

## BIBLE VERSE OF THE MONTH

Those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength.  
They will soar on wings like eagles;  
They will run and not grow weary,  
They will walk and not be faint.  
*Isaiah 40:31*



## What it means to be an Anglican

Bishop Michael tells his story to delegates at Synod

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## A letter BEFORE going to Cuba

Divinity student Dean Cormack reflects on what is in store

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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

JANUARY 2015

## Celebrating the life of Corporal Cirillo



### the chaplain's perspective

needed to be arranged, numerous inquiries from the media, as well as welcoming ecclesiastical, military and government dignitaries, including the Prime Minister. It became a real community effort requiring coordination with the city, military, police, fire and numerous other security organizations. In the end there were 150 pages of instructions with 17 annexes for funeral celebration.

The funeral was held on Tuesday, October 28. As the presider and homilist I wanted to ensure that Cpl. Cirillo's funeral had a noble simplicity to it along with all the military formality he deserved. I was also aware that the family, regiment and nation were still in shock and grief. During the service there were beautiful reflections offered by Nathan's cousin, his Commanding Officer and the Prime Minister of Canada. It was my responsibility to ensure that in the midst of this awful tragedy we also remembered the hope and promise of eternal life offered to us in Christ Jesus.

—See CHAPLAIN'S - Page 4

### ROB FEAD

**O**N WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 22, 2014 Corporal Nathan Cirillo was shot and killed while standing ceremonial guard at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Ottawa.

Cpl. Cirillo was a member of the Hamilton-based reserve regiment the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada. I have had the honour of serving the Argylls as their chaplain since

2004. As a result I was notified within minutes of the shooting and was assigned to be part of the Next of Kin Notification Team, as well as to offer ongoing support to the Cirillo family. This included escorting members of the family to Ottawa, participating in escorting Cpl. Cirillo home to Hamilton along the "Highway of Heroes", as well as the preparation and planning of the funeral.

Due to the nature of Cpl. Cirillo's death and the interna-

Chaplain Rob Fead leads the procession at the funeral for Corporal Nathan Cirillo.

Photo: Mark Blinch

tional attention it received, it was clear that the entire nation was shocked and was grieving the loss of this young fallen soldier. Those of us charged with preparing the funeral service would need to take into account not only a grieving family and regiment but also a grieving nation.

Cpl. Cirillo and his mother's side of the family are Anglicans,

so the family made the decision to have the funeral at Christ's Church Cathedral. Bishop Michael Bird, Dean Peter Wall and the Reverend Bill Mous, along with the whole cathedral staff, were actively engaged in assisting in the many aspects of preparing for what became a nationally televised funeral. There were seating plans that



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The Right Reverend Michael A. Bird  
Bishop of Niagara

The Very Reverend Peter A. Wall  
Rector of the Cathedral and Dean of Niagara

SUNDAY, JANUARY 4  
THE FEAST OF THE EPIPHANY  
8:30 am Holy Eucharist  
10:30 am Choral Eucharist  
Preacher and Presider: The Dean

SUNDAY, JANUARY 11  
THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD  
8:30 am Holy Eucharist  
10:30 am Choral Eucharist  
Presider: The Reverend Canon Bill Thomas  
Preacher: The Rev. Canon Dr. Sharyn Hall

SUNDAY, JANUARY 18  
EPIPHANY 2  
8:30 am Holy Eucharist  
10:30 am Choral Eucharist  
Presider: The Dean  
Preacher: The Right Reverend D. Ralph Spence

SUNDAY, JANUARY 25  
EPIPHANY 3  
8:30 am Holy Eucharist  
10:30 am Choral Eucharist  
Presider: The Rev Dr. Eric Griffin  
Preacher: The Rev Canon J Lefebvre

4:00 pm Organ Recital  
Michael Bloss  
4:30 pm A Festival Service marking the end of  
The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

EUCHARIST 12:15 pm Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays  
7:30 am Tuesdays

## Synod Report

# Synod musings

**MARNI NANCEKIVELL**

Whether motions or agendas, canonical changes or appointments to Diocesan Court, for the initiated there may appear at first glance to be a certain sameness each year to Diocesan Synod.

Yet for the past several years, here in the Diocese of Niagara, we have been experimenting with doing Synod in different ways. We began by taking our annual Synod out of the Convention Centre setting, and meeting in a parish church - St. Christopher's Burlington.

The next year, we met at Cathedral Place. Out went the pews and in came round tables and chairs. The stained glass windows stayed, but images were accompanied by the images of the Bishop and synod delegates, projected on high screen televisions.

The first year we were at the Cathedral was a two day Synod, and we were honoured to have as our guests from our Partner Diocese of Cuba Bishop Griselda Delgado del Carpio and Dr. Jose Antonio Bringas Linares.

In 2013 we also took part in a memorable luncheon at Liuna Station with Judy Maddren as our speaker. After lunch we walked back to the Cathedral with placards which stated specifically how each individual par-

ish in the Diocese was engaged in local mission.

Our 2014 Synod met again in Christ's Church Cathedral - part one was held in April (see Summer issue of the Niagara Anglican) and the second day long meeting in November was our "Business Synod."

We gathered first to break bread, and to hear the charge, by Bishop Michael Bird. The theme for this Synod was "What is it to be Anglican?"

In an agenda packed to overflowing, we explored in many ways how we are giving voice to the Anglican expression of our Christian calling in the current day. We heard how parishes are Walking on Water (figuratively) in missional expressions of local ministry. Synod was brought up to date on the work of the Cathedral Place Development Task Force as well as about Canterbury Hills. We voted for diocesan representatives to our next Provincial Synod. Synod was given a financial report for the year past and was presented with a budget in a more narrative format for 2015.

One Canonical change discussed at Synod was the recommendation from Synod Council that the responsibility for approving each year's budget move from Synod to Synod Council. As Synod Council receives more frequent financial



◀ Delegates line up on a November day to get lunch at the food trucks during Synod.

Photo: Alicia Archbell

updates and more information about the financial life of the Diocese, this was thought to be a logical change. There was an excellent debate at Synod, and it was clear that at this time, the Synod of our Diocese feels a continuing sense of ownership about our Diocesan budget. This motion was defeated.

From the perspective of being the Secretary of Synod, this was a helpful conversation in which we "checked in" with one another about how we take ongoing ownership of our financial resources and ministry.

The conversation about the Diocesan budget reminded me of the Bishop's Charge and its focus on relationship. In our "family conversation" about what is

important to members of Synod it was clear at this Synod, the will was to continue to reflect together on our budget.

This year lunch took place through the presence of three food trucks. Feedback was great about the choices and quality of food provided; however it was clear this process took longer than we anticipated. As people waited in line on a cold November day, it became evident that perhaps we needed more than three food trucks if we are to have lunch provided that way again.

Each year we learn. As we grow in faith, we grow too in our knowledge of how to "do Synod" when we are both organizing Synod as well as hosting it in our

venue.

One thing we have learned is how grateful we are for the Synod Office staff and the volunteers from Christ's Church Cathedral, who do so much to welcome people from throughout the Diocese into our diocesan home.

Stay tuned, for next year is the 140th anniversary of our life as the Diocese of Niagara—and something special will be happening as we grow and deepen in our diocesan life.

*Canon Marni Nancekivell is Secretary of Synod for Niagara Diocese. EMAIL: [marni.nancekivell@niagaraanglican.ca](mailto:marni.nancekivell@niagaraanglican.ca)*



## Chapel deconsecrated

"The service today marks a passage for this place. A ministry is coming to a close; something new is about to be born."

With these words of intent, a service of deconsecration began. Its purpose was to give thanks for the past, acknowledge the sorrow at seeing a diocesan facility closed and to commend the building to future ministries for God's people.

The Chapel of St. Francis, Bagnall Lodge at Canterbury Hills completed its church function on November 11, 2014. Some parts of the lands and facilities are being sold or transferred for other purposes. Details can be found in the December 2014 *Niagara Anglican* or online at [www.niagaraanglican.ca](http://www.niagaraanglican.ca)

"Buildings are created, serve God's purpose and are given over, but the Word of God continues on to enable the work of God's people in new ways," was affirmed during the deconsecration worship.

◀ Attending the deconsecration service for the Chapel of St. Francis at Bagnall Lodge, Canterbury Hills were current Executive Director Paddy Doran and former Executive Directors Rick Jones, Gavin Barnett and Bill Thomas.

Photo: Robert Morrow



**HOLLIS**torial

# What does it mean to be an Anglican?

**HOLLIS HISCOCK**

Mid November found me sitting on a Florida beach contemplating the question—what does it mean to be an Anglican? It was the theme for the November Niagara Synod; Bishop Michael addressed it personally and encouraged each person to do likewise.

What better setting in which to ponder weighty issues—reclining in the sun, watching stereotypical vacationers and eavesdropping as human voices compete with the endless lapping of water on pearly sand.

Two scenes captured my curiosity.

To my right six people were playing “beer can toss.” Similar to horseshoes, beer cans, still containing their spirits, were thrown towards a sandy cavity to score points. One overly boisterous player chattered a noisy, nonstop play by play commentary in a booming voice audible within a kilometre radius.

To my left approximately 50 individuals, dressed in their Sunday best, waited with heightened expectation for the wedding ceremony to commence. They seemed out of

place and yet, when the minister prayed to Jesus, I focused more intently. The worship portrayed an air of dignity and solemnity. Afterwards the guests congratulated the couple, laughed, cheered and then wandered away to continue celebrating at the wedding banquet. They seemed happy, delighted and honoured to be participants in this mammoth milestone of life being played out on a public Florida beach.

For me these totally different scenarios epitomized the extremes of what it means to be an Anglican.

My life began outside the Anglican Church; my parents were members of the Church of England, living in the independent colony of Newfoundland. Eight years after my baptism I was integrated into the Anglican Church of Canada without much fanfare or knowledge - when the most easterly land mass of North America became a Province of Canada, albeit by a slim majority of 51 to 49%.

Church life followed a traditional pattern and practice. Morning and evening Sunday worship were sandwiched by afternoon Sunday School, where

we “learned” the 10 commandments, the Apostles’ Creed and weekly collects. Generally we read or dramatized the Old Testament stories, and paid lesser attention to the far less exciting gospel parables. Our outreach centred on needy people, nearby or worldwide, and we were urged to treat others - even our classmates - the way we wanted to be treated ourselves.

My university days coincided with the many revolutions of the 1960’s, when we questioned or ripped down structures, institutions, traditions and practices.

When I was ordained in 1964, our ministry centred mainly on keeping church traditions alive and hanging on until the tides reversed and people returned to the “good old ways.” However, the questioning sixties, revolutionary seventies and topsy-turvy eighties practically guaranteed there was no going back.

To survive, and especially to thrive, both lay and ordained leaders had to adapt. I celebrated over 50 years of ordained ministry because I was willing to adopt creative effectual ways of being and doing church in the emerging global society. The ordination of female priests and

bishops plus greater lay leadership involvement in worship are leading paradigms of what I mean. Our gospel beliefs may have remained the same, but how we practiced our faith changed drastically.

To be an Anglican we need roots and wings. Roots ground us to the essentials of faith and wings allow us to soar into uncharted domains. There we can stumble, fail and fall before regaining our focus, resetting our goals and moving forward in our shared mission and ministry with God.

For me “what it means to be an Anglican” changes almost daily. When my Anglicanism clashes with the gospel of Jesus Christ I choose the latter; when forced to decide between people and traditions I side with the former; and whenever possible I apply my beliefs to make the world a more Godlike place in which to live.

This month’s Niagara Anglican contains illustrations of what I mean.

Here, you will meet an Oakville group raising money to give children in Belize a better education; you can walk with the Bishop as he tells his story and what is “personally meaningful”



to him; you will catch a personal glimpse inside a chaplain’s world as he deals with a family and nation grieving and coping with a horrific tragedy; you can share a journey in Cuba with a divinity student and much more.

As you read the various items, keep asking the question – *what does it mean to be an Anglican?*

You may be pleasantly surprised and inspired.

**NOW IT IS YOUR TURN ...**

What does being an Anglican mean to you?

- In 400 words or less,
- Answer the question
- Give examples from your own life
- Write your story and observations
- Send your article to the Editor by email (below) or 710 Ashley Ave, Burlington, ON, L7R2Z3.

Let us share the unity and diversity of what it means to be an Anglican in the church, in the community and in the world in the 21st century.

## Call for grant applications

**DEREK ANDERSON**

One of the important features of Hands Across Niagara (HAN) is the way it connects us to something larger than God is doing in our world.

Congregations that have received a grant to fund justice-based community partnerships are telling stories of the new sense of purpose they are finding for their ministry as they connect to God’s mission of justice-making. This goes beyond the

satisfaction of doing something good for our church or for our neighbours. We are learning about who God is calling us to be.

In 2015, HAN will again be awarding grants to ministry groups proposing to target the root causes of injustice faced by their neighbours or by the natural world.

Groups applying for grants will need to identify a partner for their project. The ideal partnership will be with a local agency that has the expertise or the

connections needed for working on a particular issue, but which is able to move ahead with its project only with the help of a partner like one of our parishes or another Anglican ministry group in our diocese.

As in past years, we will entertain applications targeting a broad range of justice issues. We encourage ministry groups with a project in mind to study the call for applications ([niagaraanglican.ca/ministry/hands-across-niagara](http://niagaraanglican.ca/ministry/hands-across-niagara)) and to speak to me or

to the Reverend Bill Mous at an early stage in their work on the application. Because of the urgency of calls for humanitarian relief in trouble spots around the world, we are particularly interested to hear from groups working on the justice-based issues faced by refugees.

Application materials will be available in mid-January, and grant applications will be due on March 2, 2015.

I want to thank you for your generous support for Hands

Across Niagara. Your gifts are making a difference in the neighbourhoods where God is calling us to serve. We are connecting in new ways with God’s mission in the world.

When Anglicans connect with God’s mission, the ministry we are able to offer is inspiring.

*Canon Derek Anderson is Chair of Hands Across Niagara. EMAIL: [derek.anderson@stmatthewburlington.ca](mailto:derek.anderson@stmatthewburlington.ca)*

## NIAGARA ANGLICAN

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# The chaplain's perspective

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

I believe our Anglican liturgy from the Book of Alternative Services is filled with beautiful words and symbols of faith and hope. In my homily I took the opportunity to try and explain some of the signs and symbols of the hope of the resurrection.

One of these beautiful symbols is the Easter Candle that we light at every Christian funeral in our tradition. It represents for us the light of Christ in our midst and that THE light cannot be overcome, not even by the darkness of death. In our parishes we light that candle for the first time on Holy Saturday evening during the Easter Vigil. The church is in darkness, reminding us of the darkness of death. The priest lights the Easter Candle and then spreads the light to all those in the church. Soon the darkness is overcome by the light. At

funerals it is a powerful symbol which represents for us the truth that the darkness of death does not get the final word. The light and life of Christ that we all share has the power to dispel the darkness.

The other powerful symbol we often see at funerals, but perhaps don't really think about, is flowers. When I see flowers at funerals they remind me of the journey of life. Flowers bloom in the spring, they fade and die in the fall and winter, and then they rise again the following spring. At funerals they remind us we share a similar journey. We live in this world, we die in this world and we rise to new and more abundant life in the world to come. It is a beautiful and hopeful journey even in the midst of grief and pain.

Finally, I wanted Cpl. Cirillo to know that in spite of his tragic and senseless death, it was not

in vain. His death brought a country together to honour his sacrifice. I wanted him to know that, along with all those who have given their lives in the service of freedom, we would never forget him.

It is my hope and prayer that his sacrifice makes all of us as Canadians more united and more determined than ever to work towards ensuring that this great nation is a place of peace and justice for all people, regardless of race, language, creed or way of life. We could do him no greater honour than to make that prayer a reality.

*Canon Rob Fead is the Rector of St. Jude's Oakville and Chaplain to the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada.*

# Many changes in 165 years

CONNIE PRICE

On October 19 Bishop Michael helped St. Matthew on-the-Plains Burlington celebrate its 165th anniversary.

There have been many changes since 1849 when a few pioneer families started meeting in their homes in Aldershot for worship.

The original church building was constructed in 1861 with the generosity of members of the Wyatt family. The church was often referred to as Wyatt's Chapel-of-Ease as people would stop there on their way to Hamilton. Some of the land was given by the Applegarth family from an original Crown grant. The former rectory land, to the west of the cemetery, was donated by the Brown family. During much of its early history, St. Matthew's shared clergy with St. Luke's Wellington Square (Burlington), Grace Church Waterdown and St. Andrew's by-the-Lake Hamilton.

A building boom began in the mid-twentieth century and the current parish hall was built in 1953, with the help of church members who volunteered 8,000 hours. The original white wooden church was enlarged in 1954.

In 1965 St. Matthew's church was razed and a modern brick church building was erected to



St. Matthew on-the Plains' original building served from 1861 until it was destroyed by fire in 1965.

Photo: Submitted by Jim Blake and St. Matthew's Archives

accommodate the new influx of people into the once rural area of Aldershot.

A further expansion and renewal of community and worship space was dedicated by Bishop Ralph Spence in 2004. This renovation made the church facilities completely accessible and able to meet the needs of the wider community.

Over the decades, St. Matthew on-the-Plains has remained a faithful Christian witness and shining beacon to the Aldershot community.

*Connie Price is a member of St. Matthew on-the-Plains. EMAIL: cprice3@cocego.ca*

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Synod Report

# Diocese built on a strong financial foundation

HOLLIS HISCOCK

Noting positive financial happenings during 2014, Chair of the Finance Budget Subcommittee Andrew Clinkard anticipates a small cash surplus for 2015.

Parish revenue per identifiable giver in 2013 was \$1,415, a substantial increase over 2012. However, Clinkard told synod delegates he predicted 2014 would be a break even year on an operating basis. The "Diocese is continuing the trend of the last few years towards improved financial health."

Turning to the 2015 budget he acknowledged the work of the Finance Budget Subcommittee (FBSC) and Diocesan Treasurer Jody Beck in creating a budget that enables the Diocese to respond to how God is calling "us to do ministry in a multitude of ways."

The budgeting process, characterized by consultation and broad input over nearly nine months, included a greater focus on "our shared mission where, not so long ago, the focus was certainly more on debt, deficits, and survival."

Traditionally about 100 people attended pre-synod meetings, but this year over 775 viewed a pre-synod video and were given the opportunity to ask questions or provide input online. The subcommittee crafted a narrative

presentation to bring life to the numbers in a meaningful way.

Expenses were broken into six categories: Employment and Parish Ministry Support, Beyond Niagara, Diocesan Administration, Cathedral Place Property, Beyond Parishes / Hands Across Niagara, and Programs and Vision Initiatives. The 2015 total budget figure is \$3,447,714.

**Employment and Parish Ministry Support** (\$1,813,871), the largest budget portion, is the cost of putting people to work on parishioners' behalf. Areas of support include direct parish support for their own staff as well as diocesan staff who are engaged in congregational support and development, justice ministries, community and global ministries, vision advocacy, excellence in ministry, Human Resources, Secretary of Synod, safe church and screening, volunteer management, stewardship, cemetery consultancy, program staff for adults/youth/children, staff for finance and diocesan support as well as the Bishop's office.

**Beyond Niagara** (\$670,643), the second largest apportionment, involves a number of initiatives supported by the Diocese that are not specific to any church, but are "important to our relationship with the wider church and to the way we serve the com-



▲ Synod delegates line up to speak on the budget and other issues discussed at the Niagara Synod.

Photo: Alicia Archbell

munity." These include General and Provincial Synod, OPCOTE, the Council of the North and "our companion diocese of Cuba."

**Diocesan Administration** (\$465,287), the third largest apportionment, is anticipated to shrink by 15% over three years. Items included are ordination retreats, employee assistance, archives, continuing education, training, office expenses, travel, interest/bank charges, communications/new web site, Niagara Anglican, auditing/legal and clergy conferences.

**Cathedral Place Property** (\$347,447) is the seat of the Bishop, the diocesan home for over 25,000 Anglicans and houses the Diocesan staff, numerous committees, as well

as Christ's Church Cathedral Parish. Expenses, representing approximately 10% of Diocesan spending, are anticipated to grow by 13% from 2014 to 2016. These items include building staff, maintenance, repairs, renovations, utilities and insurance.

**Beyond Parishes / Hands Across Niagara** (\$82,500) includes Hands Across Niagara, Canterbury Hills, Refugee support, PWRDF, Partners in Mission and ongoing partnerships in gospel justice.

**Programs and Vision Initiatives** (\$69,540), one of the fastest growing budget areas over the last five years, is anticipating very modest growth over the next two years. The Program staff offers numerous programs

for children and youth, accessible to everyone regardless of what may or may not be offered by their local church. Vision Initiatives, the largest single discretionary budget area, includes coordinating and animating responses to emerging social justice issues, supporting local/diocesan social justice groups, guest preaching, support for Hands Across Niagara applicants and facilitating learning/networking events.

The 2015 budget predicts revenue of \$3,424,209 and expenses \$3,447,288. By applying a net operating use of surplus/restricted funds (\$31,500), the cash surplus available in 2015 is anticipated to be \$8,421, said the Chair.

He explained a new line in the budget—"DON restricted funds Grant \$"—which reflects income received from restricted investment funds being dispersed to Congregational Support and Development, Education, Outreach and Greening Niagara. This income is made possible by careful stewardship of the Diocese's financial resources and healthy investment returns, he said.

Calling Niagara a diocese striving with Christ's help to carry out the mission of the church, he concluded, "together, we can do infinitely more than we would otherwise be able to accomplish on our own."

## Congratulations

The Reverend William H. Steinman of St. Catharines was recognized with the Ontario Senior Achievement Award, the highest provincial honour for seniors over 65.

An Anglican priest, he has been an active volunteer with the Ontario Special Olympics for more than 20 years, is a member of the St. John Ambulance Association and serves as the padre of the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 24.

In the next Niagara Anglican

Susan Wilson begins a mini-series "A journey in storytelling"

Michael Burslem returns with "Seeking to Live Faithfully"

Sharyn Hall revisits Susanna — "A story told thousands of years ago"

# Let's dance

MURRAY BLAND  
Burlington

Although I did DJ bookings for 18 years, my greatest pleasure came from offering my services to Anglican churches as well as Roman Catholic and United Church groups.

This was one such occasion. A nun friend called and asked if I would provide dance music for something she was putting together. I said I would be happy to do so. She gave me the date, time and location in the northeast part of Toronto.

When the day came, June and I arrived there early and I set up the equipment on the stage, looking out on an arena sized room with hun-

dreds of tables and a huge dance floor in the middle.

People started arriving; we were told many were mentally or physically challenged. There were younger and older people, many families and friends—every table was filled.

A man stepped up to the microphone to welcome them all.

As he was talking, a young man at the back of the room started walking briskly down the middle of the dance floor. He arrived at the stage just as the second man took over the microphone.

The young man looked him straight in the eye and said in a clear, loud voice, "Enough talk, let's dance!"

A tremendous cheer went up from the crowd as they poured onto the dance floor.

The second "speaker" shrugged his shoulders, and then he and his wife joined the crowd.

How they danced! It didn't matter what I played, they danced! What joy!

Oh, the noise, the noise, the beautiful noise! What smiles and laughter—it went on, and on, and on.

I looked up and there near the stage were my wife June and my friend, the nun.

They smiled—I smiled. They knew—I knew. A night to remember!



**The Bishop's Charge to Synod****“What does it mean to be ANGLICAN?”**  
**Bishop tells his faith story**

It is a great pleasure for me to welcome you to our Cathedral and to this second session of the 140th Synod of the Diocese of Niagara. Our Synod gathering this session is centred around the question: “What does it mean to be Anglican?”

As we explore that question not only here in our time together today but in gatherings in parishes across the diocese, it is my hope such an exploration will give us an opportunity to share with each other our faith stories, and our understanding of how the presence and love of God has shaped and charted the course of our lives.

So let me set that process in motion by sharing something of what that looks like, in my life, and what it means to me vocationally and personally to be an Anglican in this day and age.

**My formative years**

I want to begin by telling those who don't already know I was born and raised in Oakville. Not only was I born and raised in Oakville, but so was my mother, and while my father was born in Toronto he grew up on a farm where the Ford plant sits today. I remember being at an anniversary dinner at one of our parishes in Oakville, with a room full of people, and I asked the question: “Who else in this room can say the same ... that both they and at least one of their parents was born and raised in this town?” Not one other person put up their hand!

Until I was twenty, I never lived more than three blocks from at least one of my grandparents. A number of my aunts and uncles lived in Oakville as well. Almost every Saturday night my father and my uncles gathered in our basement to watch Hockey Night in Canada. Those evenings and many other family events gave me the opportunity to interact with a wide circle of family and friends that nurtured deep and meaningful relationships that continue to shape and inform me to this day. I know—and you know—that that kind of family dynamic no longer exists for the vast majority of the people we encounter in the Diocese of Niagara today.

My life as a Christian and as an

Anglican throughout those years was interwoven with this story from the moment I was born.

I was baptized at St. Aidan's Anglican Church in Oakville at the age of two and a half months. The Rector who baptized me was none other than John Bothwell, who would go on to be the 8th Bishop of Niagara. Bishop John died this past year and I had the privilege of visiting with him the day before he died. We talked about the fact that he had baptized me. He was famous for loving a good pun and in our conversation I told him that I only had one complaint about my baptism. I speculated he was experimenting with full immersion in those days and that he may have held me under the water a little too long!

We continue to give thanks to God for Bishop John's life, ministry and witness and our love and prayers continue to be with his wife Joan and family.

Without exception the next three Rectors at St. Aidan's would play significant roles in my formative years: Bill Anthony, Don Powell and Doug Perry.

The connection between the Community of the Sisters of the Church and St. Aidan's was well established in those days; there was always a Sister from the Community who took an active role in our parish life. My confirmation teacher was Sister Juliana and, believe me, she was a force to be reckoned with in all kinds of wonderful ways.

I was a member of the junior choir and servers' guild, the head server, a chalice bearer, a member of Parish Council and worship committee and a delegate to Regional Council—all before I was 19 years old.

The worship that was at the heart of my early life in the church was well-centred in the celebration of the Eucharist in the Anglo-Catholic tradition and in the *Book of Common Prayer*. I also have to admit, that to this day, there is nothing more healing and comforting for me than attending a BCP sung Evensong.

Perhaps one of the most painful and difficult parts of my journey in the Church over these 57 years is coming to the realization that, once again, the vast majority of the people we

now encounter in the Diocese of Niagara, will not have had this experience or any connection to the Church.

I took that experience of my life at St. Aidan's and my Sunday school version of religion with me as I went off to University to study science and mathematics.

Believe me, my faith was challenged and assaulted on every side. Even in those days, however, the Church was there for me. I attended an Anglicans on Campus group at the Erindale site of the University of Toronto, which was led by a local parish priest in Streetsville. That, combined with long conversations with my Rector Doug Perry, I emerged with a new and more resilient faith perspective. In the last year of my studies I had decided to begin a process of discernment that would lead to a life in ordained ministry.

Ironically, on the day of my election as the Bishop of Niagara I received a call from that former parish priest in Streetsville. His name is Andrew Hutchinson and he was calling me, on that day, in his capacity as the Primate of the Anglican Church of Canada.

As I continued on in my life as a deacon, priest and bishop, God continued to bless me with a wonderful wife and family, a long list of mentors, colleagues and friends, both lay and ordained, to whom I am deeply indebted and for whom I am profoundly thankful.

**My answer to the question**

My answer, then, to the question: “What does it mean to be Anglican” begins with a list of the things that are personally meaningful to me.

There is our rich heritage and tradition of theological reflection and liturgical practice, and the many ways we read, engage with and are guided by the Bible. As an Anglican, I am richly blessed by our prayer books and liturgies, especially when those liturgies are well-planned and rich in meaning and reflect elements of creativity. I am also grateful for our understanding of how the grace of God touches our human reality in our administration of the sacraments of the

**What it means to be Anglican—  
as lived out by the Bishop**

▲ The Bishop ordained Daniel Cranley (right) as a Deacon in the Church of God on November 30, 2014 in Christ's Church Cathedral Hamilton. Canon Rob Park, Rector of St. George's Georgetown presented Dan to be ordained.

Photo: Bill Mous



▲ Bishop Michael Bird and Rector Scott McNaughton cut the anniversary cake signalling the end of a yearlong celebration of St. Stephen-on-the-Mount's 100 years as a parish in Hamilton. The Anniversary Sunday was held on November 2 with the Bishop as celebrant and preacher. The weekend also included an anniversary dinner and dance held the previous night.

Photo: Submitted by Parish Administrator Lynne Timmins

# “We are called to be in relationship with God's people EVERYWHERE.”



▲ Bishop Michael led the deconsecration service for the Chapel of St. Francis at Bagnall Lodge, Canterbury Hills on November 11, 2014, assisted by current Executive Director Paddy Doran. Story on page 2.

Photo: Robert Morrow



▲ The Bishop speaking to the children at a worship service celebrating 165 years of history, mission and ministry at St. Matthew on-the-Plains Burlington. See also Page 4.

Photos: Submitted by Jim Blake

**As an Anglican, I am richly blessed.**

*+Michael Bird*

**CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6**

Church, and would also hold up as a gift the ways we structure our lives as Anglicans; how we govern ourselves and how we recognize and exercise authority in many forms. I feel blessed by many of our ways of being Anglican, including through theological reflection; careful, meaningful and creative worship; sacraments; our approaches to governance and authority, and yes, even our structures.

**The gift of relationship**

Having heard my story, however, it will not be a surprise for you to hear me say that one of the things that I particularly hold dear about my life in the Anglican Church is the gift of relationship—the precious and life-giving relationship that I have with God and Jesus the Christ, and the ways that that sacred encounter with the divine has been nourished and made real in the human relationships I have been blessed with along the way.

In the Gospel reading we have chosen for today, the lectionary Gospel from two Sundays ago, Jesus encounters a group of Pharisees and from the moment they meet him, their intention is one of distancing themselves from Jesus.

In fact, the word “Pharisee” means one who separates himself from others—from the “heathen” and from some other Jews.

The Pharisees were highly invested in tradition, in the letter of the law and in rigid structures of governance. They were a political, religious sect that emerged in the third century B.C., following the Exile, as the people of Israel found themselves confronted with a variety of different belief systems, political ideologies and societal norms and influences.

In fairness, their stance of “battering down the hatches”—of separating themselves from the rest of the world as much as possible and vilifying and victimizing those who see things differently—is an age old reaction that religious people have employed when they meet with challenge and lose a sense of direction.

Sadly, it remains with us in our Anglican Church, in the Christian Church as a whole, in the wider world and quite locally. As we continue to mourn the loss of Corporal Nathan Cirillo, we see how this impulse for separation still plays out on the world scene.

The Pharisees tried desperately to trick Jesus or to back him into a corner on a number of occasions, and in this passage they ask him to choose the greatest commandment of all. He says to them: “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and soul and that you should also love your neighbour as yourself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.”

There is no doubt that we would all agree that loving God is the defining purpose and activity of our life.

It is interesting to note, however, that our Lord was unwilling to name this one commandment as the greatest; that the love of one's neighbour (and oneself!) is absolutely inseparable from our love of God and we cannot do one without the other. In Luke's gospel this same story has a twist. The Pharisee or the lawyer immediately asks Jesus: “And who is my neighbour?” This leads into Jesus telling the parable of the Good Samaritan. We all know that at the end of that parable, Jesus asks his own question: “Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbour to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?” The answer comes back: “The one who showed mercy.” Jesus replies: “Go and do the same.”

“Go and do likewise”—it is our mission, it is our calling—we worship God and then we go and show mercy to our neighbour. We are called to be in relationship with God's people everywhere.

Malcolm Grundy in his book, *Leadership and Oversight: New Models for Episcopal Ministry*, writes: “Churches are the places where activity and beliefs are built on relationship. People in their many types and with their various hopes and expectations are the life-blood of the church. It has to be that those who are called to any kind of responsibility in any church depend more

than anything else on the quality of relationship ...”

For me then, the good news in all of this is that I believe our beloved Anglican Church, with all its faults and foibles, is hard-wired for relationships. We are hard-wired to be in relationship in so many ways: bishop and clergy, bishop and parishes, clergy and people, parish to parish and bishop to bishop, within the diocese, across Canada and around the world. We are hard-wired to support and share with one another, learn from one another, pray with and for one another. In the challenges we have faced and the opportunities we embrace, it is always in the context of a journey that is taken together that we follow in the footsteps of Jesus.

**The importance of relationships**

Let me spend a few minutes telling you why I believe this matters and matters deeply.

On Wednesday, October 22, 2014, I was sitting in the Niagara Room at Cathedral Place in our weekly staff meeting. As we met, through the attentiveness of staff member Bill Mous, our social media guru, we had the information that a soldier had been shot in Ottawa from the moment the first news broke. By early afternoon the word came to us that the soldier was an Argyll and Sutherland Highlander from Hamilton, and immediately the Dean and I walked down to the Armouries. The regiment was in lockdown but outside the media had begun to gather.

There, by himself, was the mayor. We were able to share our disbelief and our shock with him, and we pledged our support and our assistance to the people of Hamilton in the midst of this terrible tragedy. The Dean also told the mayor that the Cathedral was opening its doors to all who needed a place for prayer, meditation or just to have somewhere to gather. It was clear that the mayor was deeply grateful.

While I was standing outside the Armouries, a call came in from Bishop Peter Coffin, our Anglican Bishop to the Armed Forces. He wanted to make sure I knew that the soldier who



## Bishop's Charge to Synod

# “NO PARISH IS BURDENED with the pressure of being all things to all people.”

### CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

was killed was an Argyll and Sutherland from Hamilton. I shared with him the details of what we were doing at this end. He told me the chaplain Canon Rob Fead, Rector of our parish at St. Jude's Church in Oakville, was already with Corporal Cirillo's family and was preparing to fly with them to Ottawa.

I want to pay tribute to Rob Fead for the incredible ministry he exercised in support of the Cirillo family and the regiment in the course of those days.

In time we learned, despite a number of possible alternatives, the family wanted the funeral service to be held at our Cathedral. The moment that word was received, members of the Cathedral Place staff did what every one of our congregations would do and has done in this kind of situation—we did everything humanly possible to allow the Church to open our doors wide and to proclaim the good news of the gospel even in the midst of such tragedy and death.

For a number of the staff their life was turned upside down with the physical details, the thousands of telephone calls that came in, the overwhelming media frenzy and requests for interviews and the task of dealing with over 150 pages of

instructions that came from military headquarters and the Prime Minister's Office. It is just one of the countless examples of how each member of our staff at Cathedral Place is a blessing to me personally and to all of us in the Diocese of Niagara.

It is also important for me to acknowledge with gratitude the fact that we have a staff and a Cathedral Place to meet in because every parish in the diocese supports and shares in this ministry.

As I have said a number of times, this funeral was a ministry event without precedence in my 30 years of ordained ministry and I am so grateful to all who contributed in any way to the work that led up to this national day of mourning.

We have received emails and messages from people across Canada who have expressed their deep appreciation. One woman from Calgary wrote this to us: “Such tremendous hope, the grace of God, deep compassion, wide embrace of all people, and a strong message to the entire world that evil will not have the final word in this tragedy.”

As a family of Anglicans across the diocese, across Canada and indeed around the world, we have ready-made networks that allow us to respond more effectively to the challenges

and opportunities we face as a church in the 21st century.

Whenever a national funeral happens in Hamilton; when a community garden is opened; when desperately needed supplies are sent to communities in the Arctic; when the needs of our neighbours are being met in the local community and as far away as Cuba, Honduras and Belize; when newcomers are welcomed to a church service held in a pub, a jazz mass or a young people's gathering service; when a visit is made to a government official to advocate for a remedy to a particular injustice; when we stand with refugees; and, as each one of our congregations finds new ways to proclaim the gospel afresh in this day and age; we do it standing together.

Sometimes I visit a particular congregation and they say to me that they are worried because they are doing nothing for young people or nothing to address the problems of First Nations communities in the North.

My answer to that is: “Actually, yes you are!” It may not be happening in this particular parish but lots of work is being done with young people and Anglicans have a strong and vital presence in the North.

Together, we Anglicans are offering incredible ministries and endeavouring to do our best to address the needs of people in

every corner of the globe.

There are many more significant unmet needs. God's mission of justice and peace is ongoing and it calls us, who follow Christ passionately, to continue to pursue excellence, practise justice and grow. But the truth is, we have so much to give thanks to God for as we gather at Diocesan Synod today.

The exciting news about this is that no parish is burdened with the pressure of being all things to all people. Every congregation has the freedom to take stock of the blessings, the talents, the passions for ministry and the treasure that we do have, and to follow the leading of the Holy Spirit in each local context. Often it will mean we are called to seek out partnerships with other churches and other community agencies to engage in the work and ministry that God is calling us to. I am delighted to report that these kinds of connections are emerging all across the Diocese of Niagara.

More than this, however, our common life together reflects the understanding of the early Christian communities that we find in the writing of St. Paul: “For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ” (1 Corinthians 12:12).

### Needing our attention in 2015

Let me therefore conclude with some thoughts on what I believe is important for us to pay attention to in the coming year:

- We will renew **our commitment to partnerships**: initiating, encouraging and supporting relationships between parishes, faith and community groups, justice networks, social service agencies and non-profit organizations.
- The Bishop's office staff will explore ways of freeing up more of my time to **engage with clergy and congregations**. Parish visits with the Regional Archdeacon will resume and be enhanced.
- We will step up the development of **Ministry Covenants** as a visible sign of this gift of relationship that we share in the diocese.

- The Bishop's **Indaba gatherings**, as a follow-up to this year's Clergy and Licensed Lay Workers Conference, will begin early in the New Year.
- In 2015 we will celebrate the **140th anniversary** of the Diocese of Niagara and I am calling on the members of Synod Council to begin making plans for a major celebration. Let us gather to give thanks to God for our past and present ministries and for the blessings that we so richly experience in our common life together.
- As part of our celebrations I intend to **invite our Primate**, Fred Hiltz, to be with us and engage with us at some point over the course of the year.
- I am also asking each region of the Diocese to plan an event that will **bring congregations together** to celebrate and to connect with one another in this anniversary year.

### Great hope and excitement for the days ahead

I have spoken a great deal about the gift of relationship and, in closing, I would like to acknowledge and give thanks for the gift and privilege I have been given in the relationships I have with the clergy and the people of the Diocese of Niagara. From my vantage point, as Bishop, I can see the passion for ministry that is being offered so freely and so courageously across Niagara, and you empower me and inspire me and bring me great hope and excitement for the days ahead! Jesus said, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and with all your mind,” and “You shall love your neighbour as yourself.” May these precious words be written on our hearts as we strive to allow them to become a reality in our lives, in our congregations and across the Diocese of Niagara. May God continue to bless this work that we share in together in the days and years to come.

*Bishop Michael Bird delivered his Bishop's Charge to the Second Session of the 140th Synod of the Diocese of Niagara at Christ's Church Cathedral Hamilton on November 8, 2014.*



▲ The image of Archbishop Thomas Cranmer, who wrote and compiled the first *Book of Common Prayer* for the Church of England in 1548 looks down on the computers, cell phones and tablets used by youth delegates in 2014.

Photo: Alicia Archbell



Synod Report

# Gleaned from reports . . .

**Repair, improve or build**

The ambition and purpose of the Bishop's Advisory Committee on Church Buildings, according to Chair Ian Chadwick, is "to help you do it right the first time, to save you money and to assist you in finishing the job within budget. We think that's somewhere between a sacred trust and a holy mission."

Over the past year BACCB worked with more than 20 parishes in Hamilton, Halton, Guelph, Oakville, St. Catharines, Welland and Niagara Falls.

**New shape for Cathedral Place**

The task force on Cathedral Place development reported, "based on the current concept, an eight storey building with condominiums, commercial and retail space," could be constructed on land adjoining Christ's Church Cathedral Hamilton.

The project could be completed by 2018.

**Education for adults—worship for youth**

The Gathering, completing its seventh year, offers quarterly worship with a live band and liturgy written and delivered by youth and young adult participants.

The Bishop's Diploma Course provided instruction related to faith issues for over 50 lay people through two eight-week terms (fall and winter) and is offered in as many as six parish centres. Course themes include Old Testament, New Testament, ethics, liturgy, history, spirituality, world religions and Anglicanism. Diploma requirements are

completion of six courses and attendance at a retreat.

**Cemeteries—a challenge for closing churches**

Cremation is now the leading method of disposition, according to Diocesan Cemetery Consultant Brian G. Culp. "I try my very best to steer all Anglican cemeteries towards columbaria and scattering gardens. These placements are very easy to maintain and equally important, and provide the greatest income per footprint."

Presently the Diocese is experiencing a transition period. There are churches closing that have cemeteries and this is going to create a challenge for the Diocese.

Meanwhile, the Cemeteries Regulation Unit is requesting all cemeteries in Ontario to apply for a new Cemetery Licence, to be completed by December 31, 2014.

**Back to the future**

Archivist John Rathbone urged parishes to update their written history records. "Many older parishioners are a gold mine of past parish history. Don't forget to record this important information before it might be lost."

The archives has copies of the *Niagara Anglican* from the very first one in January 1955—a small four page edition—as well as *Niagara Synod Journals* from 1876.

Parishes can obtain from the Archivist a helpful pamphlet, *Archives, our story*, which describes what to keep and what not to keep. "Please—no kitchen sinks!" pleads Rathbone.



▲ David Ricketts, Sue Carson and Jean Archbell represented St. James Dundas at the Niagara Synod.

Photo: Alicia Archbell



▲ Youth delegates Barbara Jean Lick and Connor Wilson exercised their right to vote at synod.

Photos: Alicia Archbell

## It's not too late

We want you to share your "Christmas Happenings" with the readers of the *Niagara Anglican*. Send us photos and short articles (200 words or less) about your Christmas experience. Because of our deadline dates, timing is crucial. **Absolute deadline January 6, 2015.** Send items to [editor@niagaraanglican.ca](mailto:editor@niagaraanglican.ca). **Thanks and have a fantastic Happy New Year!**

### Deadlines and Submissions for Niagara Anglican

**Deadlines –**  
 March 2015 – January 25  
 April 2015 – February 25  
 May 2015 – March 2015

**Submissions –**  
**News – 500 words or less**  
**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](mailto:editor@niagaraanglican.ca) or 905-635-9463



**HAPPY NEW Year 2015**

**Thank you for supporting the Niagara Anglican in 2014.**

**May you feel God's presence in whatever you experience in the coming year.**

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Synod Report

# Synod – a parish perspective

*(Editor's note: Synod delegates are expected to report back to their respective parishes shortly after the diocesan gathering. The Sunday after synod delegates from Epiphany parish Oakville published their report in their weekly bulletin. The Niagara Anglican presents it here as an illustration of what can be done, as well as noting the highlights of synod as seen through the eyes of parish representatives.)*

Canon Suzanne Craven, Linda Kelloway and Sarah Thompson represented the Church of the Epiphany at the Diocesan Synod on Saturday, November 8, 2014.

In his charge to the Second Session of the 140th Synod of the Diocese of Niagara, Bishop Michael posed the question "What does it mean to be an Anglican?" Bishop Michael recounted his own faith story, having been born and raised in Oakville and enjoying deep and meaningful relationships with his family and church for his first 20 years. Bishop Michael spoke on how the influence and faith teaching by family seems to be lessening and as such the

vast majority of people in the Diocese will not have had such a connection with the church. What it means to be Anglican is something that is profoundly personal and meaningful to each person. To love God is the defining purpose of our lives followed by the love of one's neighbor and the love of self. The Bishop also reflected upon the recent funeral held for Corporal Cirillo at the Cathedral, emphasizing the support that was shown in the midst of tragedy and death, and emphasizing how we should all love our neighbour. The Bishop outlined several priorities for the coming year, including the 140th anniversary of the Diocese. The Primate will be invited to visit and each region is being asked to plan an event to bring congregations together to celebrate this milestone.

The Diocesan budget for 2015 was passed. The debt has been significantly reduced and a small surplus is projected on operating expenses. There was discussion on Historical Debt: long term debt is defined as anything more than two years old. There is a



◀ Sarah Thompson, Suzanne Craven and Linda Kelloway represented the Church of the Epiphany at the 2014 Niagara Synod

need to reduce the long term debt held by parishes in Niagara. Incentives for parishes with long term debt were presented and included establishment of a stewardship campaign within the last six months and that funds used to repay the debt will not be included in DM&M charges.

In other business, the Vision Groups each gave a presentation under the heading "Living the Legacy" focusing on the lives of influential people, including presentations on Thomas Cranmer, John Wesley, Francis of Assisi, Dorothy Sayers, Hilda of Whitby and The Reverend Florence Li

Tim-Oi.

The Cathedral Place Development Task Force provided a report on planning. They are moving ahead with a plan to make Cathedral Place financially viable and sustainable and are investigating building at the back of the cathedral in the parking lot. Investigations with an archeological company have revealed the presence of a cemetery under the parking lot. The task force is working with authorities to determine the next steps.

The Canterbury Hills Conference Centre property has been sold to a boarding school

with closing expected in the spring; the Diocese is also working on leasing the camping area in the shoulder seasons to help offset costs.

Presentations were given by recipients of the Walking on Water (WOW) grants. WOW grants are available to support parish initiatives that meet a number of objectives including launching new ministries that relate to our Diocesan vision. More information is available on the Diocese of Niagara website.

Lastly, Provincial Synod representatives for 2015 were announced.

## A letter BEFORE going to Cuba

DEAN CORMACK

I am a third year M.Div. student at Trinity College Toronto, and a postulant in the Diocese of Niagara. I planned to graduate this May but have opted to experience something that doesn't often happen.

Going back three generations, my relatives were Anglican Missionary Priests in the Caribbean. As a young boy I remember my grandmother telling me stories of her father's postings and experiences. It never occurred to me that I might have the chance to channel my missionary roots in these modern times.

As a postulant in Niagara there are many vibrant parishes I could have applied to for my phase two internship. This full semester placement is a requirement in the M.Div. program. We have the diversity of geographies as well as communities in which a student can experience the challenges and joys of intercultural ministry.

The relationship developed between Niagara and the Diocese of Cuba is a special communion of cultures, customs, language and spirituality. As I learned more about this committed partnership I wondered if there had ever been, or maybe there could be, an opportunity to have a ministerial exchange program.

This summer, while interning with Bishop Terry Brown at Ascension Church Hamilton, I was the chaplain for Bishop Michael. I asked what he had planned for his upcoming sabbatical. He told me he was going to continue his Spanish lessons so he might better communicate with our Cuban partners.

I saw the opportunity and asked if there had ever been an exchange of clergy to Cuba for any extended period of time. He paused and said "No, would you like to go?" I explained I would love to do my phase two internship there. I was surprised and thrilled that this seed of opportunity had fallen on fertile soil with Bishop Michael. Now

the challenge was: could I make this seed grow? I asked if I could investigate the possibility with his blessing, which he gave. I soon found that this seed was about to have many people nurturing it, who are all looking forward to an abundant harvest.

I contacted Canon Terry DeForest at the Diocesan Office and outlined my conversation with the Bishop. He was most receptive and contacted Dr. Andrea Mann (global relations coordinator, Anglican Church of Canada). My little seed was starting to grow.

Bishop Griselda Delgado Del Carpio of Cuba happened to be in Canada, and was presented with the possibility of having an intern from Niagara come to Cuba for four months. She was very excited and open to the experience. This seed had taken root.

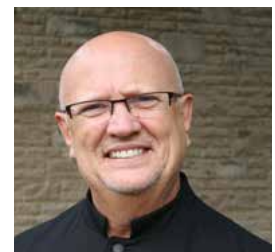
The next hurdle to this journey was Trinity College and fulfilling the requirements of my field education course under the guidance of Canon Andrew Sheldon.

It is not that unusual to have students do internships abroad, but never has one been done in Cuba with its restrictive environment where the Church and Government are often at odds. The other difficulty is that Cuba has an internet lockdown for citizens and communicating home, even with email, is challenging.

With a few minor variances in the reporting and supervision sections of the Trinity field education handbook the seed continued to grow. Canon Stuart Pike volunteered to be my Canadian Supervisor, and with the involvement of the Reverend Bill Mous and Canon Terry DeForest my Canadian team was set.

My process of observing, learning and sharing will be concentrating on education, worship, social needs and administration within the Cuban Church and community. I hope to try and get to as many regions as possible, realizing travel is difficult.

As I write in late November, I am awaiting my Cuban Religious Visa which is issued by the



Government in Havana, and finishing off my semester at Trinity College. My departure date is December 18, and I return after Easter in April.

So many people are involved with this idea and so much support offered to me, including my family, my home parish of Grace Church Waterdown, my diocese, my college and my national church. When I asked Dr. Mann why all this support for me, she simply said, "Because you asked."

I realize this unique opportunity has a huge educational component, but it is also a chance to grow our shared beliefs while celebrating our cultural diversities.

My hope is to send a few letters from Cuba so that my experiences along the way can be shared ones.

# Spaghetti dinner attracts record numbers to help school in Belize

## TAMARA FERGUSON

On Saturday, November 1, St. Simon's Oakville hosted its annual spaghetti dinner to raise funds for the church's fourth mission trip to San Pedro, Belize scheduled for July 2015.

Every other summer, St. Simon's and its youth lead a mission trip to Holy Cross Anglican School in Belize. The first trip was in 2009 with subsequent trips being in 2011 and 2013.

Next summer, approximately 20 youths and adults will be heading down to Belize, located on the northeastern coast of Central America, to help out at Holy Cross. The school was founded in 2006 by a couple from Virginia who, working as missionaries in Belize City at the time, saw a tremendous need for a new school in San Pedro.

Located in the incredibly poor neighbourhood of San Mateo, the school started with just a few dozen students but now boasts between 500-600 students, from preschool to grade eight.

Since opening its doors, Holy Cross has undergone considerable transformation with the help of many volunteers. It has expanded its classrooms, upgraded computer labs, added a sewing centre, covered outdoor playgrounds, improved sanitation, expanded solar power and much more.

During mission years, St. Simon's fundraises half the cost of sending its team to Belize through events such as pie-making, bake sales, barbecues and spaghetti dinners. Fundraising also takes place between missions to support a specific need or program at Holy Cross.

By far, one of the church's biggest fundraisers for Belize is the annual Spaghetti Dinner, and the November 1 event was no exception.

While the mission trips are important to the congregation and parishioners like to support the mission team with various fundraisers, this year's dinner in particular brought in record numbers with approximately 120

people in attendance, although only about 80 were expected to attend. This led to some scrambling and excitement, and certainly kept the kitchen "staff" and servers on their toes throughout the evening! The night was filled with fun, fellowship, great food and some fabulous entertainment provided by a few connected to the mission, including some musical youth.

Although the adults prepared the food and arranged most of the evening's details, the youth also played a big part by greeting guests, serving food and helping with the cleanup. It was only a month earlier that this same team came together to make 110 pumpkin and apple pies to sell for Thanksgiving, with all proceeds going towards the mission trip. Bake sales, also known as a "Belize Café" are a regular fixture once a month after Sunday services.

St. Simon's feels that the mission trips are a time of partnership with its youth and with the people of Holy Cross.



▲ Samantha Rideout, Meggie Haycraft and Adrianna Michell prepare to serve the spaghetti dinner to help sponsor the parish's mission trip to a school in Belize.

Photo: Tamara Ferguson

The church's goal for the mission trips is to show the love of Christ in practical ways that make tangible differences in people's lives and to allow God to work in us through the residents and workers of Holy Cross, so that together we can be God's hands in our world.

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