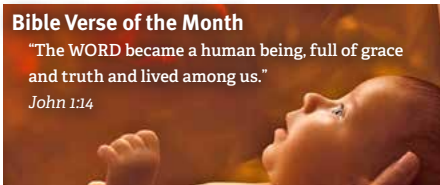


Bible Verse of the Month

"The WORD became a human being, full of grace and truth and lived among us."

John 1:14



"The fire has been lit in the Diocese of Niagara"

Read the full text of the Bishop's Charge to Synod.

Starting Page **6**



Lay ministries recognized

2015 induction of Order of Niagara and a sampling of candidate profiles.

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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

DECEMBER 2015



Creative quilt for the "Seasons of Our Church"

This wall hanging, "Seasons of Our Church", quilted by Anne Balanyk for St. John's Rockwood, speaks volumes about God, the church and relationships with people.

As you view each block of the quilt, read our explanation on **PAGE 5** and reflect upon its meaning or significance for you as we approach the celebration of the birth of our saviour Jesus Christ in 2015.



Glory to God in the highest and on earth

Peace and goodwill to all people.

Merry Christmas and a joyous holiday season

to you and yours from all of us at the Niagara Anglican.

Christmas Greetings



May the good news of the birth of God's Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ, fill your hearts and lives with love, joy, hope and peace as you gather with friends and family to celebrate Christmas.

We wish you and yours every blessing in this Holy Season and much happiness in the coming New Year.

Bishop Michael and Susan Bird



Our first Christmas in Canada—a refugee's story

TAM NGUYEN

Everything for us was new. We had never had a Christmas before and did not know what to expect. We were all so excited. This was our first Christmas and our first winter in Canada; it was 35 years ago.

I came to Canada when I was 18 years old with my parents and four siblings. In Vietnam my father was an electrician with his own business.

With the ongoing war between China and Vietnam in 1979, my mother's half Chinese heritage created more urgency for us to leave. With no other options, except to leave secretly and illegally, we got on a small boat in 1980.

Not long after departing, our boat broke down and we stopped on the Chinese island of Hainan. For a week we lived on the sand by the water without any shelter. For much of the journey we were seasick and unable to eat.

A week after departing from the island, we arrived in a refugee camp in Hong Kong. In the refugee camp we slept in one room with at least 60 others side by side in a space about

1,000 square feet. We all shared a bathroom. We stayed in those conditions for 13 months. During that time we felt completely hopeless and vulnerable.

Sponsorship to Canada allowed us to start a new life with new hope for the future.

For our first Christmas in Canada, our sponsors brought us a fresh Christmas tree and showed us how to water it. They gave us decorations and Christmas lights and all of us children had fun decorating it.

They brought us lots of wrapped gifts to put under the tree, some for each of us and we were told not open them until Christmas Day. We were very curious, but my father told us that we may not look ahead of time.

We went to one of our sponsors' homes to have Christmas dinner and we played games like "pass the parcel". We had so much fun and we were all happy.

We were lucky that a lady from church sold us an old car for \$100. Our sponsors taught us to drive. First of all we had to study the booklet so that we could pass the test.

This was a real struggle for



▲ Tam (far right) and her family experiencing their first Christmas in Canada 35 years ago.

Photo: Pat Lythgoe

my dad. He was 55 years old and English was a challenge. When he first saw the book he said, "No. No. No." but he learned it and

passed his test.

We were very proud of him and he was proud of himself; he was able to drive himself to work.

Over time our sponsors helped us with grocery shopping, banking and finding work—we soon became friends. We felt as if we were and still are treated like family.

I am so grateful to all the people at St. Christopher's Burlington for the life they gave us here in Canada. Without your help, I don't know what would have become of my family or where we would have lived. Their support enabled us to walk into a new life equipped with the tools for living, and opportunities to become whoever we wanted to become. Most of all I can never forget the generosity and kindness of spirit that has inspired me to this day. Having a sponsor to encourage you to succeed is a tremendous gift when life is desperate.

I think of how far I've come when I remember lining up in the refugee camp every day with a bowl to receive our food ration for the whole family.

It was so important to us that St. Christopher's sponsored us, and we felt so lucky to have a group that cared for us and helped and guided us to settle into our new life in Canada.

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by December 20, 2015
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Deadlines and Submissions for Niagara Anglican

Deadlines:

February – December 30
March – January 25
April – February 25

Submissions:

News – 500 words or less
Articles – 600 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

HOLLISitorial

A way in a manger

The familiar carol which heralds the beginning of Christmas for millions worldwide opened my eyes to a possibly new understanding of the importance of the manger as related to the birth of the WAY (Jesus Christ).

Since first appearing in 1884, *Away in a Manger* has projected images of the baby being tucked in a manger, away from the noises of animals and people.

However, if we presume the songwriter intended the first word (*away*) to be two words—*A WAY*—then a whole different perspective appears.

Now we can see the baby lying in the manger as *a way* or *the way*; three decades later Jesus would describe himself as “the way.”

Is it possible the American writer who penned these thoughts was thinking about Jesus as “the way”, and not just describing the only physical lodging his parents could find in the crowded town of Bethlehem?

By using “the way” we are discovering the path the human/Jesus travelled on earth, and are reassuring his followers that God/Jesus will bring them through suffering and death to resurrection and eternal life.



▲ A manger or trough, similar to this one I photographed in Israel, may have been the only bed available for Jesus.

Photo: Hollis Hiscock

Since the manger housed “the way” as Jesus/God began life among humans, then its significance and importance did increase exponentially.

The manger, similar to the one I photographed in Israel (see picture), was a rough trough where animals came to feed.

The symbolism is staggering, especially when we consider God was not only born as a human in a stable or cave, but the place where God was laid for resting and safety was in a container reserved for the lowest of creation.

So what does the manger symbolize for us and our relationship with God?

The manger signifies new life or new beginnings. Here is where God entered humanity, responding to the calls and pleas to have mercy and save people from their sins.

The manger is the launching pad for Jesus and his gospel ministry.

The manger for the fragile baby Jesus becomes the place of comfort and security from physical, emotional, spiritual and mental assailants.

The manger comes to be a gathering place for all people of different nations, genders and classes where they can encounter unity and one sense of purpose.

The manger stands as the place where basic needs of food, clothing, shelter, etc. are provided.

The manger develops as a location, physically or figuratively, to which any person can return periodically to refocus, to restart, to appraise or to be “born again.”

You may want to expand what the manger signifies for you in your own life.



For me, on Christmas Eve when we start singing *Away in a Manger*, I will pause between *A* and *WAY* and concentrate on *THE WAY*: God becoming human and extending an invitation to all individuals to enter into a personal relationship with God, leaving the final choice to the individual.

Later, while standing in queue waiting to be offered the bread at the Holy Communion, I will notice my hands formed like a cradle or manger ready to receive the incarnate God.

Hopefully, my thoughts will be transported to another manger in Bethlehem, at a time when angels sang to shepherds and astrologers followed a star.

Perchance my thoughts will turn to other mangers—a cross, an empty tomb and an eternal future room “prepared for you.”

Then my attention will focus outward to mangers in God’s world where people walk or gather to be fed, find shelter, receive healing and feel safe.

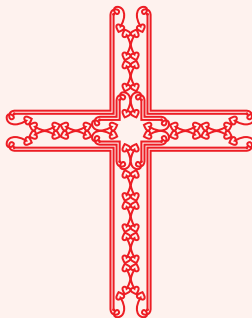
If we could all respond in this way, maybe the world would be a better place in which to live.

Prayer for parishes (and people) during Advent

It is the expectation of Bishop Michael that all parishes use this prayer during Sunday services in Advent asking God’s blessing on Niagara Diocese as we embark on a discernment process around our vision in 2016. The prayers of Anglicans across Niagara will help ground that work in the Spirit.

Suggested Uses:

- ✦ At the conclusion of the Intercessions or as a prelude to the Dismissal in public worship.
- ✦ The Niagara Anglican suggests we take it one step further, asking our readers to pray this prayer at least once per week during Advent.



**God of abundant grace,
in this time of joyful anticipation,
send us out with a renewed song of joy in our hearts.
As we wait again for the advent of your Son,
and enter into a period of discernment about our diocesan vision;
enliven our imaginations to find new and creative ways to live Christ’s message of love;
enrich our vision for the life and ministry of your church in this place;
and draw us together in compassion and hope for all your people.**

Amen.

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For a complete staff directory and more information, visit our web site
www.niagaraanglican.ca



Share your Christmas news

Christmas is coming ...

We know you will be extra busy ...

We know some exciting events will be happening in churches and parishes around Niagara Diocese ...

And we would like for you to share your "Christmas glad tidings" with the *Niagara Anglican*. Send us ...

- Photos (high resolution, action shots, captions, photographer's name, permission to publish children's pictures from parents or guardians, etc.)
- Short article (300 words or less) about your Christmas experience.

Because of deadline dates, timing is crucial, so we need to receive your Christmas items by January 4, 2016 at the absolute latest (earlier would be much appreciated).

Send items to editor@niagaraanglican.ca

Thanks and have a joy filled Christmas.

This Night of Nights

REBECCA CLIFFORD

Angels from celestial heights
Come rejoicing to the earth.
Tell us! Tell of the Hope of the World!
Ring the joyous news of the birth.
How radiant, this night of nights.

Shepherds all expectant, watching,
Harken to sweet cherubim above
Sing out! Sing the Truth of the World!
Incarnate proof of God's love.
How bright, this night of nights.

Ox and ass give voice this eve -
Praise the maiden mother's child.
Laud Him! Laud the Light of the World!
Strong and mighty; meek and mild.
How wondrous, this night of nights.

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(This Night of Nights, a duet for alto and baritone, was set to music by William Renwick, former organist at St. John the Evangelist Hamilton.)



Christ of the Woodland

REBECCA CLIFFORD

Silent and invisible He goes—
No cornstarch squeaks on powd'ry snow.
He need not squint to see the hov'ring flight
And dark outline of owl or kestrel,
For whether by day or by night
His vision is celestial.

Know, raptors, finches, jays, and doves—All feathered things the Christ Child loves!

Their mottled coats form a disguise
For quivering snouts and glistening eyes -
Hares in the hedges, alert and tense,
Can tell by more than bestial smell -
Do His Heavenly spirit sense
Through cold and lightless spots of hell.
Know, timid creatures, swift and small—Christ the Lord does love you all!

The shadows of mauve and violet
Against the pure white coverlet
Of snow and ice, both crisp and brusque,
Bright light makes icy diamonds shine
On lacy frost webs, empty husks,
And copp'ry leaves in frosty rime.
Know, tow'ring oak and lowly fern, Christ Jesus loves us all in turn.

Through passing seasons and passing years,
In caws and cries and up prick'd ears
All worldly creatures, with hide and horn,
In nature's chorus ever sing
Through ev'ry even, ev'ry morn,
The Glory of our Heavenly King,
In puffing breath and scraping hooves. Know, fair doe, gentle stag, Our Christ loves!

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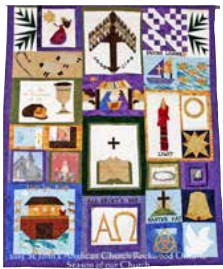
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Creative quilt for the "Seasons of Our Church"

The symbols and their meanings

Here is an explanation for the wall hanging, quilted by Anne Balanyk for St. John's Rockwood.

As you view each block of the quilt, read our explanation and reflect upon its meaning or significance for you as we approach the celebration of the birth of our saviour Jesus Christ in 2015.



Circle of Eternity – a circle, like God, has no beginning and no end. He is eternal and everywhere. God's love lasts forever.



Trinity – means the unity of three persons and one God. God the Father (Creator), God the Son (Redeemer) and God the Holy Spirit (Sanctifier).



Advent – announces the coming of Emmanuel (God with us). Four candles help us count down the Sundays to Christmas, Jesus' birthday. The candles are blue (royalty) or purple (waiting) and the third can be pink (joy).



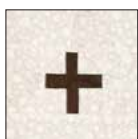
Epiphany – a very bright star led the Magi or astrologers and others to Bethlehem, the place where Jesus was born.



The ship – a symbol of the church. The cross on the sail is an ancient symbol of Jesus and God's love.



Shepherd's crook and sheep – as a shepherd cares for the sheep, God wants us to do the same for all people. Jesus said, "I am the good shepherd."



Ash Wednesday – the beginning of Lent, remembering Jesus fasted for 40 days in the wilderness and overcame temptation.



Noah's ark – a symbol of salvation from the great flood. After 40 days of rain, Noah sent a dove out from the ark, and when it returned carrying a dry olive branch, he knew all was well.



Praying hands – Jesus prayed alone and with others, drawing strength and guidance from being in the presence of God.



Palm Sunday or Passion Sunday – in ancient times palm branches were a sign of victory. The early Christians carved palms onto the walls of their hiding places to celebrate Jesus' victory over death.



Maunder Thursday – a crown of thorns. The soldiers who arrested Jesus twisted branches of a thorn bush into the shape of a crown and put it on Jesus' head.



Good Friday – this is the day when we remember that Jesus died on a cross to save us from sin and to show God's love for us. Joseph of Arimathea gave his tomb in which to bury Jesus.



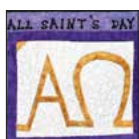
Easter Day – on Easter we celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. The Gloria rays streaming outwards from the cross form the shape of a sunburst, showing that "the light of the world has returned."



Pentecost – a dove symbolizes the Holy Spirit. When Jesus was baptized, the spirit of God came down in the shape of a dove and blessed him. Similarly God's spirit descends on us to guide and protect.



Fish – Jesus said, "Follow me and I will make you fishers of people." The fish was a secret symbol to identify followers of Jesus.



All Saints Day – the Greek alphabet begins with Alpha (A) and ends with Omega (Ω). Our lives begin and end with God. We might say God is with us from A to Z.



Christ Candle – Jesus is the light of the world.



Jacob's ladder – is the colloquial name for a ladder or bridge connecting earth to heaven. Jacob saw the vision in a dream.



Nativity – the Birth of Jesus Christ at Christmas. He was born in a stable in Bethlehem.



St John's Sunday School – this wall hanging was quilted for the children who still gather around the feet of Jesus to listen to his stories.



Angels – are messengers of God bringing news to people throughout the ages. They appear in many parts of the Bible, most notably telling the shepherds about the birth of our Saviour Jesus Christ.



The Bible – is a collection of sacred books telling the story of the relationship between God and creation, especially humans.



Holy Communion – the central act of our worship, when we take bread and wine to remember what Jesus did for us on the cross and through His resurrection.



The Tree of Life – the term tree of life may also be used as a synonym for sacred tree, which encompasses the sacred as well as the secular.



Bell – traditionally the bell called people to worship and conveyed other messages for the community. At St. John's Rockwood children line up after Sunday worship to ring the church bell.

The person and the story behind the wall hanging



When asked by former Church Warden Barbara Reed to produce a quilted wall hanging to explain the seasons of the Church's year for the Sunday School children, quilter Anne Balanyk rose to the task.

Anne worked on it for 12 months, named it Seasons of our Church. The wall hanging (67" long by 54" wide) was blessed on Easter Sunday 2015.

The parish was so impressed they wanted to hang it in the church, not, as originally planned, in the stairwell leading to the Sunday School rooms.

While she has used many well-recognized Christian motifs, Anne particularly likes to draw attention to her own design for the Jacob's ladder square, which represents the many generations of families that run through the Old Testament. This is particularly meaningful at St. John's in Rockwood, where the seventh generation of the founding warden still worships.

Anne came to Canada from England when she was 15 years old. Five years ago, she and her husband Maurice moved to Rockwood and joined St. John's.

She is currently People's Warden, Envelope Secretary, Fundraising Chair and a member of the prayer shawl group. As well, she organizes a monthly ladies' coffee hour and the prayer chain.

Anne has been quilting and sewing for many years, belonging to two quilt guilds. Her love of quilting keeps her busy designing quilts and trying different techniques. She enjoys entering her quilts in fall fairs and often wins prizes for them.

The Bishop's Charge to Synod

“The fire has been lit in the Diocese of Niagara ...”

Draw your Church together, O God, into one great company of disciples, together following our Lord Jesus Christ, into every walk of life, together serving him in his mission to the world, and together witnessing to his love on every continent and island. We ask this in his name and for his sake. Amen.

I have prayed that prayer many times over the course of my 31 years of ordained ministry, but never has it had more meaning, never has it had more relevance than it has for me today as I welcome you to this second session of the 141st Synod of the Diocese of Niagara.

The word in that prayer that is repeated over and over again, as we ask God to bless our life and ministry as a church, is the word, together: “draw your Church together into one great company of disciples.” The theme of this Synod is a simple phrase, “More Together.” For me, that beautiful prayer, and the powerful gospel reading we proclaimed this morning (John 13:1-17), offer the essence of what these words might mean to us today.

Servanthood at the core

It is St. John's account of Jesus gathering the disciples together in an upper room. In just a few hours, Jesus and his friends and followers would face a challenge and an ordeal that would test the extreme limits of their courage, their endurance, their understanding of who and what their fellowship was all about, and it would deeply test their faith in God. For a time they would be paralysed by their fear and their doubts. To move through that paralysis, they needed to find ways to persevere, to be clear about their purpose as disciples and adapt to the significant challenges of their circumstances.

As was the case so many times before, Jesus gathered them together ... our Lord's ministry had always centred upon drawing them and others together. How many times have we heard people, whom we have invited to join with us in ministry, tell us that they are fine worshipping God in their own way and on their own?

My friends, nothing in the accounts of Jesus' ministry,

Flanked by the candles on the altar symbolizing Jesus as the light of the world, Bishop Michael delivered his charge to over 200 synod members from all parishes in Niagara Diocese.

Photo: Hollis Hiscock



nothing in our experience of who we are or who we have been as Anglican Christians over the centuries supports an understanding that we can exercise our discipleship in isolation.

In that upper room he gathered them together and then he did something that I can't believe anyone in that room would ever forget for the rest of their lives. He poured water into a bowl and he washed their feet in a dramatic act and sign of servant leadership.

In his book *Living Toward a Vision*, Walter Brueggemann has pointed out that the tools which Jesus left his disciples to carry out their mission of service were a towel and basin. “Tools determine and define one's trade. If we as disciples of Jesus are left the tools of a servant, we can only do the work of a servant ... a towel and a basin are used to make contact with the soiled, sometimes unattractive dimensions of humanity, and to carry out our service with loving attention.” He goes on to say: “Such a mission can be fulfilled only by people who are not self-preoccupied, who can take their minds off themselves ...” so as to focus on their ministry to those living with poverty and need.

Looking back over 140 years, we know that we too have had our share of focus on ourselves and our survival in rapidly changing times. These concerns can deter us from the profound fulfillment of embracing Jesus' example of servant leadership with the tools Brueggemann draws to our attention.

What is sometimes sad about our present reality is that we have bought into the idea that this is something new, that the necessity to change and adapt faithfully to our present situation is a sign of failure or decay. Yet, we have been here before.

An enduring observation

Over this past year, we have been reflecting upon some of the great characters and leaders over these decades, and Bishop Walter Bagnall's years in episcopal ministry have been seen by many as some of the glory days of the Diocese of Niagara. In 1969, on the 20th anniversary of his consecration, he preached a sermon in this Cathedral in which he said the following:

“Since the Anglican Congress of 1963, we have elevated the exercise of self-criticism to the stature of a fine art. There has been a lot of healthy breast-beating, but some of it has been vicious, and for some people this has become a way of life—a daily flagellation. Perhaps the faithful and we will grow accustomed to look for God less and less in buildings and more and more in people. Perhaps the men and women of the new tomorrow will build fewer elaborate shrines to honour God and learn to honour Him by building a society which reflects His love ... a church more tolerant, more loving, more alert to the day and the need, moving into the future. In many ways it will be a new church ... it may be a smaller church, different in structure, with fewer professional minis-

ters, but many more sharing the priesthood of all believers.”

The signs of a changing, rather than a declining Church, have been with us for a very long time and, in response to the Bishop's insightful words, I want to say quite emphatically that the dawn of that new tomorrow is right on our doorsteps.

A new church

I want to share with you some of the ways I believe we have become or are becoming that new Church Bishop Bagnall spoke of so eloquently some 46 years ago. I was aided and inspired in this reflection by the keynote speaker we heard from at our recent Provincial Synod, Dr. William Cavanaugh, Professor at DePaul University in Chicago, speaking on the subject of “Reimagining the Church in the Public Square.”

1) Led by our Diocesan Vision for Ministry and by the Anglican Communion's five Marks of Mission, we are coming to understand ourselves as a discipleship-based Church instead of a membership-based Church. More and more people in our congregations are seeing their lives defined by their baptismal covenant, and there is a renewed interest and desire to learn about our Church and our faith, to regularly read and study the scriptures, to create more disciplined and structured opportunities for prayer and to find new ways to allow these new learnings and these experiences to guide and inform the lives we lead.

2) We have become, or are becoming, a Church that sees itself grounded in St. Paul's understanding of how our ministry, our participation in God's mission, cannot be understood apart from our interconnectedness and dependence upon each other. We are coming to realize that we are much more together and we are becoming clearer about where that mission is taking us, where our rich resources reside. Everywhere across Niagara, congregations are engaged with seeking out partnerships with other congregations, other denominational communities and we are working with others in the community who share similar passions for the work we are called to do.

In our New Testament lesson, St. Paul writes: “For as in one body we have many members, and not all the members have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another.” As we live out the reality of this way of being the church we are discovering new paths to inclusiveness, new ways to advocate for the liberation of people from all forms of subordination and inequality and we are abandoning, thank God, the fallacy that our task is to make the world over in our image instead of in the image of God.

3) As we accept Christ's challenge to take up that towel and that basin of water, we are becoming a Church that sees itself, in the words of Professor Cavanaugh, not within separate

The Bishop's Charge to Synod

acts of outreach but rather as "a network of living concern." We are not reaching out in servant-hood ministries to those in need simply to solve a problem. It is not an immunizing strategy to shield us from the messy and dirty side of life but rather it is the work of proclaiming the gospel in the midst of that messiness. We are coming to understand that our work is the encountering and recognizing and upholding the divinity of all God's people, particularly those who live on society's margins.

We are called to proclaim that, while government aid programs and other social supports are important, necessary and good, they are not the kingdom of God! This prophetic critique is a distinctive contribution that we, as the Church, can make to the common good and it moves us to make other contributions as well.

Living out our vision

In marking our 140th Anniversary as a Diocese, we have been gathering together our resources and pooling our blessings, and I have asked every Anglican in Niagara to contribute to our Anniversary Fund that will allow us to sponsor up to 50 new refugees.

I had occasion last month to travel in Spain where it was obvious from what I observed that the whole continent of Europe is obsessed, and rightly so, with the refugee crisis in that part of world. During the past five years, 15 conflicts have erupted or reignited, displacing tens of millions of people. Over four million Syrians alone have fled to neighbouring countries. The UN refugee agency expects at least 1.4 million refugees to flee to Europe across the Mediterranean this year and next, a sharp rise from initial estimates. The need for servanthood ministries is clear.

To date, we have raised close to \$100,000 for our refugee sponsorship initiative and two parishes have each raised over \$25,000. I am grateful to all the congregations who have taken up special collections and hosted special services in support of this Fund and I am also aware that some of our parishes are ahead of our program and are already working with sponsored families.

About a dozen parishes have expressed interest in sponsoring refugees through the anniver-

sary initiative and, as a result of our first application, St. James and St. Brendan Port Colborne will soon be welcoming two families of 9 people (10 if you count the one on the way!) to Niagara.

We will continue to work with community partners and other faith groups on refugee sponsorships; offering wisdom and support through presentations and consultations, and submitting applications through our Sponsorship Agreement with the Federal Government.

When you combine this refugee work with the outstanding work of our Hands across Niagara, our share in the work of the Primate's World Relief and Development Fund, WOW Grants, Leadership Grants from Survive and Thrive and our local outreach partnerships with various regions throughout the world, all represent our broad commitment to engage God's mission throughout our diocese and beyond.

Guided by our diocesan vision, parishes are discerning ways to align resources of ministry with voices crying out for justice and as we do so, we live out our baptism by committing to justice and servant ministries.

One of our most valued and defining partnerships is the one we share with our sister and brother Anglicans across Canada and that relationship is nurtured, enhanced and shepherded by our Primate and the staff of our Church National. We are so very honoured to have Archbishop Fred Hiltz with us for this Synod.

As your Bishop I have a unique perspective on the work of our Primate and, at each House of Bishops meeting, we receive a listing of the dioceses, the events, the meetings and the travel that our Primate is involved in. Just reading the report often leaves me breathless!

Having experienced Fred's ministry very closely over the years, I can state with complete confidence that his life and witness continue to be one of the richest gifts and blessings we have to share in this beloved Church of ours. Fred, on behalf of this Synod, and the people of the Diocese of Niagara, I want to thank you from the bottom of our hearts.

There is much happening on the National scene as we prepare for our General Synod in Toronto



▲ Canon Rob Welch (right) has served Niagara Diocese as Chancellor of 27 years. He shares the shepherding of Synod proceedings with the Secretary of Synod Marni Nancekivell and Bishop Michael.

Photo: Hollis Hiscock

next year and we look forward to hearing from our Primate on these and other matters in his address to us tomorrow.

Renewing our vision

Eight years ago, in my early days as your Bishop, I called people together from across our diocese to begin a conversation that would eventually help us discern our Diocesan Vision. That Vision has been our guide, our template and our compass for the journey we have shared in ever since. What I am saying today is that it is my strong belief that we are no longer the Church we were eight years ago and that we have moved strongly and courageously toward that new Church and that new tomorrow Bishop Bagnall spoke about almost half a century ago. It seems fitting then, as we move beyond this anniversary year, that we find a way to gather back together once again and to take a compass reading.

In 2016, I want us to engage in a process that will allow us to gather together once again to engage in some further work of discernment. I expect these conversations will help us determine how our present Vision needs to be revised or adapted. It will also provide the opportunity for me to connect personally with diocesan leaders, and it will create the space necessary for us to be open to the leading of the Holy Spirit as we chart the path ahead. There will be more information about this process in the days ahead, but in the meantime I am asking every parish to use a special prayer throughout Advent as we seek God's blessing upon our work of discernment in the coming year. Copies of the prayer are available today and will be distributed later in the Synod.

Before I conclude this Charge,

I want to acknowledge another milestone that has been reached in our diocese that is indicative of the servant leadership that our Gospel story proclaims. This year marks the 27th year Canon Rob Welch has served us all in the capacity of our Chancellor.

That, in itself, is a remarkable gift and achievement. But this also means that, combined with the years his father, the Honourable Robert Welch, served in the same capacity before him, Rob and his father have now consecutively served as Chancellors to the Diocese of Niagara for the past 50 years! Rob, words cannot describe what a monumental gift and witness this service has been and continues to be for the people of this diocese.

We will be marking this milestone at a diocesan event in the coming months, but we ask you now to accept our deepest and heartfelt thanks.

The fire is lit

During the summer, I had the privilege of attending the eighth Sacred Circle that was held in Port Elgin, Ontario, focused on the theme "Lifted on the Wings of Faith." Sacred Circles are national gatherings of Indigenous Anglicans for prayer, worship, discernment and decision-making. Hundreds of participants gather for these special meetings every two to three years. Each gathering begins with the lighting of the sacred fire that burns continuously throughout the course of the week.

The fire-keeper for this Sacred Circle was an elder from Navaholand and he invited young people and other volunteers to come forward and help get the fire started, using the traditional implements that were spun and rubbed together to create a spark. They worked at

for a long time and every once in a while smoke would rise up but no fire was forthcoming. The majority of us had to leave the fire pit and return to the conference centre for the celebration of the Eucharist, but a few volunteers stayed behind to continue the effort.

What we found out later was that the elder could have started the fire right away but he withheld some of the knowledge required. In the Navaho tradition a major aspect of the lighting of the fire is the experience of working together with others and the process of learning as they went along. As the rest of us stood together in the celebration of the Eucharist, we were given word that the fire was lit, and it was a profound moment and so incredibly symbolic that it should happen as we stood together around the Lord's Table as fellow members of the body of Christ.

As we gather together today, and prepare to share in this celebration of the Eucharist, I have some very good news for you:

The fire has been lit in the Diocese of Niagara and I want to say, "Thanks be to God!"

Bishop Michael Bird delivered his charge to open the second session of the 141st Synod of Niagara Diocese at Christ's Church Cathedral Hamilton on October 30-31, 2015. The synod's theme was "More Together"

Look for more
Synod news in
the January 2016
Niagara Anglican.

A pantry for pets; owners also welcomed

The 200 bags of high-quality dog and cat food were all gone within two hours and over 20 pets received a free nail trim.

The Pet Pantry, held in October, was a joint venture between St. Matthew's House and Hamilton PAWS to help low-income pet owners.

Caring for a pet can ease loneliness, reduce stress and anxiety, promote social interaction and encourage exercise.

Since pets are non-judgmental, loyal and trustworthy, they provide unconditional love and affection, social and emotional support, as well as comfort.

For those facing major struggles—homelessness, ongoing instability from living in poverty, mental health issues—the role of a pet becomes all the more critical.

Caring for pets can provide a sense of normalcy, responsibility and a reason to face a new day. For those feeling rejected, disdained and forgotten, having a loving pet can provide a sense of meaning in an otherwise difficult existence.

Associate Veterinary Clinics are well aware of the importance of this human-pet connection. They know some low-income/homeless pet owners sacrifice their own food for their pets, and many struggle to provide medical care, vaccinations and spaying or neutering for their animals.

In response, Associate Veterinary Clinics created the Pet Pantry, a Canada-wide program to help address these needs.

The pet friendly event for marginalized pet owners is run by local veterinarians, Animal Health Technologists and industry representatives.

Due to licencing issues, on-site veterinary care cannot be offered, yet the Pet Pantry does provide an opportunity to build relationships with pet owners, to help owners learn about pet care and to identify health resources, including vaccines, spaying and neutering, in their communities.

(This article is based on information supplied by St. Matthew's House, Hamilton. To learn more go to stmatthewshouse.ca)



Left: Dr. Hillary Peach from Kingsway Animal Hospital trimmed nails for free.

Bottom left: Bolt went home with a free bag of food.

Below: Charlie, a 12-year-old Chihuahua, was rescued by his owner from a puppy mill.

Photos: Ashley Lewis



Book review

Let us declare what we see

Go Set a Watchman

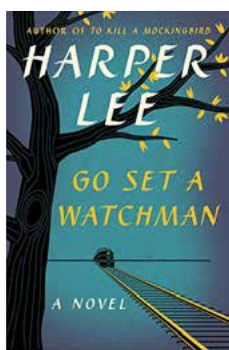
By Harper Lee
(2015, Harper Collins)

ELEANOR JOHNSTON

Most of us have studied Harper Lee's heart-warming *To Kill a Mockingbird* about Scout (Jean-Louise) Finch and Atticus, her father, a heroic lawyer. Lee has now published the first version of this novel, its title taken from the prophecies of Isaiah, "For thus hath the Lord said unto me, Go, set a watchman, let him declare what he sees."

Lee and her publisher insist that this second story, set 20 years after the original, was actually written before *Mockingbird*. And the character we expect to function as "watchman," Atticus Finch, seems oblivious to the racial injustice that only his daughter, Jean-Louise, can see in Maycomb, Alabama.

In *Watchman*, Jean-Louise is returning from her New York home where she has picked up



modern values that make it difficult for her to imagine living down South with Henry Clinton, a childhood friend who is waiting to marry her. Meanwhile, her brother Jem has died and Calpurnia, once her family's servant, has been rejected by Aunt Augusta in taking over running Atticus' home. It's as if the simply-defined characters of *Mockingbird* have grown nasty.

When, in *Mockingbird*, Atticus successfully defended the wrongfully-accused black man, Scout and Jem sat with

Calpurnia in the segregated balcony. Jean-Louise has no place in the modern day courthouse—Atticus has told her not to attend and the black community wants nothing to do with her family. Jean-Louise is shocked to see Hank sitting beside Atticus in a group that seems to be the Ku Klux Klan.

When she explains her equal rights values to Hank, he maintains his support for integration in the future. For now, he argues, the blacks in Maycomb are inferior, unready for democracy. In *Mockingbird*, Atticus led the jury to realize that the accused black man was dignified and innocent, clearly superior to his accuser. In *Watchman* Atticus seems unsure.

The clear villain in *Watchman* is Aunt Augusta who talks her niece into marrying Hank. Jean-Louise's engagement party reveals the grotesque bloodlust of women for a lynching. This disgusts the bride so much she just wants to get back to NYC.

One chilling, apparently mod-

ern point made in *Watchman* is the suggestion that all Southern whites carry guns because they, the true American Confederacy, must be ready to put the blacks in their place, to finish the Civil War.

Harper Lee, through her portrayal of this adult yet idealistic Scout, sets herself and her readers as watchmen for her time and perhaps for ours as well.

Eleanor Johnston writes regularly for the Niagara Anglican. eleanorjohnston@gmail.com

Christmas Spirit

VICTORIA BALDWIN

'Tis that special time of year
When hearts fill up with holiday cheer
We feel the Spirit's loving embrace
As He brings with Him the gift of God's Grace
The feeling uplifts our minds, hearts and souls
Giving us peace and making us whole
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As we thank God for our Saviour, the real Christmas reason.

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150 years and still welcoming



▲ The congregation of Christ Church Flamborough poses for a picture following a special worship service marking the 150th anniversary of the consecration of their church building.

"We welcome all God's people with open doors, open minds and open hearts," reads Christ Church Flamborough's web page.

The same sentiment may have been in the mind of Bishop John Strachan of Toronto when he consecrated the church building on August 25, 1865, or the hope of Canon Featherstone Osler who was Rector when the church was built the previous year.

On October 4, 2015, the thirteenth Primate of the Anglican Church of Canada, Archbishop Fred Hiltz, presided over a special service to mark the parish's

sesquicentennial.

The church, an example of Gothic revival architecture, popular in the 1800s with buttressed, gabled lancet windows, stands as "the light on the hill" at Bullocks Corners near Greensville.

The one story structure was built of rough faced stone, some from a local quarry. The bell, given by Sarah Bullock, is still rung every Sunday morning, and the stained glass windows were installed at various dates. A parish hall was built and eventually linked to the church.

The church grounds include

the original church cemetery and the adjoining municipal cemetery, sold to the church in 2001.

The original baptismal font, still used today, was brought to Canada by Osler from Cornwall, England.

The bowl of the font is fastened by a Tau cross, an emblem used in the fifth century to placate Scandinavian traders. It is believed to be one of the oldest pieces of church furniture in Canada.

The font sits on a Canadian stone base linking the pieces together.

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Sundays	11:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

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Sunday, December 20 at 10 a.m.

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9:00 p.m.
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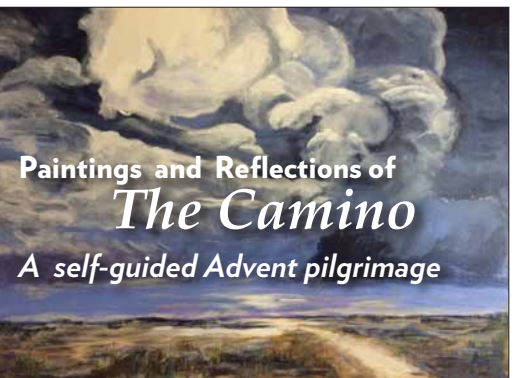


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Lay ministries recognized with Order of Niagara



Photos: Bill Mous

Fifteen years ago Bishop Ralph Spence introduced the Order of Niagara (ON) to enable the diocese to thank laity for their faith and support, as well as to instill a sense of pride in their ministry.

All licensed clergy are invited to nominate one person from each parish annually and the Bishop can also appoint members to the Order.

This year with the addition of 62 people, the Order of Niagara has grown to nearly 1,100 members.

Because so many people were nominated, two worship services on separate Sunday afternoons were held at Christ's Church Cathedral to install the 2015 recipients.

Here is a sampling of the wide range of talents and ministries of the new ON members, according to those who nominated them.

Dianne Williams – Grace Church St. Catharines

As a talented musician, Dianne inspires worshippers and revelers with keyboard and voice. As a choir director and teacher, she helps others find the musician within themselves. She has built community through music by leading various choirs over the years. Dianne's heart for helping others led her to a career in social services. In retirement she helped start a Community Garden, a monthly free Community Dinner and Person to Person: Companionships in Wholeness, which enables individuals to support others during life's challenges. A visionary community builder, Dianne has helped Grace Church develop partnerships with other organizations and faith communities, and rallied members of Grace Church to come together in a common cause.

Lloyd Brostad – St. Alban's Acton

Lloyd has been a faithful member of St. Alban's for over 50 years. During this time he has served the church in many roles including Warden, chair of the Building Committee, Member of Parish Council, Chalice Bearer, Lay Reader, co-ordinator of Anglicans in Mission and BAC member. As well, he organizes social events and does church maintenance. Over the years Lloyd has flipped thousands of pancakes at pancake suppers, and has sanded and refinished the hardwood floor in the church hall so many times that this year they had to put in a new floor, since the old one was too thin to refinish again!

Beth Schat – St. Alban's Beamsville

Beth has served St. Alban's faithfully in many capacities over the years. She was one of the founding members of the Prayer Chain, served for many years on the Altar Guild and at present is on both the Stewardship Committee and the Pastoral Care Committee. Beth is also a Chalice Bearer. Whenever help and/or baking are needed for a function, she answers the call for the Ladies Group and is very supportive of Church events. She has been a member of the Rose Cottage Palliative Care Association and was awarded The Ontario Volunteer Service Award for her work with them.

Gary Hoyle – St. James and St. Brendan Port Colborne

Gary is a gift to his church and community. He volunteers at the Food Bank, Port Cares, working with at-risk youth, Port Colborne Museum, and Canal Days. He is a past City Counselor and a past Regional Chair for Lions District 38. As well, he serves on the Board of Directors for

Meals on Wheels and Regional Housing, he is an Out of the Cold team member, a Chalice Bearer, a past member of Parish Council and an annual Mission participant since its inception.

Ruth Faulks – Church of the Ascension Hamilton

Ruth has been involved with many facets in the life of the parish church: the Ascension Young People's, Young Adults, Choir, Parish Council, Church School Superintendent, Bazaar Convener, Altar Guild Member, Reader, Bishop's Diploma Course graduate, Order of Ascension, Corktown Seniors Co-ordinator, Lay Delegate to Synod, Christmas project for St. Matthew's House and Ascension Rentals. In addition, Ruth has acted as the liaison person with the Holy Trinity Ethiopian Church, which meets regularly at Ascension.

Bob Stiles – St. Alban's Glen Williams

Bob will help anyone, at any time, with anything and usually has the right tool to do it. He has fixed, built or helped fix or build pretty much everything on the church's property—dishwasher, furnace, gazebo chapel, Paschal candle stand and community garden beds. He has flipped burgers, set up tables, hauled trash and rigged sound/lights/video equipment for every event. If someone does not show, Bob steps in—even acting as crucifer and reader for the Christmas Eve service, with five minutes notice. This is on top of his regular roles as warden, greeter, counter and Parish Council member. In community life, he was named Glen Williams Citizen of the Year.

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Re-imagining the Church in the PUBLIC SQUARE

Provincial Synod delegates explore theme through worship, discussion and presentations

BILL MOUS AND HOLLIS HISCOCK

Gathered in the provincial capital, Toronto, the Ecclesiastical Provincial Synod of Ontario explored how the church is re-imagining itself by intersecting with the public square.

It was fitting that the Premier of Ontario, the Honourable Kathleen Wynne, helped begin synod with an address lauding the contribution faith communities make to the issues of our day. She noted, in particular, the role churches play in fostering belonging and adding to the discourse on issues like poverty reduction and dying with dignity.

The Ecclesiastical Province of Ontario, covering most of the geographical province of Ontario and some of Quebec, includes seven dioceses: Algoma, Huron, Moosonee, Niagara, Ontario, Ottawa and Toronto.

Niagara was well represented by clergy and lay leaders from across the diocese. Canon Michael Mondloch from Grace Church St. Catharines said synod was "a wonderful opportunity to sit at the table with Anglicans from around our province." He was encouraged by the "breadth and depth" of conversation, particularly how the "church is called to make a difference in

our wider world." He added he was moved "by the way in which local churches are making a difference in their communities through serving those who are marginalized."

The Synod heard keynote addresses from former Senator Hugh Segal, Master of Massey College in Toronto, and Professor William Cavanaugh from De Paul University in Chicago. Segal discussed the need for the church to always be active in the public square, and Cavanaugh explored political theology and the re-enchantment of the modern era. Bishop Michael Bird noted both addresses contributed to the synod as being one of the "most thought-provoking" he has attended.

A variety of workshops—from social media to affordable housing—immersed members in issues arising in the public square and ways to better equip them to engage these issues through their ministry. Delegate Sue Carson, co-chair of the Greening Niagara Committee, called the government relations workshop inspiring, saying she has always felt it was more important to change the minds of politicians than to change our light bulbs.

Each diocese created a video to reflect the synod's theme and



◀ The 11 member delegation from Niagara Diocese who attended Provincial Synod included a young person, the bishop, laity and clergy.

Photo: Submitted

what that means in their unique ministries. Niagara's presentation can be viewed on the diocesan website.

During the three-day session Archbishop Colin Johnson of Toronto and Moosonee Dioceses was re-elected Metropolitan for another six year term. Laura Walton was elected as Prolocutor and Jean Bedard installed as Chancellor.

The Ontario Provincial Commission on Theological

Education (OPCOTE), under the leadership of Canon Terry DeForest, is planning a video series entitled "Ask Bigger Questions" to promote theological education throughout the province.

A budget of nearly \$150,000 was approved.

The next provincial synod will be hosted by Ottawa Diocese in 2018.

More information about the work of the Provincial Synod

of Ontario can be found on their website (province-ontario.anglican.ca) or check out the insert in the September 2015 *Niagara Anglican*.



Impressions from Provincial Synod

The Niagara Anglican posed three questions to the Niagara delegates attending Provincial Synod. We print some of their responses for our readers.

What were your overall impressions (highlights, low points) of Provincial Synod?

Sue Carson: The three days were full, but the meaningful discussions, speakers and prayer times made the time pass very quickly. I was impressed by the visit of our Premier Kathleen Wynne and her Christian values became obvious as she spoke. Also Hugh Segal gave a memorable after dinner speech reminding us that Canadians need to stand with those who don't have freedom from fear or freedom from want.

Rob Welch: I enjoyed Synod. I thought the addresses of the Premier and Hugh Segal were highlights for me. At our opening session the Premier's comment "where faith is inclusive, it builds belonging" certainly resonated with me. And Hugh Segal's address at our Wednesday night banquet when he said our two core freedoms are "freedom from fear" and "freedom from

want", and all other freedoms and values flow from them ... stuck with me.

Sierra Robertson-Roper: Provincial Synod was a great opportunity to get to know the Anglican faith in a broader sense beyond the confines of our diocese. I most enjoyed the conversations I had with amazing people from all across the province that challenged my thinking, and hopefully also challenged theirs.

Jean Archbell: The agenda was thrown out the window before we even got started with a surprise visit from Premier Kathleen Wynne, who gave a rallying address to the delegates on the importance of the Church in engaging in the public sphere. This was the topic of the Synod and her visit got us charged up and ready to hear and think about how we do engage, as well as how to get more involved.

What actions were taken that will affect Niagara Diocese or your parish?

Sierra Robertson-Roper: Provincial Synod is a very

different beast than synod at a diocesan level. At the provincial level, we bring together Anglicans from across Ontario to discuss what it means to be Anglican and how to bring that back into the diocese, and elect leadership within the Ecclesiastical Province of Ontario.

Jean Archbell: A lot of learning happens at Provincial Synod with the seven dioceses working together to streamline the business of managing the church, as well as sharing ideas and best practices. Just one of many ideas that triggered excitement in me was the video from Huron Diocese in which they showed a Handivan delivering elderly shut-ins to the church for monthly worship. This inspired me to think about our seniors lunches and transportation in a new way.

Sue Carson: I came away inspired to do more in my parish, also knowing that, although the things we do might seem small, such as packing Good Food Boxes or serving a community meal, they are examples of the synod theme Re-imagining the church in the Public Square.

See *PROVINCIAL SYNOD* Page 12

Prayer and action go together



The power of prayer and giving financially to support refugees made October 17, 2015 an important day for members of the Mothers' Union (MU) in Niagara Diocese. Meeting at Crieff Hills Retreat Centre to examine the power of prayer, Canon Sharyn Hall helped delegates explore the connection between scripture and prayer. Members shared and discussed Bible passages on the themes of thanksgiving, faith, hope, love and peace. Following discussion, they read the prayers developed from each reading.

▲ The members of the Mothers' Union in Niagara Diocese spent a day at Crieff Hills Retreat Centre exploring the power of prayer in people's lives.

Photos: Submitted

Hall also introduced the group to many prayer resources to deepen their prayer practice. During the afternoon, delegates had many choices: prayer shawl knitting circle, workshop on writing prayers, labyrinth walk or enjoying the nature trails of the retreat centre. At the Eucharist the Reverend Aaron Orear, Rector of St. Alban's Glen Williams, was installed as the new MU chaplain.

The collection was donated to the Niagara Refugee Settlement Fund. Commenting on the day, Virginia Cummings of St. Andrew's Grimsby wrote, "This time of fellowship is so important to our members to support each other and share the blessings of our continued membership as Mothers' Union stewards."

Provincial Synod delegate reflections

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11

We are God's hands and feet reaching out to those who are vulnerable and marginalized. I need to remind others in my parish that every outreach into the community is valuable.

How did your experience at Provincial Synod affect you personally, and how will that influence your life in the church in the coming months?

Jean Archbell: Experiencing Provincial Synod is unlike General or Diocesan Synod. As you become aware of the dioceses working together and see the hope for the future of the church, it is inspiring to think about my local deanery and ministerial working together to break down the silos to further the work of God's mission.

Sue Carson: I would like to thank the lay members of Synod for their confidence in electing me as one of the four lay delegates to Provincial Synod. I found the experience very uplifting and would recommend others to put their names forward for the 2018 Provincial Synod to be held in Ottawa. As I return to my parish life I feel better able to pray for the whole Anglican Church in Canada as it has widened my awareness and made me feel part of a greater whole.

Sierra Robertson-Roper: I left Provincial Synod with a greater understanding of the way the Anglican Church works, but also seeing some of the challenges it faces. I feel compelled to continue talking about youth needing a voice in the church, and to see our roles as Christians as working towards global equity.

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