



**Back to Church Sunday is September 29, 2013.**

Invite a friend or neighbour. Jesus said, "Come and see."  
The local church is there to welcome you. See Connie Phillipson's article page 5.



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A section of the Anglican Journal

# NIAGARA ANGLICAN

A Gathering Place and a Sounding Board for the People of the Diocese of Niagara

SEPTEMBER 2013

Youth Synod in Action delegates and volunteers gather in Bishopsgate outside Christ's Church Cathedral Hamilton.

## Youth Synod in Action

Energizing youth for social justice and action



Photo: Bill Mous



Environmental Justice group members of Youth Synod in Action fix bikes at the bike co-op, a social enterprise that focuses on building relationships and community by teaching people to fix their own bikes, loaning tools, providing low cost refurbished bikes and teaching job skills.

Photo: Beatrice Ekwa Ekoko

### Youth Synod in Action on Twitter – #ysia2013

**Editor's note:** We asked Jane Wyse to compile tweets from this year's Youth Synod in Action. Billions of tweets circle our globe everyday, and a few of the tweets from the Youth Synod in Action delegates give us a glimpse into communicating in the new age.

-  **Carrie Charters** @cocharters  
Jesus was out meeting people where they were...so we will too! #ysia2013
-  **Jennifer Harper** @harper  
"There are 43 million forcefully displaced people in our world today. Canada welcomes approx. 45,000 each year." #ysia2013
-  **Alicia the intern** @AliciaOfNiagara  
"There's enough children using food banks in #hamont to fill 370 classrooms." -@hamiltonpoverty #ysia2013
-  **Nathalie Reid** @nathaylee  
17% of Canadian inmates are indigenous, only 3% of the total population is indigenous #thisiswrong #justice #canada #ysia2013
-  **bre** @brebeingbre  
this shouldn't be a radical thought. It should be a common belief that all should have enough #ysia2013
-  **James KH Beattie** @jameskhbeattie  
@nathaylee history is for remembering, not repeating. We are action-oriented LOVING people, and we create the new culture. #ysia2013
-  **Christyn Perkons** @ChristynPer  
#ysia2013 tired but passionate youth scattered around Cathedral writing plans for justice engagement in their own communities. Allelulia!



Read the special report on Youth Synod in Action from Christyn Perkons – Page 12

# Church light, I think not

NANCY ROWE

Messy Churches are springing up across the Christian landscape as part of the diversity of worship.

With its crafts, deceptive appearance of disorderliness and rambunctiousness, Messy Church might lead one to think that it is not “real” church, or maybe “church light”. It might be perceived as great for the beginner Christian, but with little to offer the more sophisticated Christian. In reality, there are opportunities for exploring faith that are uniquely provided at Messy Church.

There is an inherent invitation to talk freely about life, faith, one’s spiritual journey and what it means to be Christian in the secular world. The exploring begins at the craft tables, where the companionship of creating and helping each other builds community. By simultaneously creating and discussing it is easier to explore ideas, without all eyes fixed on you. A table leader helps with the craft and encourages conversation. The

craft itself can tease out thoughts about one’s relationship with God and others - that can open new ways of being.

One Easter, the craft was the “tears of Christ”. Each person received two tears. On one they wrote the name of someone they had hurt or an act that they regretted, and how they could mend this brokenness. On the other tear they wrote, “I am forgiven”. A ribbon tied the two tears together to be hung on the cross during the celebration time. A father came with his family. His wife and children continued on; he stayed, deep in thought. Others came and went. I quietly said to him that this was between him and God and God knew what was in his heart. At the celebration he came forward with tears in his eyes and hung his “tears” on the cross. “Church light”, I think not.

At the celebration we explore our Christian story. It is our tradition to do the Christmas pageant at our December Messy Church. Everyone is invited to take part. Costumes and props are provided.

Speaking parts are simple and a narrator tells the story. The Holy Family is played by the family with the newest baby. Every year, there is some aspect of the nativity story that is inadvertently underscored. One year it was a dad who made Joseph very real. As the story progressed he must have been reflecting on both his experience in becoming a father and Joseph as a husband desperately seeking shelter for his wife in labour. When the innkeeper denied them a room, the anguish in his voice as he replied – “but you don’t understand, my wife is in labour” - stilled the room. “Church light”, I think not.

During the celebration, we share conversations from the craft tables. At one Messy Church the theme was “the Good Shepherd.” During the talk, a child asked why God thought she was a sheep. The attention of all was focused on the answer. The question was posed by a child, but it was not a childish question. There is a freedom to ask, seek and explore.

Messy Church offers a chance to participate in prayer in



innovative ways where people can experience the imminence of God.

On one occasion, each person was encouraged to write on a piece of paper something they identified within themselves that kept them from being the person God wanted them to be—and what they wanted to be. The papers were folded into paper airplanes and then thrown. Every individual was instructed to pick up a plane (not their own). When the leader said, “God help us”, everyone shouted out what was written on their plane, followed by Amen. Each had enthusiastically prayed for an unknown other. “Church light”, I think not.

Much of Jesus’ ministry was at a table and Messy Church continues that tradition of Christians sharing a meal together. Conversations continue, new friendships happen, play dates are set and potential

golf games discussed. The Christian fam-

ily, having gathered to celebrate God, continues that community out into the world.

Developing disciples is a huge part of Messy Church. People who felt they could never witness to their faith can begin to understand they have much to offer; that their faith journey can inform the faith journey of others. Also the spiritual growth of the team is as powerful as that of the participants.

Messy Church is a living, breathing, dynamic expression of God working in the hearts and minds of God’s people, engaging every sense and every part of their being.

“Church light”, I think not.

*In April 2007, the Reverend Nancy Rowe started the first Messy Church in Canada at St. George’s Georgetown. For more information today, contact Canada Team Leader Sue Kalbfleisch at 905-648-0302 or messy@freshexpressions.ca*

## ▼ Children and parents working at the Messy Church crafts table.

Photo: Andy Kalbfleisch



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## Christmas – a time to share

Christmas is a time of giving and sharing. The Niagara Anglican would like you to give your time and share your Christmas stories, poems, memories, experiences, etc. with each other. In 300 words or less, recall a special Christmas worship, relate a humorous Christmas happening, re-tell a Christmas poem or story or reflect on what Christmas means for you. You can even draw us a Christmas scene.

**We need to hear from you by October 25 to make our December issue extra special for Christmas.**

Send your submission to editor@niagaraanglican.ca or Editor, Niagara Anglican, 710 Ashley Ave, Burlington, ON L7R 2Z3 or talk to the Editor at 905-635-9463.



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The Diocese of Niagara lies at the western end of Lake Ontario, encompassing the Niagara Peninsula, Hamilton, Halton Region, Guelph and portions of Wellington and Dufferin Counties to include Shelbourne and Mount Forest in the north and west.



HOLLISitorial

Making a decision? Try S.O.D.A.

In the 13th century, theologian Thomas Aquinas penned his *Summa Theologiae*, including five arguments to prove the existence of God.

Astronaut Chris Hadfield, during his recent sojourn into space, fascinated millions of earthlings as he explained the mysteries of space... from standing up to sleep, to shaving as well as commanding a space ship.

In July 2013, while preparing for my next preaching gig, I stumbled upon S.O.D.A., a *modus operandi* to elucidate and explain human decision making.

S.O.D.A. relates to a process most humans employ, intentionally or unconsciously, when making decisions. The choices may be as simple as selecting our clothing for specific occasions, or as complex as choosing or changing careers, or engaging in behaviours which could obliterate or seriously hamper relationships with another person, institution, country or even oneself.

S.O.D.A. is a four step evolution.

S stands for any SITUATION facing us in any aspect of life situations.

O means the OPTIONS available to us. Options mirror our personality, history, faith, community standing, etc., which must always be considered and may enhance the third step in S.O.D.A.

D is the DECISION we make

after weighing all possible scenarios.

A refers to AFTERMATH, the results or consequences following our decision. Sometimes it may be wise to explore AFTERMATH before finalizing our DECISION.

Jesus may not have been aware of S.O.D.A., but Luke (14:28-31) recorded two little known parables which illustrate it beautifully.

*Random act of kindness also illustrated S.O.D.A.*

The first SITUATION is about a man wanting to build a tower (could be buying a car, house, anything). Jesus suggested that before proceeding he should sit and mull over his OPTIONS, including total costs and the availability of funds and other resources to complete the task. If his DECISION meant going forward without adequate capital the AFTERMATH would be an incomplete project and ridicule from neighbours.

The second parable has many parallels in today's world. A king (military commander, president, whatever) contemplates the SITUATION of going to war. He examines his OPTIONS, mainly

sending his 10,000 troops against an army twice that size. He makes the DECISION not to risk defeat in the ensuing battle. The AFTERMATH is to send emissaries to meet the other king and work out peace terms while a window of opportunity still exists. I wonder if nations today could follow the counsel of this insightful parable.

S.O.D.A. appears easy to understand, uncomplicated in application and seemingly fool proof, yet the decisions and actions of individuals and corporate bodies sometimes would indicate no such conscientious pattern of decision making. No doubt, the desire to dominate, religious beliefs, philosophical leanings, political affiliations, historical behaviours and other factors are powerful persuaders which colour and influence our decision making. However, others who follow S.O.D.A. often benefit their own and the lives of people around them.

Two examples caught my attention this summer...

Hunter Mahan, a professional golfer, was leading after one day competing in the Canadian Open golf tournament, and seemed destined to win and claim the million dollar prize. Then he received news that his wife Kandi had gone into premature labour. That was his SITUATION. He probably weighed his OPTIONS, essentially either stay in the Canadian



Open or return home to be with his spouse. His DECISION was the latter and the AFTERMATH was losing the prize money but being present when his first child was born.

A recent random act of kindness also illustrated S.O.D.A. in action. The Toronto Star (July 31, 2013) writer Melinda Maldonado described the SITUATION - a "very pregnant couple marched into Tim Hortons in the basement of Toronto's Mount Sinai Hospital on a mission." Apparently they had considered their OPTIONS and made their DECISION to "treat 500 strangers with coffee." The AFTERMATH meant 500 people received a free cup of coffee the following morning. Their random act of kindness may spur the recipients to do likewise for other strangers. The snowball effect could be amazing.

Subsequently I have been examining decisions and actions made in my own life in the light of S.O.D.A., with the expectation that from today onward it may help me to make the world a better place in which to be.

You may want to do the same and may want to share your experiences and stories with the Niagara Anglican community.

*The Reverend Hollis Hiscock can be reached at editor@niagaraanglican.ca*

To the Editor

This space welcomes your comments.

Send your letters (300 words or less) to the Editor at the address elsewhere on this page.

Editors to celebrate 25 years in Niagara

2014 marks the 25th anniversary of the Anglican Editors Association (AEA). The Diocese

of Niagara has invited the group to come to Niagara to celebrate the occasion.

Formed in 1989, the AEA is a network of diocesan publications, the *Anglican Journal* and other communication media and committees in the Anglican Church of Canada.

It also provides opportunities for fellowship, professional development and exchange of ideas, and promotes common concerns and interests of AEA members.

The group meets annually and their conference is a combination of in-service workshops, business meetings, worship and networking.

This year's conference, held in Montreal, was attended by 29 editors, staff and others.



Hollis Hiscock (right), Editor of the *Niagara Anglican*, receives pointers about the annual Anglican Editors Association conference from 2013 host Harvey Shepherd of the *Montreal Anglican*.

Photo: Paul Sherwood

## Controversial Bishop could liven up Bishop's Company dinner

Less than one month after his official retirement date, one of the Anglican Church's most controversial figures will speak at the annual dinner sponsored by the Bishop's Company of Niagara Diocese.

Bishop Michael Ingham of New Westminster Diocese in British Columbia said in his announcement that his diocese had been in the "forefront of positive change in the Church for decades. From the ordination of women, to support for indigenous peoples, to the dignity of gay and lesbian Christians, to inter-faith dialogue – it has been a privilege to serve a diocese living and growing at some of the leading edges in the Anglican Church of Canada."

The Bishop's Company Annual Dinner will be held on Monday, September 30, 2013 at Burlington Convention Centre, 1120 Burloak Drive, Burlington, beginning with a 6:15 p.m.

reception, followed by dinner and Bishop Ingham's address.

Bishop Michael Bird of Niagara calls the Bishop's Company "one of the great blessings I have experienced in the unwavering support and encouragement that I have received from the members".

He said that the Bishop's Company Endowment Fund was established in 2004 and many individuals are helped by people's generous contributions.



Bishop Michael Ingham

For more information about the Bishop's Company Annual Dinner or to become a member of the Bishop's Company, contact Nancy Clause at [nancy.clause@niagaraanglican.ca](mailto:nancy.clause@niagaraanglican.ca) or call 905-527-1316 ext. 380.

### Prayer and Hymn Books wanted

The Dunn Anglican parish and St. Paul's Dunnville are looking for large print copies of the Book of Common Prayer and the Book of Common Praise (1938) in fair condition.

If any parishes have some they no longer use, we would be glad to come and collect them and put them to good use.

Contact Rector Paul Sherwood at 905-774-6005.

## Live choral excellence!

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## Lecture series

The T. W. Smyth Annual Lecture and Retreat will take place on October 19 and 20 at St. John's Church Elora.

**George Herbert – A Parson for All People** is the topic for this year's lecture.

The lecturer, the Reverend Susan Bell, Chaplain of Havergal College Toronto, draws on her doctoral thesis to discuss George Herbert's *A Country Parson* as it reflects the concerns of his day and illuminates the issues of our day.

Saturday, October 19, 9:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m. (lunch included) -Seminar and Retreat. The day's topic is "A Poet for All Seasons: Herbert's poetry according to the church year and the journey of faith".

Sunday, October 20 at 4:00 p.m. a public lecture: "George Herbert, a Parson for All People", is presented in St John's Church, 36 Henderson Street, Elora. To register: 519-846-5911 or [stjohns@sentex.net](mailto:stjohns@sentex.net)

## Hints to writers:

Short sentences • Short paragraphs  
- More readers

## 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 Liturgy**. 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 9 - 7:30pm
Jordan	St. John	September 17 - 2:30pm
St. Catharines	St. Columba	September 11 - 7:00pm

For further information contact Jane Wyse at 905-527-1316 ext. 420 or [jane.wyse@niagara.anglican.ca](mailto:jane.wyse@niagara.anglican.ca)

## Choral Evensong and Recital

Guest Choir:

*Church of the Holy Saviour, Waterloo*

**Sunday, October 20, 2013 - 4:00 p.m.**

Organ Recital after Evensong by Ian Sadler  
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# “Lead by imagination, not by memory” ... Michael Harvey

CONNIE PHILLIPSON

Listening to passionate speakers is one of the joys of my life. When people tell personal stories that radiate their love for Jesus, well, I know that I have entered a sacred place and time and I relish every minute of it.

On June 16, I heard Michael Harvey, author, motivational speaker and founder of the Back to Church Sunday movement talk about his passion at St. Paul's Anglican Church in downtown Toronto. Hundreds heard his provocative message that rainy Sunday morning, and I was thrilled to be in their midst.

The Gospel passage for the day was John 1:35-51. Harvey asked us what was the first thing Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, did when he made the decision to follow Jesus? Did he go to seminary? Did he start a group to build a church? “No, that would have been naughty,” he mused. What was the first thing Andrew did? He brought his brother Simon to meet Jesus.

With one simple question,

Harvey had set the stage to challenge us about what it means to follow Jesus. Another question followed: “Is this congregation welcoming or inviting? You have to invite before you can welcome. How welcoming can we be, if we're not inviting?”

Becoming an invitational church...it sounds so simple, doesn't it? I listened as he spoke about the ease with which children invite their friends everywhere, and yet, as we become “big children” inviting friends to church becomes more a task than a gift. Why? What are we afraid of? Are we afraid that people

thought about the number of people I had invited to church over the years, and felt a little better when Harvey said that the “yes” or “no” to your invitation is God's work, not yours.

Apparently, 85 to 90 percent of congregations have no intention of inviting anyone to church. How can this be? How can we proclaim that God is great and sing that my soul longs after you on Sunday, and then not share our love of God on Monday? There is a real difference between hungering and thirsting for the Lord (on a Sunday) and the kind of hungering and thirsting for



to church? “There is success in invitation” says Harvey, “even if the person says no.” Just by inviting we are sharing our hunger and thirst for God in a demonstrable way by reaching out to others in God's name.

Of course, it is important to remember and to honour our past, but Harvey is right. Leadership is all about leading by imagination, with vision and with a sense of joyful expectation about what God is prompting us to do and to be as Christians. What is Harvey's vision? One million people inviting one million people to come to church on a Sunday. God is responsible for their “yes” or “no.” All we have to do is to invite them with a loving heart. What could be easier than that?

*(The article was first printed in the Christian Perspectives Column of the Orangeville Citizen.)*

*The Reverend Connie Phillipson is Assistant Curate at St Mark's Church Orangeville. EMAIL: connie.phillipson@zing-net.ca*

Apparently, 85 to 90 percent of congregations have no intention of inviting anyone to church.

will say no?

This leads to his third question, “What is your no-quotient? How many “no's” are you prepared to take for Christ?” I

the Lord that moves us to want others to learn about and come to know the love and mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Michael Harvey urges us to

dream big, to have a vision of hundreds more people finding relationships with God in this sacred place. Just imagine that, I wonder. Ushers already guide people to a few empty seats, so I begin to visualize standing room only in the House of the Lord! “Imagination is an attribute of God,” he exclaims confidently, so “lead by imagination, not by memory.” Do not lead from the past, but “from your vision of becoming an invitational church as prompted by God.” What an inspiring image. God is prompting all congregations to become invitational churches. Will we respond by daring to dream big? By daring to imagine overflowing churches? By inviting friends and neighbours to come

## Anglican Communion Alliance

Meets 2nd Thursday of every month

King's Christian College  
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*In Essentials, Unity; In Non-Essentials, Liberty; In All Things, Charity*

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## Deadlines and Submissions for Niagara Anglican

**Deadlines ...**  
November 2013 – September 25  
December 2013 – October 25  
January 2014 – November 25

**Submissions ...**  
**Articles** – 750 words or less  
**Letters to the Editor** – 300 words or less  
**Reviews (books, films, music, theatre)** – 400 words or less  
**Original cartoons or art** – contact the Editor  
**Photos** – very large, high resolution, action pictures (people doing something). Include name of photographer.

**Questions or information:** contact the Editor at editor@niagaraanglican.ca or 905-635-9463



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## Keep the conversation going

For decades, the *Niagara Anglican* and the *Anglican Journal* have been a vital communications link between parishes, dioceses and the national Church.

Together, we have shared stories, ideas and opinions from a faith perspective in a way that has helped us put that faith into action.

Whether encouraging a response to human need, educating about the care of creation, or helping readers discover new ways to reach out and grow the Church, the *Niagara Anglican* and the *Anglican Journal* spark compassionate conversations in an increasingly secularized world.

Please give generously to the Anglican Journal Appeal this year. With your help we can keep the conversation going!

Please fill out and return the enclosed postage-paid donor reply card or call 416-924-9199, ext 259. Alternatively, you can email mross@national.anglican.ca or go to www.canadahelps.org to make your gift today.



# General Synod • Joint Assembly 2013

**EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION:** The Anglican Church of Canada and the Evangelical Lutheran Church met in Joint Assembly from July 3 – 7, 2013 in Ottawa, Ontario. This was the first such gathering involving these two denominations. Some sessions were held jointly and some separately to provide an opportunity for each church to discuss and decide about issues relevant to their particular church. The Anglicans called their session General Synod.

Representing Niagara Diocese were Bishop Michael, five lay people, five clergy and one youth.

## What impressed you most about General Synod?

**Susan Little:** We met at the Ottawa Convention Centre which overlooks the Rideau Canal. We could see in the distance the tower on Parliament Hill. High above it flies our Canadian flag, reminding us that the Anglican and Evangelical Lutheran churches had gathered Christians from coast to coast to witness the power of our God — “Together for the Love of the World”.

**Greg Laughton:** What impressed me most was the humour and joy of the shared fellowship with the Lutheran delegates and staff...they're just like us!!! As well, the joyfulness surrounding the establishment of the new Diocese in the North.

**Canon Jean Archbell:** Keynote speaker Christopher Duaisingh challenged us to de-centre ourselves and our churches so that we can truly serve the world. He said the experiences of marginalization, including Canada's First Nations, are a consequence of a culture where greed is borne out of self-centredness. He said Jesus' baptism was identification with the hopes and aspirations of the poor and oppressed.

He said church means preaching the word and celebrating the sacraments. We usually interpret this as looking after the buildings and following the canons, but that is not the church. Mission and witness are what make us the church - we must be a counter alternative culture.

At baptism we took a plunge of solidarity with all humanity, assuming a lifestyle between the font (baptized into new life) and the cross (another kind of new life). Jesus was able to see penetratingly - to live for the love of the world and to reach out to make a difference by being.

Every spirit filled person has three eyes. The third is the eye of the heart - to heal and have compassion. The eye of Jesus aches for us to move on mission.

**Wayne Barnes:** I was very impressed by the friendly and comfortable nature of our first joint assembly with the Evangelical Lutheran Church. Meeting jointly was not at all strange or stilted. The teamwork and moderating skills of Bishop Susan and Archbishop Fred was most impressive and enjoyable.

**Dean Peter Wall:** From my vantage point as one of the assembly planners and as Chair of the General Synod Planning Committee, it was a very successful and meaningful gathering of two churches together in mission, for the love of God's world.

I was most impressed by the way in which 750 people came together to meet and get to know each other, to learn and pray together, to listen and reflect, and to resolve to make some important declarations about our common life.

**Carolyn Pugh:** The days were long, but the week was short.

This was my first General Synod as a delegate, although I briefly attended the 2010 one in Halifax, so I had some idea of what to expect.

**Canon Joe Asselin:** The highlight of the week for me was our closing worship when nearly 1,000 people gathered to worship our Lord in a unique and Spirit filled Eucharist.

Some other holy moments included the gathering of native elders who came to the Anglican Church of Canada's General Synod to officially inaugurate a new diocese in Northern Ontario that will be primarily led by indigenous people, including a Bishop. The joy in the Lord which these humble people brought to the gathering was palpable and I absolutely took off my shoes as this was underway.

**Sharon White:** The sincere care evidenced by Anglicans and Lutherans at the General Synod - Joint Assembly for the well-being of our respective churches, and of the Church in a larger sense, was moving.

**The Reverend Katherine Morgan:** Joint Assembly was an incredible adventure! As a first time delegate, I didn't quite know what to expect. It was long days, fabulous conversations, meeting Anglicans and Lutherans from all parts of the country and the chance to be a part of making history. Fifty percent of our time was spent in Joint Assembly with the Lutheran delegates.

We began and ended our days together in prayer, and heard thoughtful presentations from our international guests and observers.

The *Niagara Anglican*, before Synod, posed four questions to the Niagara delegates to get their thoughts and reactions. Some responded directly to the questions and others provided more general comments. We have edited their responses and placed them with the appropriate questions, and trust that we have retained the essence of their responses.

Individuals wishing details of the General Synod - Joint Assembly can read more in the summer issue of the *Anglican Journal* or the daily reports at [www.anglicanjournal.com/archives](http://www.anglicanjournal.com/archives) or you can speak to one of Niagara's delegates.



▲ **Our representatives: Niagara Delegation to General Synod 2013**

(l to r) Susan Little, Pat Davis, Jean Archbell, Gregory Laughton, Carolyn Pugh, Wayne Barnes, Joe Asselin, Sharon White, Katherine Morgan, David Pickett, Bishop Michael. Absent: Peter Wall

Photo: Submitted by Joe Asselin

## What was a disappointment or low point for you?

**Greg Laughton:** The low point, for me, was the debate on the Marriage Canon, loaded as it was with strong feelings on the same-gender issue. In the hall outside Plenary, there was still a good deal of grumbling going on after the vote.

**Sharon White:** The debate and procedure in connection with a motion to refer Canon XXI, On Marriage in the Church, to COGS (Council of General Synod) for study serves as a warning that this issue continues as a threat to the unity of our Church.

**Wayne Barnes:** A profound disappointment for me was the negative and small minded remarks of Bishop David Parsons. The Bishop was speaking in reaction to a resolution that was passed to evaluate changing the marriage canon to permit same gender marriages. His comments portend future discord in our church and they were ill timed at the wrap up joint session when spirits were running high.

**Canon Joseph Asselin:** Other holy moments included something that came out of a difficult even painful part of our meetings at the ACC's General Synod. During the difficult conversation around

the possibility of a change to the marriage canon, Archbishop Hiltz made a serious error in process and prematurely cut off debate. After a break where many people, including myself, approached the leaders of our assembly to express their disappointment with the process, Archbishop Hiltz, in a very emotional moment for him as chair, apologized for his mistake and asked the delegates for forgiveness. While it was a difficult moment, people's feelings were hurt and some unfortunately left the meetings feeling as if their views were not being heard, it seemed to me that most of the gathering forgave Archbishop Hiltz for what was an honest and very human mistake.

**Susan Little:** My greatest disappointment was the lack of significant time to talk and to mingle just with Anglicans. With the emphasis on both Anglicans and Lutherans gathering together, people felt compelled to dialogue with the others who were different in the hope of finding more ways to enrich our ministries. There was just not enough time to focus on both groups of brothers and sister in Christ, a rich blessing which we were privileged to share for five days.

# • Together for the love of the world •

## What did you bring back from General Synod that will help you in your parish or the diocese?

**The Reverend Katherine Morgan:** Three highlights shine the brightest in my heart.

1. Our Joint Declaration on Homelessness and Responsible Resource Extraction. Two national churches uniting their voices in calling for action and greater accountability.

2. The Joint Assembly itself was a Spirit-filled experience—a sign for our larger Christian communities about what was possible when we came together for the love of the world.

3. It still brings tears to my eyes remembering the joy in General Synod as we gave our concurrence to the creation of an indigenous diocese in Northern Ontario. (Keewatin Diocese has been divided into two regions; one region joins Rupert's Land Diocese and the other becomes a new diocese).

**Greg Laughton:** A better understanding of the broader Church, and some of the very best meeting-chairing skills I have ever seen. As well, given this example, I am more likely to accept Robert's Rules as a pathway to discussions at St. David's.

I know, you didn't ask—but closer ties with fellow-delegates; some I have not met before, some I have not felt I knew well before.

**Canon Jean Archbell:** What I took away from this is that Lutherans and Anglicans working together in every corner of our nation can bring about the kingdom of God here on earth.

**Wayne Barnes:** Coming back from General Synod I believe my under-

standing of the people who were in our Diocesan delegation has greatly improved. This should prove helpful in my work on the diocesan Financial Advisory Committee.

**Sharon White:** Members of the Diocese of Niagara can be gratified by the progress being made in relations between aboriginal and non-aboriginal members of the Anglican Church of Canada.

**Dean Peter Wall:** I bring back a new sense of mission as articulated so brilliantly by Dr. Christopher Duraisingh. I look forward to deepening that sense of being caught up in God's mission here in the Cathedral community and beyond.

**Susan Little:** The best part of attending Synod is hearing about new models of ministry from presentations to the Assembly and from conversing with others involved in ministry and parish life about their challenges and triumphs.

**Canon Joe Asselin:** It was a holy privilege getting to know many of the people at our various sessions. I met Lutherans and Anglicans of all ages and backgrounds and was amazed by the sacrificial love that people, especially those from isolated and impoverished communities, bring to their church and God's people.

Finally it was a sacred honour to attend this General Synod – Joint Assembly on behalf of our diocese and to spend some time in the company of my fellow delegates.



▲ Bishop Michael Bird chats with Archbishop Katharine Jefferts Schori, Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church in the United States.

Photo: Submitted by Jean Archbell

## What decisions will impact Niagara and how?

**Dean Peter Wall:** We in this Diocese will be affected by decisions made by General Synod to add a sixth covenant promise to the Baptismal rite in the *Book of Alternative Services*; we will continue to contemplate our response to the Anglican Covenant, in preparation for General Synod 2016 and we will contribute to the work which will be done on a resolution to change the definition of marriage in Canon XXI, also to be brought back to General Synod 2016.

**Susan Little:** The decisions which will affect Niagara most are not life altering nor tremendous. The significant ones are those which may occur once the measures for governance are created. The most direct impact will be the number of delegates we will send to General Synod, and the possible imbalances which may occur since there has been a significant increase in the number of bishops in the Canadian church because of our response to the voices of First Nations expressing their need to be heard. There are several possible scenarios which could affect our own diocesan voice being heard since we are one of the three largest dioceses in

Canada and such a reduction in numbers could hamper proceedings. However, only God knows what disappointments or pleasant surprises await us in the future! Surely the Spirit will help us thrive with whatever develops!

**Greg Laughton:** I hope we (Niagara) might move closer to ELCIC in the sharing of resources, as we have with Communion.

**Carolyn Pugh:** It was interesting to see the church on a national level and how our diocese is part of a greater whole.

I was excited to come together with the Lutherans, although I wish there was more time to socialize outside of sessions.

Despite the brevity, I felt a surprising amount of progress was made and we were able to discuss some important issues on a national level.

**Wayne Barnes:** Niagara is not particularly affected by anything that went on at Joint Assembly, save and except the possible disruption over same gender marriage controversy.



▲ Dean Peter Wall (far right) engages with others in discussion during the Joint Assembly

Photo: Submitted by Jean Archbell

## Elections ...

Two delegates from Niagara Diocese were elected to ongoing committees at the 2013 General Synod. They will serve for three years until the next Canadian Anglican Synod to be held in Toronto.

**Sharon White** becomes a member of the Pension Committee.

**Dean Peter Wall** was elected to COGS (Council of General Synod). He has been re-appointed as Co-Chair of the Joint Anglican Lutheran Commission, and will be the representative of the Anglican Church of Canada on the Executive Council of The Episcopal Church.



# Orthodox and Anglican Churches celebrate together

RUTH FAULKES

Holy Trinity Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church and the Church of the Ascension Hamilton celebrated a unique liturgy in Ascension's sanctuary.

It was an example of ecumenical hospitality, and centred on an ancient marriage rite when their deacon Ermias Dagne and Elleni Birru were married.

The High Altar was curtained off as the Holy of Holies and the Ark of the Covenant (replica) was carried around the nave with joy as part of the annual commemoration ceremony of the Holy Trinity. The Ethiopian children's choir and Ascension's choir also participated.

Bishop Michael Bird of Niagara Diocese attended and welcomed Archbishop Abba Mathias of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church in Canada. Terry Brown, Bishop-in-Charge of Ascension, and Komos Aba Gebreyesus, Vicar of Holy Trinity, joined other clergy in the chancel for the celebration.

The fellowship and loving kindness of brothers and sisters in Christ displayed during the worship continued afterwards when the Ascension congregation was invited to join in the delicious reception lunch in the

lovely decorated Corktown Hall.

Our relationship goes back to June 2010, when Holy Trinity Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church of Hamilton approached our Interim Rector Alex Hewitt asking for help in finding a church home.

Holy Trinity Church accepted Ascension's offer to conduct their Sunday morning worship in our Corktown Hall. I had the privilege of organizing and coordinating all the details.

Since then, their liaison Tewoderos (Ted) Assefa addressed our congregation with a history of their Ethiopian Church. As well, we connected when they helped us by moving stage equipment for the Ascension's "St. George and the Dragon" fundraising event, which some of their congregation attended. I found out that in one of their Ethiopian home cities there is a statue of St. George and the Dragon—our story is their story.

This past June, their liaison asked me, on behalf of their priest, if it would be possible to use our main sanctuary to hold their special worship service for the Festival of the Holy Spirit (Pentecost) and the marriage of their Deacon. With support from our Bishop-in-Charge and



Elleni Birru and Ermias Dagne listen to Archbishop Abba Mathias as they prepare to take their marriage vows.

Photo: Jack Faulkes

approval from the Ascension Parish Council, all arrangements were made.

The special celebration was held on Sunday, July 14, 2013.

Ruth Faulkes is responsible for room bookings, outreach and liaison at Ascension. EMAIL: [randjfaulkes@cogeco.ca](mailto:randjfaulkes@cogeco.ca)

## People

Bishop Michael has made the following lay and clergy appointments ...

### Lay appointments

**Bonnie Harris** as lay reader at St. James and St. Brendan's Port Colborne;

**Patricia Payne** as lay reader at St. Paul's Jarvis;

**Brooke Payne** received permission to administer the chalice at St. Paul's Jarvis.

### Honorary Assistants

The Reverend **Jack Pearce** at the Church of the Nativity Hamilton;  
The Very Reverend **Alex Hewitt** at the Church of the Ascension Hamilton;  
Canon **Mark McDermott** at Grace Church Milton.

### Clergy Appointments

Canon **Peter Davison** as Interim Pastor at St. James Dundas;  
The Reverend **Marc Germaine**

as Interim Priest-in-Charge (part-time) St. John's Rockwood; Rector **David Pickett** of St. John's Ancaster as Archdeacon of Mohawk Region;

The Reverend **Renée Desjardins** as Priest Associate at St. John's Ancaster;

Canon **Mark Tiller** moved to Toronto Diocese where he becomes Incumbent of St. James Caledon East;

The Reverend **Stephen Hallford** from Edmonton accepted the incumbency of Christ Church Flamborough;

The Reverend **Owen Ash** resigned from St. John's Rockwood to become Rector of St. James the Apostle Guelph;

The Reverend **Daniel Bennett** was issued bishop's permission as Assistant Priest (part-time) at St. Paul's Fort Erie and St. John's Ridgemount, under the supervision of the Interim Pastor.

### Congratulations

Happy 50th anniversary of ordination to the Reverend **Donald Coombe**;

Congratulations to the Reverend **Stephen and Betty Coombs** of St. Christopher's Burlington on their 60th wedding anniversary; Happy 50th anniversary of ordination to the Reverend **Duncan Lyon**, Honorary Assistant at St. John the Evangelist Niagara Falls.

### Condolences

*Our deepest sympathies to the following and others who are grieving the loss of loved ones. Pray for them as they cope with the new realities of life.*

Canon **Dorothy Johns** and family on the death of her daughter, **Kathy Lincoln**;  
The family of **Edith Land**, O.N. of Glen Williams parish;  
The Davies family on the death of **Dave Davies**, O.N. from St. Alban's Beamsville.

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# Scattered Seeds 3: Gratitude

C.T. (TERRY) GILLIN

Early in my cancer journey the first key insight that emerged came as something of a surprise: I was and am extremely grateful for all that I have been given, from “big” things to “little” ones.

Life is good, but it is easy to become so busy with daily work demands and family activities that we infrequently “pause to smell the roses” – one of my mother’s wise and regular admonitions to me. My circumstances place me in a kind of forced suspension of normal life, and into a quieter space where the roses are more easily noticed. I am surrounded by a loving wife, son, family members and friends who daily express their support and encouragement. I have a career as a teacher and academic administrator which has permitted me to engage in a wide range of learning, teaching and institutional participation. It is fun to be a life-long learner, to

encourage others to learn and to celebrate the contributions that education makes to individuals and society.

There is also joy in small things: the flash of juncos and cardinals at the feeder; the squirrels racing along the fence, up the pine tree and along the wide oak branch – and sometimes hiding from the red-tailed hawk; the gifts of a mini-garden planter of primula, polka dot, ferns and ivy, as well as other plants reminding me that spring has come; the sun pouring through the sliding door at the back of the house; the warmth from the fireplace and the freshness of the chilly air on walks.

As the diagnostic process and treatment proceeded, there were more reasons for gratitude. I am particularly grateful for the caring, expertise and sheer determination of the medical staff to develop the right diagnosis. Diagnosis determines treatment. When the data did not fit the anticipated paradigm, continu-

ing the diagnostic process was critically important to developing the correct diagnosis. The doctors, nurses, technicians, support staff and volunteers have been unfailingly supportive in their explanations, encouragement, assistance and care. This is also true for the volunteers and staff at Wellspring (Halton-Peel), a non-profit organization supporting the needs of cancer patients and their families.

Most striking to me has been the kindnesses and concerns of others. There have been pastoral visits, conversations with my spiritual director, phone calls, cards, emails, visits, books and other gifts, plants and flowers, an amazing cornucopia of food, and prayer shawls for my wife and myself. Of particular note, while we are active members of St. Cuthbert’s parish, my wife is also a member of the bell choir at Maple Grove United Church just up the street. Women from this choir made the prayer shawls,

which we now use regularly. The women call themselves “prayershawlers,” which is logical enough. But I think of them as shawl-prayer-ers. Knitting and sharing the shawls are prayers in themselves. Also, one evening Robin came home from choir practice with a trunk load of food – home made entrees, soups and sweets. And just the other night one of the choir members dropped off more prepared meals.

One of the dangers of being ill is that it is easy to become focused on oneself. Symptoms, side-effects, treatments, energy levels, reflections and prayers, communications with family and friends – everything can lead to a focus on what is happening to me. With all the good will in the world, some advice, “Just focus on feeling better.” Being grateful and expressing gratitude are vital antidotes to this tendency to center on oneself.

Kindness and generosity are expressions of our relationships

with others. It is humbling to be the focus of care and concern. In particular, I feel enormously supported by the prayers of others. The prayers from my own parish community and also those from different denominations and religious traditions are gifts beyond measure, pearls of great price. When you are ill it is easy to turn inward and to begin to feel isolated. But knowing that so many friends, associates and even strangers are remembering me in their prayers gives me connection, strength and encouragement. In return I add them all to my prayer list.

*Terry Gillin teaches at Ryerson University in Toronto and is a member of St. Cuthbert’s Oakville. EMAIL: tgillin@soc.ryerson.ca*

*When the series continues, Terry writes about “Scattered Seeds 4: Invisible Grace.”*

## Prayer shawl bring physical warmth and spiritual comfort

ANNE WARNER

A prayer shawl creators gathering was hosted by St. James Church Fergus on Wednesday, June 26th, in our beautiful Butterfly Hall and Garden.

This idea, started as a small seed, was planted at our monthly meeting this past February. It subsequently took root and grew into this special time together.

The original plan was to invite the Prayer Shawl Group from St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church to one of our meetings. But by the end of the meeting, we had decided to invite churches in our area for a gathering to share our stories, ideas and patterns in a social environment.

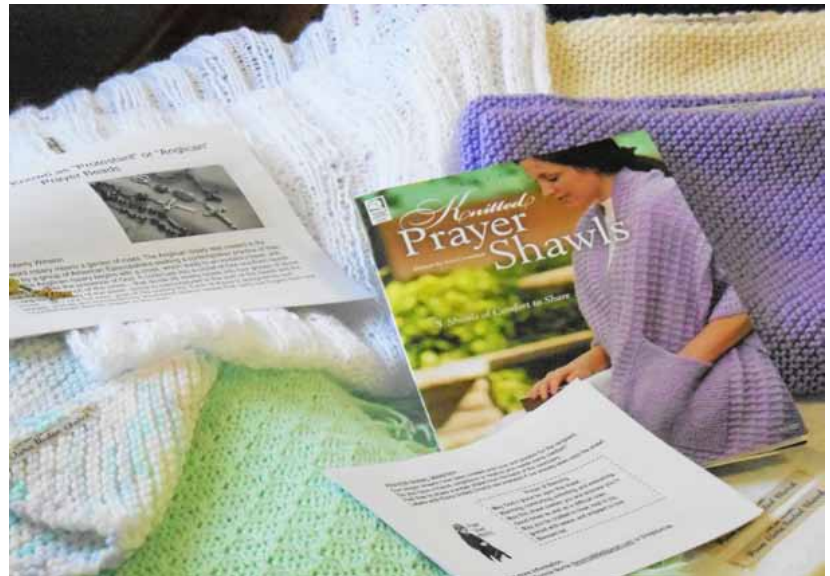
We identified three churches that had a prayer shawl ministry in Centre Wellington: St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church Fergus, St. John’s United Church Belwood and Melville United Church Fergus. In total 15 churches were contacted by a personal phone call and then email, if possible. Posters were created and mailed to each church, not only to invite existing groups but also to invite anyone interested in creating a ministry in their parish, “An opportunity to meet parishes

involved in this special ministry and/or learn how to start a group at your church”. By the week of the gathering, I had been contacted by two more churches, Elora United Church and Bethel Mennonite Church Elora.

The format for the afternoon was formulated. We started with a short service which included a gathering prayer, the reading of Psalm 139, and a reading from Romans 12:9-18, a short reflection by our Rector Pauline Head and a closing prayer. Most of the contents of the service were inspired from the resources of founders Janet Bristow and Victoria Galo, the creators of the Prayer Shawl Ministry ([www.shawlministry.com](http://www.shawlministry.com)), and also from two of their books, *The Prayer Shawl Companion*, and *The New Prayer Shawl Companion*.

Each group was invited to create a table display and prepare a short presentation. This part of the afternoon was very interesting; all of the groups had similar content, but each presented their own personal characteristics that made their group special to their own parish’s needs.

The Prayer Shawl Group at St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church is part of a larger ministry, Women on a Mission. Not only does this



▲ A table display of prayer shawls prepared by Elora United Church.

Photo: Mary Lou Mason

group make shawls, but they also knit and sew articles of clothing and toys for their mission work throughout the world.

The Community Healing Circle at St. John’s United Church Belwood meets to offer prayers for individuals within their parish and the community, intertwined with creating prayer shawls. Elora United Church is

just in the beginning stages of their group, but has also introduced prayer beads as part of their prayer shawl ministry.

Our group at St. James Church recently sent 40 “pocket prayer shawls” and two prayer shawls for the rector and his wife, when a member of our congregation travelled to their parish of Pilgrim’s Hope in Swaziland.

Melville United Church presented many interesting patterns of shawls and explained their unique way in recording the recipients of their work. Bethel Mennonite Church Elora has just formed a prayer shawl group in the last few months and was very pleased to learn more about this

See PRAYER SHAWL page 11

# Bishop Michael reports on regional meetings

This spring I had the privilege of holding three regional gatherings across the Diocese.

In past years they were held just prior to our Synod, mainly to present the diocesan budget and highlight certain aspects of our life and work.

This year it seemed important to speak and engage with people before drafting the budget, so town hall style meetings were held in Guelph, Hamilton and St. Catharines.

On each occasion I was overwhelmed by the response and discussion. I am delighted to report that close to 300 people participated. I have received many expressions of gratitude for the opportunity to engage together in this way. It was a joy to hear the passion and excitement for the work in which we are engaging, and about new initiatives and projects.

While many ideas and issues were articulated, there were common questions and insights.

Here is my summary of the common themes:



## Stewardship and Resources

At each meeting we heard a longing for a greater understanding about the resources with which we are blessed in our diocese, and how we can make more effective use of those resources when we work together.

## New Models for Ministry

As the Bishop, the meetings gave me a strong mandate to continue encouraging new models of ministry in the Diocese ... focussing us beyond our church communities and offering radical, authentic and inclusive hospitality.

## Spiritual Nurture

Several speakers articulated a hope of finding new ways to support and nurture the faith journeys and spirituality of those we are called to serve. Since many people are coming to us with no previous Christian background, there was a call for greater openness to those who think and believe differently, honouring the fact that we are all children of God.

More bible study, particularly with greater intentional focus on the ministry and message of Jesus, was also recommended.

## Financial Issues

Many people expressed concern over the financial struggles parishes are experiencing. Those comments centred upon four particular areas:

- 1. Buildings and Insurance** – It was noted that the money being expended on keeping our buildings open is impacting our ability to engage in God's mission to us as the church. Questions and concerns were raised regarding the alarming rate at which energy, maintenance and insurance costs are rising.
- 2. DM&M** – Once again people asked how the formula for each parish's Diocesan Maintenance and Mission assessment is applied. Others suggested using another kind of formula, applying a different set of deductions or investigating the possibility of each diocesan region being assessed differently.
- 3. Synod Office Expenses** –

Some people sought information about the process used to monitor and reduce our costs as a diocese, and clarification about particular aspects of our Diocesan and National work. It is clear that there is a

general lack of understanding about what happens at Synod Office, and even more importantly about what makes us who we are as Anglicans.

- 4. Compensation Costs** – Another major line item in parish budgets is the cost of ordained leadership, so people inquired how the minimum compensation levels were set ... some were concerned over the rate of annual increases.

## Statistics

Some felt we needed a better handle on statistical and demographic information, while others raised concerns over the time and energy required to gather this data.

## Communication

Another common theme was a desire to enhance our ability in communicating effectively both within our church and out to the wider society. There were calls for an improved website and a general plea to embrace and better use new technologies and social media. This could raise our profile and get our message out more successfully.

## Youth and Children's Ministry

Time and again the lack of children and young people in our community gatherings was noted. People were generally not speaking about a return to some kind of "glory days", but rather a real desire to explore the needs of youth and young families. This could mean offering or creating space to discover what is meaningful and relevant to them. I found this encouraging.

## Liturgy

Many times, in one form or another, people asked; "how can we provide liturgy that is life changing for those who look for a more traditional worship service and at the same time offer liturgical gatherings that are uplifting and powerful for those who are obviously looking for something very different?"

The importance of music was highlighted.

## What happens next?

I hope to talk further about these themes in our fall regional meetings and certainly in my charge to Synod in November.

Now, I want to address the issue of the DM&M and our understanding of what makes us who we are as members of the Anglican Church.

The senior leadership of the Diocese continues to hear and be concerned about the financial challenges we all face. In our budget discussions we need to do a better job of articulating how we monitor our costs on a regular basis ... not only by those who work at Synod Office, but also by the Financial Advisory Committee which meets monthly. Again this year our budget will show another decrease in the percentage used to calculate the DM&M ... our third reduction in six years. More discussions about this will take place as we move toward Synod, but keep in mind the many different and competing perspectives and passions included in the budget's line items. I want to thank our financial and budget committees who walk a very fine line in this regard.

I am concerned, both at the parish and diocesan levels, that what seems to be missing in many cases are some important theological and historical

fundamentals.

In his recent book, *Leadership and Oversight: new models for Episcopal ministry* (Mowbray 2011), Malcolm Grundy wrote: "Episcopally structured churches and their local congregations are organically joined as parts of one whole – what St. Paul called the Body of Christ. The body is held together and given meaning and reality primarily through the concept and practice of the ministry of the bishops. The binding cement which holds the two parts together is mutual consent and respect" (page 34).

Regional meetings and other gathering opportunities will help us build the mutual consent and respect that our life together requires.

I commend the article "On being the Church" by the Reverend Matthew Griffin which expands on this subject of who and what we are as a diocese (see next page).

The last issue of the Niagara Anglican offered a powerful indication of how our Diocesan Vision is being lived out. Every page offered examples of new outreach initiatives, justice events, liturgical experiments and ministry endeavours.

I thank God for these signs of the Kingdom which continue to break in upon us and for these exciting glimpses of what the future holds for us in Niagara Diocese.

I look forward to continuing these "holy" conversations as we prepare for our Diocesan Synod in November.



Bishop Michael can be reached at [bishop@niagaraanglican.ca](mailto:bishop@niagaraanglican.ca)



## On Being the Church

MATTHEW GRIFFIN

As the bishop's celebration of the Eucharist began to conclude each Sunday, deacons would be sent from the service, each carrying a small bit of the bread that had been consecrated, to travel through the city. They would take the communion element to each community gathering to celebrate, and a portion of the bread would be added to that community's chalice after the Eucharistic prayer. The practice is called fermentum, and though it has not survived as part of how we are supposed to celebrate the Eucharist in the diocese of Niagara, it's worth remembering: in it was an outward and visible sign of that which holds us together—Christ's presence as we gather to celebrate His resurrection—and of the bonds of communion that remind us that we are one. Though the bishop couldn't be with each

community each Sunday, by sending the fermentum the Christian communities under his care knew they were part of one larger community, the diocese that was itself part of God's Church.

As we seek to respond in loving service to the world around us, a world that is changing rapidly both inside and outside of those who currently call the Church home, those of us who seek to follow Jesus have a responsibility to reflect critically about how we best live for God's purposes.

**Editor's note: Continue reading this article at [www.niagara.anglican.ca](http://www.niagara.anglican.ca) or to obtain a written or electronic copy of the full article contact the editor or synod office (details on page 3).**

*The Reverend Matthew Griffin is Rector of the Church of the Nativity Hamilton.*

## Prayer shawl ministry of compassion

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

special ministry.

Everyone who attended thought the idea was great, appreciated the planning and hosting by St. James and looked forward to another time together in the future.

The special ministry of creating prayer shawls certainly does not have any boundaries. As Janet Bristow and Victoria Galo write in their latest book, *The*

*New Prayer Shawl Companion*, "We're hard pressed to find any other self-sustaining grassroots movement that is occurring in our world so successfully at this time. Prayer shawl makers share a collective consciousness that transcends our differences teaching us that despite our religious beliefs and backgrounds, we can work together to create a global cloth of peace and comfort."

Do you have a prayer shawl ministry at your parish? Look

around your community and make contact with other groups; perhaps you already have a working connection.

The goal of all ministries is to bring love, peace, comfort, joy and healing to individuals along their faith and life journey, no matter what their circumstances may be.

*Anne Warner is part of St. James Prayer Shawl Ministry Fergus. EMAIL: [afwarner@bell.net](mailto:afwarner@bell.net)*



St. James' Prayer Shawls Group includes (back row) Debbie Roberts and Pat Kingdon, (front row) Mary Lou Mason, Thelma Eastwood, the Reverend Pauline Head, Anne Warner, Dorothy Dennis, Peggy Westerman and Jane Watson.

Photo: Joan Nixon

## Planning your Christmas Bazaar?

**NOW** is the time to book your advertising in the *Niagara Anglican*!

Advertising deadlines:

- ☞ November issue – September 25
- ☞ December issue – October 25

## Bishop responds quickly to General Synod motion

In a Pastoral letter to the clergy of Niagara Diocese, Bishop Michael authorised the inclusion of a new promise as part of the baptismal rite which was passed at the recent General Synod.

The Bishop wrote:

"The first (liturgical matter) has to do with decisions made at the recent meeting of General Synod in Ottawa, and commended for use throughout the church. On a resolution by members of Synod, a sixth covenant promise has been added to the Baptismal rite in the Book of Alternative Services.

This important promise reflects our Church's focus on the Five Marks of Mission and also supports our very real support of the biblical call to be good stewards of the earth.

The new promise (the sixth of the covenant questions, the ninth baptismal question, including the creedal questions) is:

**Celebrant:** Will you strive to safeguard the integrity of God's creation, and respect, sustain and renew the life of the Earth?

**People:** I will, with God's help.

Given the importance we in Niagara have placed on ecological and environmental concerns, I am very pleased that this question has been added, and I commend it to you and authorize it for use.

I hope that all will incorporate it into baptismal rites in parishes and congregations."

## Synod delegates ... take note

The "holy" conversations mentioned by Bishop Michael (see Page 10) continue with the upcoming pre-Synod meetings.

The **139th Session of Niagara Synod** will be held at Cathedral Place Hamilton on **Friday, November 15 and Saturday, November 16, 2013.**

It brings together representatives from some 94 parishes, as well as other groups and ministries serving people in Niagara diocese.

Delegates are urged to attend one of the pre-Synod meetings to receive updates on issues coming before synod, to ask questions and provide input before the formal presentations at the actual Synod.

Each pre-Synod Regional Meeting begins at 7:00 p.m. (doors open 30 minutes earlier) and at the following locations:

**Tuesday, September 24th – St. Simon's**  
1450 Litchfield Road, Oakville

**Thursday, September 26th – Church of the Resurrection**  
435 Mohawk Road, Hamilton

**Wednesday, October 16th – St. David and St. Patrick's**  
520 Speedvale Avenue East, Guelph

**Wednesday, October 22nd – St. Columba's**  
7 St. Columba Drive, St. Catharines

## A summer to remember, including Laura Secord

TERRY HOLUB

Those who say things have a tendency of slowing down in the summer haven't paid a visit to Holy Trinity Chippawa lately.

The almost 200 year old church, founded in 1820 was abuzz this summer hosting an ordination and a historical celebration that attracted visitors from all over Canada.

On May 26, 2013, I was ordained to the priesthood and appointed Priest-in-Charge of Holy Trinity by Bishop Michael.

Less than a month later, the parish honoured one of its most famous parishioners, Laura Secord who attended Holy Trinity from 1835 until her death in 1868.

With the assistance of the Friends of Laura Secord (the guiding organization and force behind the Laura Secord Legacy Trail), Holy Trinity received national and international exposure when the organizers of the Laura Secord weekend celebration decided to add the

Sunday Liturgy to its itinerary, and promote it on the organization's website.

As a result visitors from all over Canada attended the June 23rd liturgy, many of whom were direct descendants of Laura Secord. A special treat was Rosalee Peppard, a musical historian from Nova Scotia, who performed a number of hymns and an anthem. She and many others not only sang along cheerfully but were also dressed in period clothing.

This special service concluded with a video message from Charles Prince of Wales. He is a descendant of Albert Prince of Wales, the future King Edward VII, who also attended Holy Trinity in 1860 and was thought to have met Laura Secord while he was there.

If that's not enough, on the following week Holy Trinity invited the community of Chippawa to join them in an outdoor service and barbeque to celebrate Canada Day. The well attended service drew many



▲ The Reverend Terry Holub, following his ordination to the Priesthood, is presented by Bishop Michael to parishioners of Holy Trinity and others, including many from St. George's and St. Columba St. Catharines where he completed his internships.

Photo: Doug Pierson

visitors who sang "O Canada" and watched the local branch of the Royal Canadian Legion march in front of the historic

church. Afterwards all gathered to eat, chat, laugh and celebrate the interim ministry of Canon Jim Powell.

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## Be the change you want to see

CHRISTYN PERKONS

After years of debating and passing social justice motions, a call to move in a different direction was discerned and so was born Youth Synod in Action (YSiA), a pilot event during which delegates would engage directly with social justice advocates and people victimized by unjust social structures. What a life-changing experience—for the youth, the adult volunteer staff and the community groups and individuals who partnered with us in this adventure!

Sixty-five delegates and thirty volunteers gathered at Christ's Church Cathedral Hamilton on Friday May 3 with some trepidation. With many a prayer, we launched into "doing a new thing" and it was filled with the presence of the Spirit!

Friday evening began with a plenary session presented by Tom Cooper (Director of The Hamilton Roundtable on Poverty Reduction) focusing on the concept of social justice and why it matters. Alongside Tom's work, Heather McCully and a group of youth facilitators from Hamilton Public Health facilitated a "Determinants of Health"

game in which YSiA delegates were the game board pieces. It was an eye-opening kick-off for Youth Synod in Action!

Our community partnerships continued on Saturday as adult youth ministry volunteers and local social justice experts spent the day with small groups of delegates exploring justice issues.

Delegates investigated corporate social responsibility, guided by Eileen Tallach of Ten Thousand Villages who, after an orientation to fair trade practices, led them on a tour of socially responsible local businesses. Other delegates explored indigenous justice at the Hamilton Regional Indian Centre through the blanket exercise and traditional teachings.

Plan B (a community-supported agriculture organic farm in Flamborough) oriented another group to the value of chemical-free sustainable farming and local consumption, while an afternoon at Living Rock brought them closer to people with lived experiences of food insecurity (hunger for which people have no available resources).

Delegates experienced community development at work at a

downtown victory garden; heard stories of homelessness and hopelessness from youth peers; earned a certificate for their participation in "Ally Training" in response to social exclusion of LGBTQ folks; heard stories about and from refugees at Micah House and explored community engagement and empowerment at The Freeway Café and Beasley Recreation Centre.

Sunday saw the delegates brainstorming and making plans around how they and their parishes might take what they learned to engage with community partners in their own neighbourhoods.

Fueling this challenging work were incredible meals provided by the Cathedral volunteers, snacks from The Church of Our Saviour, the Redeemer, St. Alban's and the Church of the Ascension; and a wonderful Saturday "out" lunch provided by St. Paul's.

Spiritual nurture underpinned the entire weekend—Friday night Compline, Saturday morning sending prayers, Saturday night Eucharist - culminating with Sunday morning worship with the Cathedral parish family, which included the NYC Band



Volunteers at Micah House

Photo: Jennifer Harper on Twitter

and YSiA delegates participating as intercessors, readers and communion ministers.

Was Youth Synod in Action a success? Ninety-five percent of participants responding to the evaluation survey said they felt better equipped to address justice issues in their own community. Here are snippets of what delegates said about the weekend...

- I learned that a community can do anything if everyone works together!
- The most significant learning for me was on Sunday after lunch, when we got into small groups and discussed how we can take home what we'd learned over the weekend and made concrete plans to carry out our goals.
- Just because people are in poverty shouldn't make them any different from us.

I think YSiA complements the work of Youth Synod well and has given us a lot of opportunities to apply what we debate. This weekend was a great start to the event and I hope that it will continue to develop and engage delegates to put their faith in action.

My most significant learning of this weekend was that even if we are young, we can do just little things and those little things will help open others' minds and ways of thinking, and also we can help change things by starting to volunteer with groups who are working on social justice issues.

The high moment for me this weekend would have been in church when everybody was singing and dancing, it was just so much fun! All in all, a successful pilot; engaging, thought-provoking, faith-filled and reaching beyond our faith communities as we walked humbly with our God!

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