



Niagara Anglican

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A reflection on fresh traditions

MICHAEL BURSLEM
ST GEORGES GUELPH

September is the month when we come back together again, and notice how much the kids have shot up over the summer. But we have been asked to write about Growth; not in stature, but "growth in ministry, growth in numbers and growth in community." I'm not sure I can tackle all that, but I have been thinking over the summer how the church should grow, perhaps in ministry and to the community, but I'm not sure these ideas would lead to a growth in numbers.

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Lessons for the flock, from the flock

MARNI NANCEKIVELL
SECRETARY OF SYNOD

Jesus taught in a variety of ways. He was a story teller, who would spin wisdom filled tales. He would gather friends on the beach and on the mountain top, and use the most common elements (spit, dust, and people gathered at a table) to help his sisters and brothers comprehend the abundant truths of God's life-giving presence.

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Back to Church Sunday: Are you inviting?

BRIAN GALLIGAN
RECTOR, ST. ALBAN THE MARTYR, ACTON

"Declining Church attendance" is a one liner designed to grab your attention and provoke a response. I hope your response will be to read this article since I suspect many of us are tired of repeatedly being asked the same question: "Are you an inviting church?"

We live in amazing technological times and have become accustomed to rapidly moving on to the latest hand-held device for communicating with others. Life is lived so fast that it has become a race to the finish and we don't take time to smell the roses, or even notice if there are roses! Hand-held has taken precedence over hand-holding. So it is with many of us in the church, such that when a simple idea like; "Back to Church Sunday" is suggested, many scoff, it doesn't resonate in today's high-tech world. We have been told time after time that we should be invitational but there just isn't time left to invest,

so we slam the door on the opportunity to discover if we are! Participation in *Back to Church Sunday* can be as simple or as complicated as you wish to make it, yet many develop the notion that there is too much work involved in promoting this "one day a year" initiative. They totally miss the point that the whole purpose of this one day is to re-group, re-visit and re-focus a congregation on being invitational "every day of the year!" As the *Back to Church Sunday* website www.backtochurch.co.uk states, "it is based on the simplest and shortest step in evangelism—that we should invite someone we already know to something we love; invite our friend to our church."

The amount of time and effort we put into preparing for *Back to Church Sunday* is directly proportional to how successful we want to be, on an ongoing basis, as an invitational church, a church with increasing, not declining attendance. The basics are simple and start with all parish members receiving training in what

it really means, to be invitational, not just Greeters handing out bulletins on a Sunday morning, but also in the workplace, the coffee shop, at social gatherings and at home. Once guests have been invited, everyone in the parish needs to recognize they are hosts and make sure that whenever guests do visit, (not just on *Back to Church Sunday*), they will always be warmly welcomed and experience pleasant hospitality. We need to look around with a discerning eye and determine is our church accessible, is the first impression both inside and out, one of a building that is clean and tidy, loved and well cared for? Is the seating comfortable, do we provide for people with hearing and vision loss, is the service easy to understand for newcomers and does it allow people of all ages and knowledge of the Christian faith to participate? Afterwards do we huddle in familiar groups for tea and coffee or do we focus on getting to know our guests?

It is also vital that *Back to Church Sunday* not be seen as a "one off

event" but as a turning point in the culture of a parish. Whenever guests arrive for a visit, whether they be inquisitive returning parishioners from long ago, or complete newcomers, follow-up personal communication in the weeks ahead, by the priest and parish members who invited them, is essential. This forges the bonds that reinforce their desire to return, to experience more hospitality, and to learn more about being a Christian. While parishes can develop most of the materials for a successful *Back to Church Sunday* themselves, helpful training videos are freely available on the internet and a small supply of printed invitational materials may still be available from Augsburg Fortress for this year's *Back to Church Sunday* theme which is; "Who are you inviting?" I hope that this year all Niagara parishes will find the time to re-focus on what it means to be invitational, to offer the welcoming hand of Christ's love to those who are invited and to reverse the trend of declining church attendance.

From generation to generation

ELEANOR JOHNSON
ST. JOHN'S, RIDGEMOUNT

Most readers of this paper are over 50. We remember a time when, as children, we sat every week in church with our parents and grandparents. The latter were the more tolerant of squirming children, the more likely to have a stash of mints in their pockets. Why aren't our grandchildren cuddling up to us in church?

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Transformative Change through Stewardship



JIM NEWMAN
STEWARDSHIP CONSULTANT

The arrival of Fall brings a flurry of activities in the church. Calendars will be updated, committee meetings will be scheduled, Church School and Bible studies will begin and choirs will re-group. More than likely stewardship has taken a holiday; and not, as we tend to think, just in terms of financial support. Stewardship really is about our relationship with God. But how does one stop equating stewardship exclusively with financial support?

The Most Reverend Douglas Hambridge, a former Anglican Bishop from British Columbia says "a major problem with our stewardship appeal is that it is all too often inward-looking. It is bound up with the idea of surviving another year, meeting budgets and paying bills. It seems to have little to do with expressing what God is worth in our lives, and not much to do with identifying ourselves with the clearly stated agenda of God that you can find in both Hebrew and Christian scriptures".

He goes on to say "if the people of the Church ever grasp what giving is all about there will be no need for special appeals, drives and campaigns. Once the meaning of money—the theology of money—is grasped and set in the context of God's agenda, then the very world will be turned upside down. The

hungry will be fed, the captives and the oppressed will be liberated, the blind will see, and the poor will hear the Good News. That is the context and goal of stewardship. That is what God has placed in our hands. We are not merely called to take part in stewardship programs. We are called to be stewards of God's future: not just collectors of money, not fund-raisers, but stewards entrusted with God's agenda with which to shape the future for God and for the Kingdom."

This is a call for transformative change in the church through stewardship, and it raises some questions. Could such change happen in Niagara? How is God's agenda expressed in our Mission, and how can it be expressed in everyday terms?

Perhaps the Anglican Communion Official Website's Five Marks of Mission is a primary expression:

- To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom
- To teach, baptize and nurture new believers
- To respond to human need by loving service
- To seek to transform unjust structures of society
- To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth

A Sixth Mark of Mission that relates to peace, conflict transformation, and reconciliation has been recommended. That seems like a most worthy addition, but the wheels of the church turn slowly.

As I understand it from their website The Mission Commission of the Anglican Communion has commended to each Province (and its dioceses) the challenge of developing or

revising its own understanding of mission which is faithful to Scripture, and to discern how it will most faithfully serve God's mission in its context. An example of such an understanding is given below.

Mission is the creating, reconciling and transforming action of God, flowing from the community of love found in the Trinity, made known to all humanity in the person of Jesus, and entrusted to the faithful action and witness of the people of God who, in the power of the Spirit, are a sign, foretaste and instrument of the reign of God. (Adapted from a statement of the Commission on Mission of the National Council of Churches in Australia.)

That's all very "Anglican", but it has to be practical. Here in Niagara we have evidence that transformative change is possible in parishes which focus time and energy on understanding their mission and ministry, pay attention to hospitality and welcoming, develop meaningful narrative budgets, build community involvement, are specific about needs, think positively, systematically, and strategically; clearly communicate their financial situation, and are mindful of the quality of music, preaching, and liturgy. It takes time and commitment, but it builds Rectors and Corporations strongly committed to stewardship, clarity of vision and foundational values, real discipleship, and more than enough credibility and value to make direct "asks" to parishioners for specific increases in giving. That's vital to the context and goal of stewardship in today's church, and the results speak for themselves.

A reflection on fresh traditions

What is that good news? Who is Jesus Christ? I believe we need to seriously re-think these two questions.

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At the risk of being excommunicated, here they are.

We need a paradigm shift, and a huge one, in the way we think and do things in the church. The danger is that, in the end, people will consider us no longer Anglican, but does that honestly matter?

We're commissioned to take the Gospel, the Good News of Jesus Christ, to the world. But what is that good news? Who is Jesus Christ? I believe we need to seriously re-think these two questions.

To take the second one first, I have to admit that I don't find the traditional Nicene formula of the 4th. Century a good fit in the 21st. I'm thankful that in our church, St. George's, Guelph, we seldom use the Nicene Creed. However, I doubt that my stab to say who Jesus is would be any better. I do say that what we know about God is chiefly drawn from his life, as recorded in the Scriptures. But there's a mystery about him the moment we try to nail him down. Why not dispense with creed making, and let each person find out who Jesus is for her or himself? Orthodoxy leads only to confusion, conflict and exclusion.

But what is the good news? Is it the tradition that if we're good girls and boys we'll go to heaven? Or, if we believe that Jesus is our Lord and Savior? Lord perhaps, but savior? Savior from what? He does say that if we believe in Him (God who so loved the world, or Jesus himself?) we shall not perish, but have eternal life. But there's no past or future in eternity, only a perpetual present, the eternal now. If this be so, the present should be our chief, and only, concern, not after we die. Heaven and Hell are present realities.

No, the good news, as I see it, is that God is in the world, in everybody. Thank God we're an inclusive church, but how inclusive is inclusive? I believe as Paul said, God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself. That's our good news to the world. Heaven is on earth. God loves everyone. He lives in and among us, as Our Father. We're all reconciled to Him. This was Jesus' message, misunderstood by the Pharisees and many today.

But there's also bad news in the Gospel. Many are living in Hell, from which they need to be rescued. There is suffering in the world, (our newspapers are full of it) and we may be called upon to suffer ourselves, as Jesus was. In spite of that, however, there's victory in suffering, as Jesus' resurrection asserts. That's really the

great news, but we need eyes of faith to perceive it.

How does this spell out in our ministry? If God be in the midst of us, the holy table (sacrificial language, such as 'altar' should be expunged from our worship) should be in the center of the church, and comfortable chairs, not pews, in semi circles around it. In that way we would be looking at more faces than backs of heads. The words of the liturgy, lessons and hymns could be projected onto screens, suitably placed to be seen by everyone. In the sermon the preacher may walk around the holy table, but no matter which way she or he face, they would be projected by suitably placed TV cameras onto the screens. A DVD could be made of the worship service for shut-ins.

The organ would have to stay put, if the church can still afford one, and the choir would be seated nearby, so that the organist may direct them, but facing the congregation. There would be no procession or recession in or out of the choir stalls. They would wear ordinary street clothes, as would the clergy.

Awesome music, not 'pop' music, should convey the presence of God. Also the best of the visual and written arts should instill awe, but not entertainment. Biblical decency and order are the hallmarks of Anglicanism.

To meet socially before and after services coffee, tea and refreshments would be served in the church. There would be part of the sanctuary reserved for the library, with comfortable arm chairs and sofas, so that during the week people may come in to read quietly in sanctified surroundings.

Do services always have to be only on a Sunday? Why not every day of the week as well? Perhaps Morning and Evening Prayer, or a Taisé service, led by a lay person, as well as the Eucharist?

On the six other days of the week the church buildings would be open to the community in whatever ministry God's Spirit should lead. The buildings are holy, but not so holy that they cannot be used for ordinary people to come into. If the buildings become white elephants we should think about dispensing with them and renting space to worship in. But I hope that won't become necessary.

Is this too great a paradigm shift for staunch Anglicans? Will it draw more people into the church? We don't know. I love the Anglican Church and all its tradition, but old tradition is a stumbling block to many. I once heard a priest in Canterbury Cathedral say that Canterbury was steeped in tradition. There was a new tradition every year. Could we not have a new one every day of the year? It would certainly freshen up the church.

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Anglican Business and Professional Women's Association going strong

MAVIS ADAMS
SECRETARY

Two thousand and eleven marks the 65th anniversary of the Anglican Business and Professional Women's association. I have belonged to this organization since the late seventies. I was working as an administrator at the former Wentworth Library when the board chairman (and ABP President) approached me and said *Mavis you're an Anglican, why not come to the Anglican Business and Professional Women's Association with us this coming Monday?* I thought "oh sure, another evening out is just what I need."

I went to the meeting: it was at the YWCA on McNab Street. The association had just had its annual Bazaar, where they had earned nine thousand dollars. I was impressed! Impressed even more when they produced a list of where they were sending this money. The Northern Dioceses of the Anglican Church, St. Matthew's house and the Seafarers. They gave it all away and I thought: *this is my type of organization.* I hesitate to repeat the word *Anglican*, because we have had members from all churches, from United to Roman Catholic.

The AB&P is an association of *Christian Fellowship*. Its origin lies in the post war period 1945-46, a time of re-adjustment and of a search for new avenues of peaceful endeavors.

This year was also a time of "assessment" by way of the Anglican Advance Movement during which Dr. Charlotte Whitten, the then Mayor of Ottawa, was appointed to conduct a survey as to the number of women in Canada listed in the Canadian Census as "Anglicans", and to investigate their church affiliations. On April 5th, 1946, Dr. Whitten reported her findings, numbering 250,000 Anglican women and girls over 14 years of age as lacking any church affiliation and suggesting that efforts should be made

to draw at least some of these women into the family of the church.

At the invitation of the Right Rev. L.W.B. Broughall, then Bishop of Niagara, Dr. Whitten met with a group of Hamilton women, representative of professions, business and all branches of current church organizations. Suggestions were requested as to the type of organization most likely to attract the unaffiliated business and professional women. Full discussion ensued and final agreement led to the choice of a Supper Club.

Consultation with Bishop Broughall led to his consent that the Niagara Diocese might serve as a "proving ground" for this type of organization. Thus we were up and rolling. Church affiliation was encouraged and corporate communion services were arranged one Sunday a month at different churches, followed by fellowship breakfast, members gained information as to membership and activity in various parishes and lines of communication were stimulated.

A dinner meeting was held the following Monday, where the entertainment was mostly an inspirational speaker. And the Church weekend was complete. To keep the association from a single course of church affiliation, board members from the Y and the AYPA were submitted.

The association grew very rapidly. Typical of the womanly desire to "serve" were gifts of overseas parcels sent to clergy in England. Increasingly, however, membership requested a "Project". Naturally "fund raising" became inevitable and a Bridge and White Elephant Sale was thought to be most productive. The highlight of 1948 was the first Bridge and White Elephant Sale supported by the entire membership, guiding this experiment to a most successful conclusion with proceeds amounting to \$932.44—a tidy sum indeed in those days. This made possible a generous donation



■ **BACK:** Peggy Tucker, Evelyn Holder, Molly Hayes, Canon Eric Mills, Edith Archer, Patricia Walsh, Betty Dean, Mary Ewan, Beatrice Pickett, Mavis Adams. **INSERT (on her own in second row):** Elinor Smith. **FRONT:** Elizabeth Waring, Ethel Straw, Jeanne Penick, Patricia Andrews, Wendy Smith

towards clerical education, as well as contributions towards Civic Projects.

Through our many church affiliations Bishop Clarke of Moosonee became our friend and a fall toy shower was started (1976) and continues to this day. At our October meeting members bring in new toys, plus some knitting and this is forwarded to the Diocese of Moosonee. They are repacked and distributed through their diocese. Bishop Lawrence—who followed Bishop Clarke—has an "in" with Air Quebec and they are shipped (free) further north to remote areas where they are needed most. It is always a delight to hear from remote church areas how our toys are received.

By 1969, Membership had grown to 174. By 1971, the 25th anniversary of our association, over \$50,000 had been donated to Church and Community Projects Canada wide.

Many will remember Elizabeth Maxwell, who worshipped at Christ's Church Flamborough—was a mem-

ber and when she died she left the contents of her house/apartment to our association, which were auctioned off for \$2,985 plus an additional \$5,000. Many of our members leave bequests, which help us maintain our donations to the North. Elizabeth's large donation was divided between the Diocese of the Arctic and Moosonee immediately to assist them with continuing missionary endeavors.

From 1996 to 2010 \$65,350 was donated to the Northern Diocese and around Hamilton. Our fundraisers are now participating in the Community Sales, and holding a Spring and Fall Desert Card Party. We have a *tooney fund* where each member can save a tooney a week and donate it towards our Northern Donations.

So here we are 65 years old and still running. We have a heritage to be proud of: 65 years of fellowship, thousands of dollars earned while working together doing God's work. Now we have our Corporate Communion Services, Octo-

ber, Christmas and June only. We still hold our Dinner Meetings the third Monday evening, October to May.

We met at the YWCA for many years, moved to the Scottish Rite Club for 10 years, to All Saints Church for 8 years and now we meet at Christ's Church Cathedral, where we have free rent and the use of a beautiful kitchen. Our meals are presently being catered. Our entertainment varies.

Last month our speaker was a semi retired Bee Keeper speaking on his experiences over the years and the tremendous work being done to control moths etc. invading the hives. Next month our speaker is from the United Empire Loyalists Association. The Bishop and the Dean are invited, along with their wives to our Christmas meeting. The Dean often visits our dinner meeting and usually has a song for us.

We are always open to new members. If you are interested, please call our membership convener, Mrs. Betty Dean at 905-389-3785.

How Tom found God and my friend understood

GRAEME STAP
RECTOR, ST SIMONS TEMAGAMI

A few years ago a friend of mine became the rector of a church with about four hundred on the parish list. Being a man of deep convictions he knew the only way to feel the pulse of the parish was to meet each person in their homes and talk about what the church meant to them. It was not an easy task what with all the other opportunities of ministry that a priest encounters but after two years all but one parishioner had been visited.

Tom, the last on the list, could not be persuaded to accept a visit. He always had an excuse. My friend almost gave up but decided to give it one more try. He first asked the wardens if they could think of a reason why Tom was evading all offers of a visit. The wardens smiled;

they had had a bet between them that my friend would not get to see Tom and it looked as if they were going to win. You see it was Tom's wife that came to church not Tom and she had died two years earlier. Tom still supported the church but only to honour his wife's memory.

Undaunted my friend set out to see Tom without calling first. He found him in the garden pulling weeds and as he could not escape he invited my friend in for tea. As he sipped his tea he listened and as Tom's story unfolded it was not difficult to see that he blamed God for taking his wife regardless of the prayers he and the whole congregation had prayed for her return to health. My friend tried to explain that God never takes God only gives but he could see he was getting nowhere. As he got ready to leave

he asked Tom if he kept in contact with his wife's friends. Tom hung his head; he had not and knew that he should have. My friend suggested that he come to church on the next Sunday; the whole congregation would love to see him. Much to my friend's surprise the following Sunday Tom was in church and every Sunday after that Tom was as regular as clockwork. He sat in the pew his wife used to sit in. (Like most of us Tom was a creature of habit)

My friend asked Tom why he had so suddenly started to attend every Sunday. The answer he got was something he would never forget. "Because God knows my name" said Tom, "every Sunday when I come to receive the Eucharist you say 'Tom the body of Christ broken for you' and if God knows my name then maybe I should get to know

him better". My friend felt a tear start to well up in the corner of his eye and he reached over and gave Tom a big hug.

Some weeks later Tom approached my friend and said perhaps it was time he was baptized. My friend, a very conservative priest was shocked "Tom I thought you were already baptized" he said. "No" said Tom, "I never got round to it."

Two weeks later the baptism took place and the church was full. People shaking Tom's hand, slapping him on the back, and congratulating him. It was Tom's turn to cry, tears filled his eyes as he lent over the Font and heard the words "Tom I baptize you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit".

My friend, when it was all over, sat in the chair in his office and wept. His whole understanding of our relation-

ship with God had changed. Baptism was what led to the Eucharist not the other way around and yet here was Tom led to God through the Eucharist to the sacrament of baptism.

My friend never again invited all baptized people to come to the table of the Lord. He stood at the altar rail and said "all people are welcome at the table of the Lord." He had come to realize that we are all children of God and that Jesus, when he broke the five barley loaves and fed the five thousand, he did not ask if they were baptized and he knew deep in his heart that Jesus would never turn anyone away from his table. "Come unto me all you who are heavy laden and I will refresh you."

It is always only my opinion but in this case also the opinion of my friend, may he rest in peace.



Pride in the rainbow of life and hope

HOLLIS HISCOCK
INTERIM RECTOR, ST. JOHN, ROCKWOOD

I accepted immediately, without any reservation, when the Reverend Mike Deed, Director of Youth & Family Ministry, invited me to join a soon to be formed committee, later to be known as the Rainbow Committee at St. Christopher's Church in Burlington.

Our goals include building bridges with the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual, two-spirited and transgender, intersex, queer, queer questioning, asexual and ally (LGBTTIQQA) communities, educating people and promoting St. Christopher's Church as 'a more welcoming, affirming and safe Church' for everyone.

Twelve people gathered for the initial meeting, when we decided that a booth at Halton Pride in Burlington would be one of our first ventures. Halton Pride is organized by Halton Organization for Pride and Education (HOPE). St. Christopher's had a booth there in 2010.

We planned, we worked, we recruited volunteers, we gathered our resources and we were ready to roll when Halton Pride Day dawned on June 4, 2011.

Our tent was the first booth there, early in the morning. It was decorated with St. Christopher's welcoming and inviting signs. Several tables displayed photos of parish life and brochures about community activities.

Two wedding cakes were 'baked', from non food ingredients. One was adorned with a female couple and the other two males, to symbolize our church's commitment to the blessing of same sex couples. A copy of 'The Niagara Rite' was also available for distribution.

A 'prayer board' would enable visitors to request prayers for individuals and situations facing the LGBTTIQQA and other communities. These requests were to be taken back to the Church and included in the parish worship the next day. We also had a 'Prayer for Pride' bookmark, in

which we thanked God 'for the gift of our LGBTTIQQA community', and prayed for 'our LGBTTIQQA family around the world'.

The youth had made lapel pins from 'rainbow ribbons', as gifts for those coming to our tent.

We also had rainbow coloured bracelets to give away. On the outside of each bracelet, the word PRIDE was embossed; when turned inside out it reminded the wearer that 'WE HAVE A DREAM'.

A sampling of books for all ages from our Church library was also available for perusing. I availed of the opportunity to read 'LOVE, ELLEN, the journey of a mother and daughter', by Betty DeGeneres, as well as 'AND TANGO MAKES THREE', a children's book by Peter Parnell and Justin Richardson, which tells the true story of two male penguins in a New York Zoo, as a couple, hatching and raising a healthy chick, Tango. These and other books can be borrowed from the church library.

Special invitations to the Pride

Flag raising ceremony scheduled for the next day and to Sundae Sunday, a fun day planned for several weeks later, were also ready for distribution.

St. Christopher's booth was ready and waiting to receive visitors an hour before the official opening.

Then it happened.

A horrendous sudden storm blew in from the north. The torrential rains turned Central Park into a swimming pool, and the gale force winds threatened to uplift our booths and deposit them further down the street. The rolling thunder and chain lightning strikes may have been majestic to watch from a safe enclosure, but were a safety hazard for volunteers and visitors alike.

Wisely and with no other alternative, the organizers decided to close down the Central Park portion of Halton Pride. The inside events scheduled for later went ahead as planned.

A sunny morning greeted worshippers the next day for the Pride Flag raising ceremony. More than 60 people gathered to help raise the flag, which

would then fly for the whole month of June. At the ceremony people prayed that the pride flag would be seen as a symbol of 'freedom and diversity' reflecting 'grace and love', and it would be a challenge to the 'hardness of our hearts', and enable us to celebrate 'the gift of life and hope'.

A display table brought together all the items from our Halton Pride Day tent to the Church lobby, so that people could view what the Rainbow Committee was doing to fulfill St. Christopher's mission as an 'inclusive, diverse community'.

On Monday, June 6, the Secretary of Niagara Synod, Canon Marni Nancekivell responded, 'I was MOST impressed driving by St. Christopher's yesterday to see the Rainbow Flag... I am 110% in support... and think that it will be a tool for missional ministry beyond what many would imagine. Yahoo for St. Christopher's!'

Another silver lining in our cloud is that St. Christopher's Rainbow Committee is now well prepared for Halton Pride 2012.

The ambivalent Anglican, and assorted friends



FRANCEAN CAMPBELL-RICH
CHRIST'S CHURCH CATHEDRAL

It was a CBC Radio show, a few weeks ago. A growing number of clergy in the U.S. claim that they don't believe in God anymore. It bothers them, but not very much. They are continuing to practice their calling, after a fashion, all the way to the altar—and the confessional, if they are Roman Catholics. I don't think they were, but I had tuned in late. I found it amusing to imagine

them mouthing the Liturgy, like Rowan Atkinson of "Mr. Bean" fame, not to mention all the subterfuges required to keep the deception going.

On second thought, what's so funny about it? We all fall back from time to time, don't we? When I find myself next to a fervent voice, I stumble over *sin* and *trespasses, descending to the dead (hell)*, and any number of *forever* and *evers*, and just *forever Amen*, or no *Amen*, and so on. And how many of us can stand up and recite the Creed, every word, in any or all of its forms, believing without reservation what centuries of wrangling sects and councils never did settle forever—and ever.

And now we are asked to bring a friend, or two, or more, to Back to

Church Sunday. On sober reflection, most of my friends are already on the side of the angels and are badgering me to do better at it myself—such as doing more for the church, or doing better what I do. But what do I do if somebody approaches me with a question I can't—or don't want to—answer? Worse, and it wouldn't be for the first time, I accost somebody new and make effusive remarks of welcome, only to discover it's a lifelong parishioner who has never missed a Sunday since Confederation.

It's a good thing our tolerant Anglican ways allow us to "stand, sit, or kneel". It's a good thing we are not even frowned upon if we do not bellow out the creed, or swallow the

bibly literally. It's a very good thing that on intensive questions of belief and conscience, we are conditioned to "all may, none must", and work it out for yourself.

Summer seems to bring some of these thoughts to mind, especially to those of us who don't have cottages, or don't get invited to cottages, and can't afford to go away somewhere—or wouldn't go even if we could afford to. And that goes for the writer of these lines. How else would I have switched dates, owing to the excessive heat wave, and instead, heard the complete Goldberg Variations at Elora—accompanied by a member of my own parish who went out of his way to make it possible. (As for the Goldberg, ask

your church musician).

The summer heat has taken its toll, however, though in a gentle, story-like fashion. I am not alone in recognizing the fact. Ask your doctor, or any doctor. If he/she fails to agree, refer him/her to me. I will relate the story of the night-blooming cereus. For starters, there is Irene, of our diocese, who set out for service one Sunday morning, hurrying, not to be late; missed her ride with a friend, took a bus, switched to a taxi at some expense, arrived at the church, found the door locked, awoke to the fact it was Saturday.

And that ambivalent Anglican friend: bless her, for she is questioning, as we are all given the right and the joy to do. Thanks be to God.

PARISH NEWS



■ Mary Baka, Linda Mills, Heather Gross, Katherine Morgan (Rector), Rita Predon, Yvonne Skrepnechuk (Chair of Evangelism Committee).

Gifts for children of the north

PAT HYSLOP
ST JOHN THE DIVINE, CAYUGA

It all began with a conversation at a nursing reunion in Sault Ste. Marie and grew to a wonderful baby shower at St. John the Divine, Cayuga with gifts of 170 blankets, 160 hats, 130 sleepers, 37 socks and 50 bibs, undershirts and other outfits. The baby shower was hosted by the Evangelism Committee at St. John the Divine, Cayuga, and was well attended by many from the area and some from as far away as Milton and Niagara Falls.

In July, 2009 one of our parishioners was attending her nursing reunion in Sault Ste. Marie. During a conversation with one of her former classmates, she learned of the need for clothing for newborn babies born at the hospital in Iqaluit. The Evangelism Committee at St. John the Divine was approached to consider an outreach program to help clothe these babies. The committee chairperson

suggested a community wide baby shower. After many months of contact with St. Jude's Anglican Cathedral in Iqaluit it was decided that the most needed items were blankets, sleepers and hats.

So the committee decided to host this baby shower on February 28, 2011 and began to spread the word of what was needed. Through word of mouth, a few flyers around town and a wonderful article in the local newspaper, the news spread about this amazing outreach project and the people came with an abundance of gifts that we could never imagine. The Evangelism Committee is very grateful for all those who contributed and would like to thank:

The two ladies who travelled from Milton and Toronto on the day of the shower to bring their gifts, South Cayuga Community Church, Cayuga United Church, United Church in Burford, York Christian Reformed Church, St. John's York, All Saints Anglican Church in Hagersville, St.

Stephen's Roman Catholic Church in Cayuga, Selkirk Christian Chapel, Salvation Army in Niagara Falls, Case United Church in Mount Hope, Deanne's Shop in Bobcaygeon and of course our own parish of St. John the Divine.

The parish hall was decorated like a winter wonderland and everyone enjoyed a feast lovingly prepared by the Evangelism Committee. We dined on Bannock—a hearty bread which Inuit people thrive on during winter months, moosemeat turnovers, whitefish pate, fresh fruit, an array of cookies and squares and tea and coffee.

A few weeks later the items had been sorted and boxed, then driven by car to Ottawa, from where they were flown to Iqaluit, thanks to the generosity of First Air airlines.

Many thanks to the Evangelism Committee of St. John the Divine for recognizing the need for clothing for the newborns in Iqaluit and making a plan to help resolve this problem.



St. John's South Cayuga celebrates 165 years!

PAUL SHERWOOD
RECTOR, ST. PAUL'S DUNNVILLE AND THE DUNN ANGLICAN PARISH
REGIONAL DEAN, BROCK

County: His Worship Ken Hewitt.

St. John's Church was built between 1843-44 and consecrated in 1846 by Bishop John Strachan of Toronto, who whilst in the area also consecrated St. Paul's Dunnville and Christ Church Port Maitland.

On Sunday 26th June at 11:00 am, the Church of St. John the Evangelist in South Cayuga celebrated the 165th anniversary of the consecration of the building.

A special Eucharist, following the Book of Common Prayer, was celebrated by Bishop Michael Bird, a former Rector of the Church, who also gave a stirring and encouraging sermon.

Following the service, which was so full of people some had to sit outside the little church, refreshments were served under a marquee and music was provided by a live band.

Special guests at the service included former Rector: Rev Mervyn Dunn and The Mayor of Haldimand

St. John's Church is one of the oldest church buildings in the area having been established by the Rev. Bold Cudmore Hill, known as the Apostle of the Grand (River), to service the spiritual needs of the first settlers from Britain.

St. John's, along with its sister Church at Port Maitland, continue to minister to their rural communities along the shore of Lake Erie.

St. John's in South Cayuga along with Christ Church, Port Maitland make up the Dunn Anglican Parish and work in partnership with the parish of St. Paul's in Dunnville.

Outreach at St. George's in St. Catharines

On Tuesday, April 26th, the volunteers of the "Breakfast Program" at St. George's Church in St. Catharines were recognized for their commitment in providing free breakfasts for the less fortunate. Breakfast is served from 7:30 to 8:30 on 365 days of the year. Janet Veale (treasurer since its inception) was the Mistress of Ceremonies.

Volunteers come from other churches, service clubs and like minded citizens. They make up 31 teams, one for each day of the month. Breakfast consists of hot oatmeal, cold cereal, juice, toast, jam, peanut butter, coffee and tea. Donations come from

the community as there is no government assistance. Costs are \$25,000.00 per year to serve 25,000 clients. Our Program is now copied in the Windsor area—the highest form of flattery!

There are 300 volunteers at the present time. One hundred and twenty-five attended the event where awards were given for 10 and 15 years of service. Special recognition was given for members who were instrumental in starting the Program, including the Rev. Nancy Baum, Jack and Peggy Pickett, Barbara Brown, Barbara and John Van Every and Janet Veale. Barbara and John Van Every have done the grocery

purchasing since day one. Janet read a letter from Rev. Nancy Baum who was amazed that the Program, started in 1996 on two days a week, had expanded to serving 25,000 clients a year.

Special mention was made of a local high school student (Haleigh Pickett) who in 2009 with three friends entered the Youth Philanthropy Initiative project in charitable work. They won and gave the prize of \$5,000 to the Breakfast Program.

Rev. Rob Fead (Rector of St. George's) thanked all present for their dedication to the community—"doing what we should be doing".

Bishop Michael Bird felt outreach was so important. He told the story of his grandfather and three friends in England who were helped by a benevolent society when "down and out". People should not stand by while others suffer. We should give a "hand out and hand up" as anyone is worthy of help. The Breakfast Program is an example and inspiration across the community and Diocese of Niagara—touching lives of people touched by poverty.

Jim Bradley, MPP for St. Catharines recognized the Program by expressing thanks on behalf of the clients for service provided. He stated "it

is our duty as a Christian community to reach out".

The Breakfast Program won the YMCA Peace Medallion in 2010 and was instrumental in awarding the Order of Niagara and the Rotary Club of St. Catharines' Paul Harris Fellow to Janet Veale.

For donations of money, food or to volunteer, contact Janet Veale (coordinator of the Program) through St. George's Church, at 83 Church St., St. Catharines, ON., L2R 3C7, 905-682-9232. Tax receipts are given for donations of \$20.00 or more.

Back to Church: Is there a point?

CHRIS GRABIEC
EDITOR

The honest and true fact is that our church buildings do not nearly have the numbers of people that they did at one time. For many parishioners and clergy, this is a very discouraging fact and sign. We all know what it feels like when the church is full, and when liturgy is vibrant and folks are singing their praises.

We also know what it feels like when the pews are empty and it seems like we are the only ones who care. In the midst of this we decide that we should have a "back to church" Sunday that somehow will be the answer to our prayers.

The fact is that we should have a back to church Sunday, but we should only do so when we are convinced that we have something to which we are inviting people. When we invite people into our homes for a social evening, we busy ourselves with a myriad of preparations. We shop for food, we clean the house, we straighten out all the mess, we cook the food, we put out the good dishes and much more. Inviting people into our homes is a special moment and inviting people into our churches needs to be equally special.

About 15 years ago, I left a parish that had 3200 families in it. There

were literally thousands of people around at Sunday services. There were 9 services on Ash Wednesday alone! I often ask myself whether or not there would be just as many people today, if I had stayed in that parish. "Of course" my proud self says, and then reality kicks in and I realize that if I had not changed and if the parish had not changed the numbers would be significantly decreased. So how must we change?

The first thing that must change is that we must listen to the un-churched. We need to ask them what we could provide that might help them. Some of them will say that we can provide nothing. Others may have some constructive ideas. Secondly, we need to be willing to minister to the un-churched whether they like it or not. Perhaps that ministry needs to be "un-selfish" and not "self-serving" and it needs to be true and authentic ministry for ministry's sake. If we go out to minister to the poor or the disadvantaged with a "hook", then they have every right to be suspicious that the only reason we minister is to get them into the pews.

In our church such ministry does exist. We need look no farther than the work of Sue-Ann Ward at HAAARP or Wendy Roy at St. Matthew's House or the good folks at the Seafarer's

Mission. Undoubtedly, there are many other areas where such good and un-selfish work is being done. Jesus never walked the earth trying to solicit people to sit in a pew. He walked the earth simply trying to serve the needs of those who needed his gift of ministry and life.

Colleen Sym reminds us in her work with Social Justice that our ministry to the poor, the disadvantaged or the un-churched must not be setup and governed by us, but it must include those who are disadvantaged themselves. The people to whom we minister must have an opportunity to be part of the solution and we who feel the call or willingness to minister to society must have open hearts and open ears. We will most certainly learn from them that ministry is not a "top" down activity, but it is collegial and everyone must have a voice that is heard in order for change to happen.

Parishes today need to re-evaluate their reason for existence. We need to ask ourselves, why are we church anyway? If we can come to some kind of conclusion that says that our gatherings are about strengthening our community to go out and act like Christ did in the world, then maybe we'll get somewhere and maybe there might be some other people that would be will-

ing to join us in our mission.

Last week I had the opportunity to be in the Grossmünster, the largest church in Zurich Switzerland. I sat there for a long time and meditated on the lives of Huldrych Zwingli and Heinrich Bullinger. I felt the spirit of their courage in their willingness to stand up and call the Church to rad-

everywhere on this earth. A reformed, inclusive, non-judgmental, ministering community of Christians inviting others to join them in the journey is the best "back to church" movement that we could have.

On that note, I would like to say goodbye to the readers of the Niagara Anglican. A good number of years

A reformed, inclusive, non-judgmental, ministering community of Christians inviting others to join them in the journey is the best "back to church" movement that we could have.

ical change. We may or may not agree with their reformed directions, but what is indisputable is that they were devoted to their ministry and that they called for conversion beyond what anyone would have ever imagined. In the end, the reformation would have and immense impact on Christian's of every tradition.

Such a reformation is needed again. Empty pews may not be filled, but the "aliveness" of our Christian faith must be seen and felt by people

ago Bishop Ralph asked me to help out by editing the Niagara Anglican. I along with the Publisher's Advisory Board have had a wonderful time shaping the paper. The writers that you know so well have been more than supportive and have exercised a ministry that I believe was truly "outside the box". They have truly made a difference to the Church. The Bishop has appointed Hollis Hiscock as the new editor and I know he will do a terrific job.

Lessons for the flock, from the flock

We need to step aside from the busy-ness of daily life and refresh our energy.

» CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

In my own life, I hear the voice of God in a variety of ways; in worship, meditation, in eye contact, in touch, and in laughter. But sometimes, I learn of the wisdom of God in more unexpected ways.

This year while at the cottage at my beloved Wood Lake, God taught me about leadership for ministry, through, believe it or not, a family of ducks. Perhaps the lessons came easily because I was moving directly from work to vacation, and hadn't quite made the leap away from work. However, as I watched the Mother duck and her ducklings, I kept thinking about what the church could learn from how the family of ducks lived. All of these examples come from my actual observations from one Mother Duck and her young'uns. So here are some reflections, from the duck's beaks to your ears:

The flock needs to know who they are and whose they are

The family story needs to be established. In her book "The Great Emergence", writer Phyllis Tickle reminds us that "the story" is the shared history of the social unit. While a family of ducks may not have an intellectual understanding of such a concept, at one level or another they know who they are. They recognize one another as being alike or of one piece.

Sometimes, leaders need to lead

It sounds like an obvious statement but my experience of both congregations and some leadership in the church is that some folks are reluctant to take a stand. Not so with the Mother Duck. She frequently made decisions and quite literally stuck her neck out in order to keep her flock moving in the right direction. Sometimes, she would dive for food; quack loudly, and within a few moments, her young were doing the same. She simultaneously kept one eye on the environment surrounding them, and another eye on her young charges. Her leadership of her young was always with The Big Picture in mind. Always she was moving, setting both the course and the pace.

Sometimes, a community needs to take risks in order to grow

The youngest ducklings, fresh from the egg, would never become func-

tional adults if they didn't learn new skills and try out new things. They are wiser, I suspect, than those in the waning parts of "Churchland" whose principal ambition appears to be to maintain the status quo in our congregational lives to ensure that no one becomes "upset". Ducklings know that in order to thrive, they need to expand their capacity. They must, both figuratively and literally, be pushed out of the nest and enter into uncharted territories. Every time they try something new, our duckling friends expand their abilities. At times, the learning is simply that they have fallen flat on their... beaks, and they have to do things differently. But deep in their feathered beings, they know that they can't stay in the comfortable egg. They need to spread their wings, and they need to learn to paddle.

Sometimes, the community needs protection

One hot and sunny day at the beach, every person and beast was headed into the lake for a swim. Those going for a dip included the golden retrievers who live year round at the Lodge. From the shore, it was clear that the flock of ducks and the retrievers were on a collision course. As the Mother duck led her young, she began to quack loudly, flap her wings wildly and swim in a zig zag pattern in order to protect her little ones from the dogs.

Church communities sometimes need this kind of care from the leadership. There can be individual influences which are not a healthy influence on the wider community. There are sometimes individuals or groups who seek undue influence on the larger community. Whether there is someone who tries to control others, or a contingent of people who are intent on moving on a different direction than the leadership base, there are times when firm boundaries need to be drawn. At times, the flock needs to be protected from unhealthy elements.

Sometimes the community needs to stick together

As I watched the "Duck Family", I was mindful that they moved and lived together. Everything they did was a group venture. The "esprit de corps" was quite admirable. The flock ate together, played together and learned together.

As I watched them, I reflected upon how important Christian community is. We need to actively foster our common identity in congregations. This is especially important when people gather at different worship times. The identity of the whole Body is crucial to our work and mission to the world around us.

Sometimes the group needs a rest

Early in the morning, the day before

I left the cottage, I glanced at the swim dock, while taking the dog for a walk and saw the most amazing sight. The Duck Family had all hopped together onto the swim dock. It looked like the wee babies were all resting, for they were quite still. (Never before had I asked myself how and where ducks sleep.) There were no people in the water at that time of day. There were no dogs or people in the cove that the ducks liked to inhabit. It was a safe time and place to rest.

As I was at the end of my refreshing vacation time, I thought how important the rhythm of the year is to Christian Communities. From Advent through Pentecost, we are busy marking the events in the life of Christ. From September to June, we're busy with meetings and study groups, bazaars and fundraisers. But there comes a time when we need to take time to rest. We need to step aside from the busy-ness of daily life and refresh our energy. Not only is it the way of the wise Duck Family, but as we learn from Genesis, from the very beginning, it has been the way of God.

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Canon Marni Nancekivell is Secretary of Synod. She also is the Director of Safe Church and Volunteer Management and Screening. She can be reached at the Synod Office.

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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Exciting new musical direction for John Laing

CAROL GOODROW
PAST PRESIDENT

In the spring of 2011, following 29 years of choral music excellence, John Laing resigned as Artistic Director of the John Laing Singers (JLS). He made this difficult decision to leave the choir that he created in order to devote his time to composing, musical collaboration and performing. In a recent interview with Hamilton Spectator music critic, Leonard Turnivicious, Laing reflected as follows: "Emotionally it was tough...but knowing that there are other things I want to accomplish in music with only a finite amount of time, my logic was that if I was really going to fulfill my music potentialities, I would have to make my move from the JLS now."

John Laing is known in Canada for his outstanding work in choral music. He has devoted over 32 years of his

time and talent to classical music in the Hamilton area. His many achievements and contributions were aptly described and extolled at a tribute concert held in Burlington on May 1, 2011. These include: 72 series concerts in the Hamilton area; 50 additional guest concert performances in twenty six locations across Ontario, Quebec and the U.S.A.; 6 excellent recordings; and two international tours where the JLS represented Canada in both France and Switzerland. Laing's musical compositions include the following: 5 works for Canadian choirs, 1 operetta, 3 choral anthems and 13 songs written for, performed by and recorded with Canadian soprano, Janet Obermeyer. As well, he has written many lovely choral arrangements of carols, Canadian folk songs, anthems and hymn descants.

Laing's legacy also includes using his music for civic good. He

has organized concerts in hospitals, seniors' facilities and at various locations in support of local charities. He has led the JLS at City Hall events for visiting dignitaries and ceremonies for new citizens. He has founded successful arts series, and fostered numerous collaborations with a total of 45 professional guest musicians, 20 guest conductors, and 10 orchestras.

His work has been recognized with a variety of honours including: the "Above and Beyond" award from the Oakville Arts Council; the "Order of Niagara" by the Anglican Church of Canada; Musician of the Year in 2008 by the Hamilton Arts Council; and Freeman of the City of London, UK. Recently, the Royal Canadian College of Organists commissioned him to write a new anthem which was premiered on July 19, 2011 at Appleby College. During the celebra-

tory service in the John Bell Chapel, Laing conducted his Singers one final time, and the congregation, consisting of RCCO members and friends of the JLS, rewarded him with a special tribute and ovation.

There is no doubt that John Laing will be missed at the podium. However, those who have sung his music or enjoyed his concerts understand that his musical contributions will delight musicians and audiences for years to come. As he moves forward, pursuing his passion for composition and collaboration, Laing can rest assured that he has the love and support of The John Laing Singers and many appreciative audience members. Concert goers will be pleased to know that The John Laing Singers will continue, with Laing's blessing and support, under the capable leadership of Dr. Roger Bergs beginning in September 2011.

Bishop's Diploma Course

This program provides an opportunity for lay people to grow in their commitment to Christ and Christ's Church through a deepening of faith. This fall will feature an eight-week course on Old Testament. Registration is held on first evening; dates indicated below. Attend the parish centre of your choice. Registration fee: \$35 (includes sessions plus text)

Area	Parish Centre	Start Date
Burlington	St. Luke	September 12 - 7:30 pm
Flamborough	Christ Church	September 28 - 7:00 pm
Jordan	St. John	September 19 - 3:00 pm or 7:00 pm
St. Catharines	St. Columba	September 21 - 7:00 pm

For further information contact Jane Wyse at 905-527-1316 x420

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From generation to generation

» CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Most of us taught our children, now adults, to attend church regularly; they were active as servers and choristers and had friends in the parish family and wonderful times at Canterbury Hills. Now they only come when they feel they have to. They say they can worship God without going to church, that their spouses were brought up in a different church or in no church, that there's no compelling social need to attend, that their children have sports practices Sunday morning or that the church's message bores both them and their children. They're doing their best.

There are other scenarios. One young adult marries another person with a strong church background and they live near a church with a vibrant congregation. Its impassioned priest cares for their souls and delivers sermons of progressive ideas that speak to their minds. They love the music, both modern and traditional. When the children of that couple are baptized into that community, angels must rejoice. Grandparents certainly do.

Meanwhile, the majority of Angli-

cans are tired of struggling to make church happen for their children and grandchildren, tired of criticisms, tired of the squabbling in parish council meetings and the frustration that festers in people who do not see a solution to their church's dwindling numbers.

We also have, in every parish, believers whose goodness inspires the rest of us to be better Christians, saints who cure and teach and feed, who are determined to promote justice. They are Jesus who lives beyond time and death.

And yet our numbers keep shrinking. We have the gospel of Jesus but here's the crux of the matter—we have never really grasped or wholeheartedly applied it. We seem afraid to "do" Christianity. We're positively squeamish about Pentecost concepts. We call ourselves miserable sinners so often that we only half-heartedly appreciate the great news of Jesus' message.

We can take the necessary steps to encourage our congregations to live up to our calling. What's involved? Let Christ be born in us anew. This is simple, but not easy.

Turn from hoarding to sharing, from exclusiveness to inclusiveness, from bullying and abuse to justice and equality for all. We've heard many sermons on these topics. We know we should put these words into practice, but it's easier not to change. Jesus said, "I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." These are the words we must embody, but church-goers are not especially known for their love. In fact, our friends and relatives who have quit the church say that they are put off by the nastiness they have witnessed in congregations.

We have intellectual work to do as well. Collectively, we still have not adjusted to the damage done to our world-view by 19th century scientists. We've been taught to get over the theistic God in the sky but we find the alternative, the "ground of being," an unsatisfactory name for the divine. If it's any consolation, most of humanity, not just the people of Western faiths,

has not caught up to these scientific discoveries. Here, for sure, we are in need of a new story—a narrative that explains a parable.

Nor have we accepted the concept that we are destroying our own habitat, God's creation, because it cannot sustain our population growth and our massive carelessness. The concept of sustainability is almost too easy. But we don't totally get it, don't know what we should be doing once we've mastered composting.

Yet Christ's story calls us to a belief that was radically new in his day and still is new in ours. After 2000 years, the church demonstrates two responses: those who hear his message of love and justice and devote their lives to applying it, and those who use the church as a place of refuge. The last thing these churchgoers want is to hear new music, new liturgies or new theology when they come to church. Church is where they have a sense of control. Christ's voice is too often ignored.

We're in a time of great change, paralyzed by the traumas of 20th and early 21st century violence and by the sights and forecasts of environ-

mental disasters, societal breakdowns and mass famines on the nightly "news." This is the context that we as Christians must find the courage to address instead of worshipping the past. What is yet untold is our 21st century story of Jesus: the glue that can hold the human race together and make sense to the individual. The good news for our time—as we tell it here and now in what we believe, think, say and do—must be spoken by us as witnesses. We as a church need to change to make ourselves heard by younger generations. That is what our world is waiting for.

Do we have what our children, our grandchildren, our church, can grasp and hold on to? Is it a positive theology? Do we choose life? We are called, and the Lord provides. We have been given a thought-provoking and workable new theology to explore and live by. We have been shown what is good and required to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with our God. When we put our trust in God, our experience is of faith, hope, peace and love. Is this not the Gospel of Christ?

We make a *living* by what we get ...
but we make a *life* by what we give

— WINSTON CHURCHILL

Have you ever wondered how easy it can be to make a difference? Or how you may support your community? Maybe you want to support those around you who are the most vulnerable, or you may want to simply be remembered. Everyone wants to *do* or *give* more, but just don't know how easy it is to achieve.

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