet to learn.

To discover that faith does change as we grow older can initially be a faith shattering experience, but from it, retrospectively, we see our faith deepened. This has become a resurrection experience, one which the Gerberts of this world can scarcely appreciate.

# Disciples of all nations



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

Earth Day, Earth Hour, Remembrance Day, Valentine's Day, New Years, May Day: these world-wide celebrations have evolved over time, some from religious roots, some not. No one organization runs any of them; news of their events spreads effortlessly in the media across political and religious borders. Who's in charge?

Consider also the United Nations, the Red Cross and Amnesty International. These value-driven organ-



I'd break bread and wine if there was a church I could receive in, 'cause I need it now.

U2, "Acrobat"

izations are secular and global, and they make a positive difference in the world by appealing to governments to promote peace, medical care, education, and political freedom. The leaders of most countries are happy to work with these global organizations.

When we look at religions we

see a different situation. Most have branches around the world, but what is our international body, the World Council of Churches? Sorry, for Christians only, and the Roman Catholics have never joined. The Council for the World Parliament of Religions sounds promising but this interfaith organization that began in Chicago during the 1893 World Fair lost momentum after its first decade, and its recent revival has not produced a functional world body. Religious leaders, apparently, do not want to work together.

Wikipedia was my quick source of the above information. It might seem odd to learn about world religions from a secular vehicle but we Christians don't bother much with learning about other religions, let alone communicating with them, although we consider proselytizing fair game. We maintain an "I'm right, you're wrong" assumption and generally avoid people of other faiths.

Into the vacuum of our self-imposed isolation steps secular society. Ontario students in the public system's Grade 11 "World Religions" university preparation course are taught "to discover what others believe and how they live, and to appreciate their own unique heritage. Students will learn about the teachings and traditions of a variety of religions, the connections between religion and the development of civilizations, the place and function of religion in human experi-

ence, and the influence of a broad range of religions on contemporary society. This course also introduces students to skills used in researching and investigating world religions." Now that most young people do not learn about their family's religion by attending church, at least they are offered a humanistic study of all religions.

This scenario makes churchgoers cringe: our young people, at least those who take this particular course, learn about Christianity as one of many world religions from teachers who may well be atheists. We used to think our religion the highest peak in the mountain range; now, as our congregations shrink and as North Americans and Europeans become a minority in the Anglican Communion, we are, of necessity, learning humility. We can't, as in the past when we interacted mostly with fellow WASPs, assume an easy confidence in our encounters with "others." Our country is multicultural and egalitarian, our world is connected, and we have become defensive.

What's more, in *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity*, Philip Jenkins explains how spiritual leadership is slipping into the hands of fundamentalists: "For the foreseeable future, the characteristic religious forms of Southern Christianity—enthusiastic and spontaneous, fundamentalist and supernatural oriented—look massively different from those of the older cen-

ters in Europe and North America. This difference becomes critically important in light of current demographic trends... The religious life characteristic of those regions may well become the Christian norm." So we have two problems. One is that our theology is too conservative for

offer until our message and approach speak with certainty to address their needs.

Bishop Michael, in his March Charge to Synod, challenged us to hope as he quoted from Harvey Cox's new book, *The Future of Faith*: "Christianity, which began



We, in the church, find ourselves on the edge of something very new and very different... We don't yet know what it looks like and what it will all mean for the ministry you and I hold dear and share.

Bishop Michael Bird, Charge to Synod, March 2010

Canadian society. The other is that it is not conservative enough for the growing numbers of Christians in southern continents.

Only by listening to these voices outside our tradition—other established religions, secular society and southern Christianity—can we reboot ourselves to discover how to speak God's 21st century message. The three major religious traditions—Animistic, Abrahamic, and Eastern—can stop competing. Different religions can maintain their distinct traditions and at times worship together as they cooperate to end war, injustice and environmental devastation. Secular society and other religions are not going to value what we offer until our message and approach speak inclusively and respectfully, and our mission fields are not going to value what we

as a movement of Spirit guided by faith, soon clotted into a catalogue of beliefs administered by a clerical class. But now due to a number of different factors, the process is being reversed.

Faith is resurgent, while dogma is dying. The spiritual, communal, and justice-seeking dimensions of Christianity are now its leading edge as the 21st century hurtles forward, and this change is taking place along with similar reformations in other world religions."

Who's in charge? No one person or religion, and that's fine. Let's work with other religions as a global force doing God's work and let's allow our traditional rivalries to die away. The reformation in all world religions may be the process of developing a global perspective, hopefully with God in charge.

## Feet washing | I finally took the plunge

» CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

At the fateful Maundy Thursday morning worship in the Cathedral in Hamilton, I sat just three pews away from where the Bishop and his assistant placed a large bowl, a cruet of water and an ample supply of white towels.

I sensed my opportunity, hesitated, reconsidered and then moved forward quickly. In my haste I realized that my feet were still encased in black shoes and socks. As I struggled to release clinging cotton from gripping flesh, I thought, 'I should have taken them off in the pew'. Finally I managed to expose one foot and positioned it over the empty water receptacle. Then the kneeling Bishop slowly and gently poured water over my receptive limb, and dried it with a towel.

It was a moment of inspiration for me, albeit difficult to describe or define, for as the water drizzled over my foot, every aspect of my own being—physical, spiritual, intellectual and emotional—felt the power of an intimate, greater presence.

Before returning to my seat, I touched the Bishop's shoulder and

shook the attending priest's hand as a gesture of gratitude for "what I had received" from God through God's human instruments.

Later on Maundy Thursday, Helen and I decided we would do the feet washing at our parish church. Twice in one day! Wow! Now I was an expert; I removed my shoes and socks, from both feet, before walking to the 'washing station' and sat in the front pew awaiting my turn.

This time, Helen washed my feet. She could not kneel because of recent surgery, so I lifted my legs 'way up high'. Watching her pour warm water over my waiting feet, I relived the memories we had shared over more than four decades since we first met in a church camp, named appropriately, Killdevil Camp.

Our feet stood together to exchange our marriage vows nearly 42 years ago; our feet lifted our children from hurtful situations and encouraged them to set their own paths for their feet to traverse; our feet have bent together as we knelt in prayer seeking guidance and encouragement and solace; our feet have been side by side as we flew, sailed, drove, walked and were carried to

new lands and situations in various parts of God's creation; our feet have danced with joy and ached from pain; and our feet have rested and relaxed together to garner strength to take us to the next adventure. It was my pleasure to have Helen wash my feet in a religious ceremony filled with the traditions of the past, and great expectations of the future.

Then I turned to the person next to me, seeking her permission to wash her feet. For a split second before pouring the water, I wondered about the story of her feet. Where had her imprints been visible in her life journey? Her clothing suggested she worked in a hospital.

Perhaps her feet brought medicine to ease a person's pain, or offered needed support during one's quest to learn to walk after surgery, or carried good news to a family waiting and expecting the worst. When I dabbed her feet dry, she thanked me and I expressed my gratitude for the privilege to do so.

Helen described having a closer affinity with the person who washed her feet, and when they meet in the future she will be reminded of that Maundy Thursday moment. I agreed

with her sentiments.

The disciples probably had similar feelings. Jesus wanted the disciples to react that way and wants us to respond similarly. The disciples, except Peter, accepted what He did as a commitment to their calling. I'm glad Peter reacted as he did, because it provided Jesus with the opportunity to explain the significance of His behaviour.

He told His questioning follower that he could not be a disciple unless he agreed to have his feet washed. Peter, grabbing the situation to get as much as he could of a good thing, wanted his whole body washed. Jesus responded with a strange retort: "anyone who has taken a bath is completely clean and does not have to wash himself, except his feet". I'm not certain if I understand the sentence, but it must have satisfied Peter as we assume that Jesus did wash the reluctant disciple's feet.

After Jesus washed all their feet (including Judas'), He further explained the significance of His actions. As their Lord and Teacher He washed their feet so that they could use it as a model to wash the feet of other people.

As Jesus served them, so the disciples were to serve the people with whom they came into contact. Jesus, said, 'I have set an example for you, so that you will do just what I have done for you'.

Maybe several disciples remembered earlier words spoken by Jesus, when He said whenever you help the least of people—the hungry, the sick, the prisoner, the stranger, those needing clothes, etc—you do it to me (Matthew 31-46).

The message is equally applicable for the Church today. Our feet bring us to locations for ministry, with water to cleanse and soothe, with towels to dry the hurt and encourage us to keep going, and with the assurance that God meets us in the places where we are sent to wash the feet of needy people.

My Maundy Thursday experience affected me deeply, so I probably will not wait another seven decades before having my feet washed and washing the feet of another life traveller.

.....  
The Reverend Hollis Hiscock lives in Burlington, Ontario.

## The Niagara Anglican

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## The Diocese of Niagara

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

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## PEOPLE IN THE NEWS

■ The Reverend Ian Grieve passed away on Saturday, February 27. A funeral service for the local community was held at Church of the Incarnation, Oakville, on March 4. A Diocesan Memorial Service was held on March 30. Our thoughts and prayers to Jean Grieve and family.

■ The Reverend Brian Galligan has accepted the appointment to be Rector of St. Alban's, Acton, effective March 21.

■ Three new Honorary Canons of Christ's Church Cathedral were installed on Sunday, March 21 at Christ's Church Cathedral, Hamilton. The candidates: The Reverend J. Lefebvre, the Reverend David Linn and the Reverend Susan Wells.

■ The Reverend Elizabeth Huether resigned as Rector of St. Thomas, St. Catharines at the end of December and has accepted the appointment to be Rector of St. Matthias, Guelph, part

time, effective March 21.

■ Our deepest sympathy to the Reverend Paul Sherwood, Rector of the Dunn Parish and Dunnville, on the death of his father, Raymond, on February 13. Our thoughts are with Rev. Paul and family.

■ The Reverend Dr. Brian Rutan has been appointed as interim pastor at St. Thomas, St. Catharines.

■ The Reverend Ann Macdonald and the Reverend Dr. Eric Griffin issued Bishop's Permission to function as honorary assistants at Christ's Church Cathedral, effective February 7, under the direction of the Dean.

■ The Reverend John Ripley issued a Bishop's Permission to function as honorary assistant at St. Andrew's, Grimsby, effective February 1, under the direction of the Rector.

■ The Reverend Bill Mous was appointed Associate Priest at St. James, Dundas, effective January 31.

■ The Reverend Susan Wilson has submitted her resignation from St. Paul's, Shelburne, and has accepted the appointment as Rector of All Saints Church, Erin, effective June 1.

■ The Reverend Cheryl Barker, Rector of St. Paul's, Caledonia, will begin maternity leave on April 16. Canon Lynne Thackway will cover that ministry while the rector is on leave.

■ The Reverend John Ripley has been appointed Interim Pastor at St. John's, Jordan, beginning May 1 due to the retirement of the Reverend Phil Ruch.

■ The Reverend Nancy Rowe submitted her resignation from St. Paul's Church, Norval, effective March 14. Canon Marni Nancekivell has been appointed interim pastor at St. Paul's, Norval.

■ The Reverend Dr. Pauline Head has submitted her resignation from Rockwood, and has accepted the position of

Rector of St. James, Fergus, beginning April 25.

■ The Reverend Keith Morrison has been issued a Bishop's Permission as Honorary Assistant at Church of the Resurrection, Hamilton, effective April 1.

■ The Reverend Carole Langlotz has been issued a Bishop's Permission as Honorary Assistant at St. Luke's, Palermo, effective March 19.

■ The following lay readers licenses were renewed: Marie Haldane, Gerry Eyles, Joan MacDonald and Maureen Clarke at Holy Trinity, Niagara Falls under the direction of the Reverend Janet Cashin; Alastair Pope was issued a lay reader's license at St. Elizabeth's, Burlington, under the direction of the Reverend Jean Archbell.

■ The Reverend Canon Elaine Hooker has been issued a bishop's permission as honorary assistant at St. Andrew's, Grimsby, effective April 1.

## Relationships and trust | The starting place

» CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Our Synod has been so successful in our approaches to these issues that the writer and other members of the Mission Strategy Committee have been asked to present our methods to other Diocesan leaders across Canada and the United States.

What makes our approach unique is that we begin with the parishes in a region and the folks on the front lines of ministry, and while there is always a larger context, our diocesan consultants respect the unique ministry of every parish, no matter how small or under-resourced. This respect leads to

relationship which leads to trust and finally a mutual understanding of what the next steps in ministry may need to be. This is not a top down approach or a bottom up approach, but a mutual recognition that we are all part of the Body of Christ in this Synod of the Diocese Niagara. We have learned that change comes best from relationships first and a common understanding of mission.

We are at an interesting time in our history. Under the leadership of Bishop Bird and the common understanding of mission provided by the Vision we are being asked to undertake real renewal, in our parishes, and

in the structures of the Synod. This is a time when competing approaches to this renewal will be put forward by various groups or individuals in our diocese. As we contemplate these approaches, which will all be driven by genuine concern for our diocese and parishes, we may want to remember what has worked best for us in the past.

I believe it is simply this: Relationships and trust are the only starting places. Once we have understanding and trust then perhaps we can move towards the future that God has dreamt for us, and that will be revealed through prayer and ordinary people

taking to one another in love. This is a very different starting place than a "grand plan" of any elite, no matter how enlightened. Form follows function, and we can live into structures, we can suspend Canons and allow innovation, this all takes time and a willingness to live with the ambiguity of building relationships and trying new things together, learning from our mistakes, and moving forward in faith. Yes it is messy, and human and even Scriptural, and in the end it may actually bring about the change and renewal we all pray for. What is more it all seems to be very much our "Niagara Way".

## Words, words, words



**PETER WALL**  
DEAN AND RECTOR OF CHRIST'S CHURCH CATHEDRAL

I have spent my life loving words. The English language is a rich repository of wonderful words and I appreciate its diversity and its beauty. My children have long winced and whined over my keen interest in proper grammar; many publications have felt the sting of my pen over their errors and inaccuracies; lamentably, most often they have kept my urgings to themselves and have spared their readership by not publishing my missives!

I delight in an article which uses the word *paradigmatic*; I believe that *ineluctable* is a wondrous word which deserves much more use than it currently enjoys; I am intrigued

by the troubles caused by the difference between *fewer* and *less*; even the somewhat precious *whilst* appeals to my better nature. I was complimented recently when, after preaching in a parish in another Diocese, a congregant took time to comment favourably to me on my grammar. No comment, interestingly (perhaps disturbingly), on the content, but kudos on the grammar!

The church has always been a place where words count—both in terms of what we say but also in terms of how we describe and name things. And so we hold words like *nave*, *narthex*, *chalice*, *aumbry*, *chasuble*, *mitre* with respect and honour; sure we could use words like *floor*, *front end*, *cup*, *cupboard*, *robe*, and *hat*—but we respect our past and enjoy the sometimes delicious character of specific and descriptive terms. We even get more exotic at times and keep alive words like *antependium*, *aspersorium*, *pyx*, and *sacristy*. While there is a natural between using the old or

correct terms and more current, popular of functional language, among the many tasks of the church, arguably, is a responsibility to connect us to our past.

Even church language evolves, just as secular language does. While it discomferts me, there is now virtually universal agreement, in common usage parlance, that none can take either the singular or plural form of the verb (some of us will not yield easily on this one) but times do change.

For centuries, we Anglicans used the word 'minister' (in its noun form) to refer to the cleric. Over the last number of years, particularly as the church has reclaimed and *proclaimed* the importance of the baptismal ministry of all, we have become more precise and accurate, using the word *priest* for those ordained to priestly ministry, acknowledging that we are all ordained to baptismal ministry—we are all 'ministers' of the Gospel.

In the same vein, I want to commend the word *presider* for the

priest who presides at the Eucharist. We have used the word *celebrant*, but, in fact, we *all* celebrate the eucharist together—it is a community act. When the English church first published the ASB in the '80s, they used the term *President* for the presider. For North Americans, of course, the word *president* seemed a little too loaded with images of political office, so we in Canada, when the BAS was in development, used the more acceptable term *presiding celebrant*, which we usually abbreviate simply to 'celebrant'. I want to wave the flag for *Presider*—I think that it is more accurate and precise! Good things!

Other terms are also important—*lector* instead of reader; *communion minister* instead of lay administrator; *intercessor* for the one who offers prayers.

Eliza Doolittle says in *My Fair Lady*, "words, words, words—I'm so sick of words". Not me—I love them. Let's learn them and use them!

# We must make the decision

» CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Adopted by the Anglican Consultative Council (the only one of the four "Instruments of Communion" that isn't entirely made up of bishops), the Marks of Mission are emerging into the life of our church, offering the prospect of a renewed and focused commitment to participate in the work that God is doing to save and transform the world. Just as the baptismal covenant invites persons into a covenant partnership with God in companionship with the apostolic community, so the Marks of Mission invite that community into reflection and action that enact that covenant partnership in our common life.

The first of the Marks of Mission, "To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom", invites us to take up the proclaiming work that Jesus himself takes up in his baptism. In Matthew we hear that proclamation first from the lips of Jesus' cousin, John the Baptist: "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near." And following his baptism and desert trial, those self-same words are the first words of Jesus' public ministry. The Marks of Mission invite the church to begin our ministry where Jesus began his, with proclamation that another way—the kingdom of heaven, the reign of God, a New Creation—has become an available choice within history, and not just a hope for the eternal future. As in our baptismal covenant we promise to "proclaim in word and action the Good News of God in Christ", so in the Marks of Mission we learn that our word of proclamation follows the pattern of

the One into whose discipleship we are baptized.

The second of the Marks of Mission (or, in Mississippi steamboat lingo, "Mark Twain"), "To teach, baptize and nurture new believers", recognizes that discipleship is not passed down with christening gowns and family customs from one generation to another. It is, rather, the work of the church to foster discipleship, to teach the way of Jesus, to invoke the Holy Spirit's power to graft new members into the living, working Body of Christ, and to nourish the baptized in body, mind and spirit to live as followers of Jesus and fellow-servants with him of the mission of God."

"To respond to human need with loving service" the third of the Marks of Mission, calls to mind the admonition of Jesus, which many of us hear each Maundy Thursday, that those who receive the servant ministry of Jesus become fellow-servants with him. As the Word kneels at our feet in creation, and incarnate in Jesus kneels once more to redeem his disciples, to return to them the grace and gladness of the servant life, we catch a glimpse not only of what God is doing for us, but of what God seeks to do through us.

In the liturgy of baptism, candidates are asked, "Do you renounce the evil powers of this world which corrupt and destroy the creatures of God?" The fourth of the Marks of Mission, "To seek to transform the unjust structures of society", invites the church to consider how those evil powers work through structures. The structures we create are always subject to the sin that can blind us and bind us, even when we hon-

estly intend them to serve the common good. Not many generations ago, our own church honestly intended to serve the common good through participation in the federal government's "Indian Residential Schools". Even the temple in Jerusalem at the time of Jesus cried out from transformation from a place where elites hid their greed behind a fog of piety—"den of thieves"—to a place in which the mission of God—God's equity, justice, and reconciliation—could be celebrated, strengthened and renewed." Unable as we are to fashion structures to shape and govern our common life in the fullness of God's justice, we commit ourselves to the continuing transformative work of vigilance—what Archbishop Michael Peers call "endless vistas of bother". In the very moment in which we say, "I can't be bothered," this Mark of Mission meets us and challenges us to let ourselves be bothered by those who are left over, left out and left behind by the way we have ordered our society's life.

Finally, the Marks of Mission include this fifth challenge: "To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth." As the failure of our stewardship of creation generates more and more calamitous consequences, the Marks of Mission recall us to God's first mandate in Genesis 2, as humankind is set in the garden "to tend and keep it." We are woven purposefully into the life of creation by the will of the creator, and our abandonment of that purpose for "the devices and desires of our own hearts" is a dimension of our sinfulness whose costs are becoming increasingly evident.

The Marks of Mission are marks of alignment with the *missio Dei*, the mission that God initiates. It is God who proclaims an alternate ethic, "the land that I will show you (Abram), the peaceable Kingdom (Isaiah), the valley of renewal (Ezekiel), the Kingdom of God, the New Creation. It is God the Holy Spirit who grafts us into the Body of Christ in Baptism, and who teaches us through scripture, tradition and reason the truth of our human purpose and dignity, and of the sin that blinds us and binds us. It is God the Word incarnate who kneels and washes the feet of the disciples. It is God who resonates through Amos, Jeremiah, Isaiah and Micah to call to account those who exploit unjust structures rather than working for their transformation. It is God who cares for creation and calls into being a woman and a man to be partners in that care. The ministry of the church is to discern the shape and scope of God's mission in and for the world, and to join in the work that God is already doing, has been doing since "In the beginning". We need no mission statement of our own, nothing more than our baptism and the landmarks made known in scripture and in the work of the Spirit bringing scripture to life among us.

The faithful discipleship to which the Marks of Mission call us can be derailed in a rich variety of ways. Two are, perhaps, the most common. First, the mission of God can be reduced to a propositional rescue transaction by which some members of the human creation, disposed to affirm "orthodox" propositions, are saved, while the rest of creation, including those indisposed for whatever reason to affirm those propositions, are discarded.

Creation, lovingly called into being by God, is treated as nothing more than a stage banded together for the drama of self-righteousness. And this life, sanctified by the Incarnation and by the Spirit's breath and Pentecostal fire, is nothing more than a global study hall for an exam that a few will pass and most will fail.

The other way that we derail discipleship is by imagining that the mission of God and the maintenance of an institution are so congruent that to ensure the latter is to serve the former. Mission precedes church, and has already outlasted many institutional forms. As Tim Dearborn puts it, "It isn't that the church of God has a mission, but that the God of mission has a church." When Jesus speaks in Luke 17 of those who seek to save their lives losing them, and of those willing to lose their lives for the purpose of God saving them, he speaks not just to persons, but also to the community of the baptized, inviting us to thrive as an agency of the divine work instead of melting away in a self-absorbed institutional failure of nerve.

As Vision 2019 passes through the hands of the General Synod, it may well become a vision for the whole church. That is something the General Synod can urge, but not something it can accomplish. In the communities of the baptized that gather across this diocese, we can decide whether and how that vision will become real in our ministry, in how we see ourselves through the lens of the Marks of Mission, and in the courage and imagination we bring to enacting them in our life together.

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