

From Ashes to Easter

Peter Davison reflects on the multi-faith aspects of fasting.

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Join the College of Deacons this Lent as they meditate on



Candidates meet and greet

At three diocesan gatherings, candidates for Coadjutor Bishop met over 400 people.

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NIAGARA ANGLICAN



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A section of the Anglican Journal

MARCH 2018



Bishop Michael writes ...

ONE of our readings appointed for Easter this year comes from the 25th chapter of the book of the prophet Isaiah:

On this mountain the Lord of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wines, of rich food filled with marrow, of well-aged wines strained clear. And he will destroy on this mountain the shroud that is cast over all peoples, the sheet that is spread over all nations; he will swallow up death forever.

Isaiah offered an ancient people a very real insight into the world God desires for all God's children. It is a prophetic image of the kingdom God offers us all. It proclaims the Easter promise of life after death, but it also speaks of the gift of transforming love that can be experienced here and now. So many times in our worship, we read these beautiful passages of scripture that echo the Easter themes of redemption and restoration, but I sometimes wonder if those who hear these words really believe that they have much relevance for the lives we lead today, almost three thousand years later.

Of all the many gifts and blessings that I have received in the course of my work as your bishop, there is no greater gift than the renewed sense of hope and encouragement I have been given for the life and ministry of our church. I believe that our work together over these years has opened our lives and our ministries to embrace more fully God's transforming love and mission. The signs of renewal and new growth in the Diocese of Niagara are all around us, and for me they breathe new life into these words of Isaiah and into the good news of Christ's resurrection that we celebrate on Easter Sunday!

The wonderful Lenten meditations that appear in this issue of the Niagara Anglican focus upon Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, that lifts up those whose lives are characterized by meekness, mercy, purity of heart, peacemaking and a hunger and thirst for what is righteous and just. It pronounces a blessing upon those who have experienced suffering, but who draw courage and strength from their relationship with God in the face of adversity.

I give thanks to God in this Holy season for the privilege I have had to witness the ways in which this life-changing message has found expression in our hearts, in our lives and in our congregations.

May the Easter promise of resurrection joy be experienced in our midst once again this year, and may the Sermon on the Mount continue to inspire us as we seek new leadership and a new vision for the work that lies ahead.

Yours faithfully in the love of the risen Christ,

+Michael



Education for ministry can transform lives



PETER DAVISON

Not that long ago, ministry was seen as the work of the clergy.

In the old induction service for new rectors, the priest promised to do all kinds of things, but there was essentially one question for the laity: Will you pay, pray and obey?

But in the nineteen-seventies that theory was turned upside down, as the church recognized that all of us are ministers, called to live our faith, not only within church walls, but in our homes, and in our work in the world.

The work of the clergy is to encourage and support the laity in their life and witness in wider society. This also means that, in an increasingly secular world, lay people need to be better equipped for their ministries.

Enter Efm (Education for Ministry), designed specifically for lay people.

Efm was begun in 1975 in the Episcopal Church USA, with Efm Canada being formed in 1985.

The program offers—one year at a time—four years of small-group study covering the Hebrew Scriptures, New Testament,

Church History and Christian Ethics, with Theological Reflection (TR) at its core.

In short, Efm provides us with an answer to the question, "How can I discern and exercise my ministry in my daily life?"

For 36 weeks each year Efm groups meet weekly for a couple of hours to worship together, share insights from their studies, and discover the art of Theological Reflection, by connecting tradition, culture, their own beliefs and how we can apply them in daily life and work. There are now thousands of Efm graduates worldwide.

All groups are led by trained mentors. Many participants describe Efm as transformative. Mentor training is available if you would like to explore that possibility.

Now is the time to register for the 2018-2019 year and for mentor training, being held May 25-27.

For more information, contact the Niagara diocesan coordinator, Peter Davison (peterdavison61@gmail.com) or Jane Wyse at synod office (jane.wyse@niagaraanglican.ca).



Minimum wage increases in Ontario

Many of the reforms brought about by Bill 148, including an increase to Ontario's minimum wage to \$14.00 per hour, came into effect on January 1. The diocese is supportive of these measures which make important strides towards ensuring all workers have enough to flourish, free of poverty.

At the same time, some employers have chosen to claw back benefits to their workers, sparking much debate and a number of large solidarity

protests.

As Bishop Michael Bird said previously, "at a time when many seek to sow division and discord, paying living wages is an act of justice and inclusion."

These changes create, through conversations and our daily actions and choices, many opportunities to live into our baptismal covenant by bearing witness to our values about respecting and upholding the dignity of every human being.



Responding to Price Fixing

Loblaws recently announced it would offer a \$25 gift card to Canadians impacted by its illegal price-fixing scheme on bread.

While this has raised some serious concerns, it is anticipated that hundreds of millions

of dollars' worth of gift cards will be given out.

Some churches and agencies have suggested donating the cards. Acts of charity like this are needed, but consider coupling such donations with an act of justice, like making a call

to your MPP urging systemic action to eliminate poverty.

Significant progress is being made to this end; and complementing charity with advocacy, community organizing and solidarity moves us closer to the goal of a poverty-free Ontario.

New business watchdog

KAIROS (kairoscanada.org) and its overseas partners are greatly encouraged by the Minister of International Trade's recent announcement regarding the creation of the Canadian Ombudsperson for Responsible Business Enterprise, billed as the first of its kind in the world.

The position will hold Canadian mining companies and their subsidiaries, as well as the oil and gas and garment sectors, accountable for human rights violations at their overseas operations.

The move comes nearly a decade since industry and civil

society leaders recommended such an office and three years after the CNCA (Canadian Network on Corporate Accountability), of which KAIROS is a member, launched the Open for Justice Campaign.

Just News is published online by Niagara Diocese. You can sign up to receive it regularly at <http://eepurl.com/n5RzL>

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Correction



In the introduction of the **Reverend Canon Susan Bell**, (*Niagara Anglican*, February 2018, page 6) for Coadjutor Bishop, the following correction should be made:

Susan was both Associate Priest and Assistant Curate at St. Martin in the Fields. She is an Associate Priest currently but did serve as Assistant Curate there previously. Also, Susan is not currently a professional member of the parish choir at St. John's Elora.

The *Niagara Anglican* apologizes for any inconvenience.

HOLLIStorial

Bishop Jesus — sure he’s just like us



Across the Canadian Anglican Church, bishops are retiring in droves—as songwriter Bob Dylan wrote, “the times they are a-changin’.”

Peter, in his letter, called Jesus “Bishop,” so the *Niagara Anglican* deemed it appropriate to interview Jesus to get his take on being a bishop.

This is our edited version; read more in the four gospels.

Niagara Anglican (NA): How did you decide what kind of Bishop you would be?

Bishop Jesus (BJ): My struggle focused on either taking the easy road offered by the evil one or following God’s more challenging way.

The former promised instant success through physical gratification, immeasurable power, unlimited properties and celebrity status.

God’s way would be difficult, filled with temptations, sacrifices, sufferings, death and finally resurrection, but burst-

ing with a bottomless, unfailing, ever-present love.

I chose God.

NA: How did you keep focused during your ministry?

BJ: I developed two new commandments, basically—love God and love people—and kept them before me as a reference.

I wanted to tattoo the words on my forehead as a reminder, like our ancestors did with the Ten Commandments. Guess I chickened out.

NA: Why use storytelling to teach?

BJ: I employed several teaching methods.

I used pithy sayings and miracles to get my message across, and occasionally I engaged in lengthy theological discourses, mostly with religious leaders. However, storytelling was my favourite.

Using parables helped explain the complexities of God to the

average person. Today, television and social media use storytelling effectively to teach and persuade people to buy particular products or follow specific life styles.

NA: What were some challenges you faced?

BJ: The most painful was being rejected by my own community in Nazareth; people turned against me when I claimed to be the Saviour.

The hardline religious leaders refused to share their power or give up their privilege, so they fiercely opposed anything I did.

Standing up for people on the margins or those being unfairly treated did not make me popular.

NA: How did you select your first disciples?

BJ: Some say not very well. Look what happened—one denied knowing me, another betrayed me and they all ran away when

times got rough.

I should have included women. Despite their shortcomings, it worked out very well.

NA: Were there any humorous moments?

BJ: Watching me hold on for dear life while the donkey bounced down the hill to Jerusalem was hilarious.

Observing the height challenged pompous Zaccheus climbing a tree to see me over the heads of the crowd triggered much laughter.

NA: What sustained you throughout your time on earth?

BJ: I knew God would be with me through the good and bad times, and everything in between.

Spending quiet times alone and conversing with God helped me check in and refocus on what God wanted me to do.

Going to a synagogue or the

temple for public worship was always uplifting and provided great strength and encouragement knowing others also wanted God’s way.

And having people support what I was doing—following me, learning from me, joining in and spreading the good news—all meant so much to me in my ministry.

NA: What advice do you have for the new bishops being elected this year?

BJ: Firstly, decide you are going to follow the “God is Love” way.

Secondly, stay connected with your private prayers.

Thirdly, worship publicly. Fourthly, remember God’s promise, “I am with you always.”

NA: Would you not give every follower, lay or ordained, the same advice?

BJ: By Jove, I think you’ve got it! Sure, you’re just like me.



THANK YOU!

On behalf of all our readers, the *Niagara Anglican* expresses its gratitude to Coordinator Nina Page and all the Deacons who made our Lenten meditations, Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount, so special this year.

We thank each deacon for their contributions in leading us through Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount, not only by opening up the central teachings of the gospel, but also by applying the message to our spiritual journey to enhance and expand the wellbeing of our lives.



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From ashes to Easter

PETER DAVISON

We live at a time when many of our leaders play the age-old game of divide and rule. They use our differences, whether real or imagined, to make us afraid of one another.

But fear is mostly based on ignorance; and when we make the effort to know one another we discover that what unites us is much greater than what divides us.

Last year's commemoration of the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation was marked, not by mutual invective, but by shared celebration, as Lutherans and Roman Catholics in particular recognized that the church is *semper reformanda*—always needing reformation and renewal.

This year, Easter and the Jewish Passover fall on the same weekend, providing a vivid reminder that both of these great festivals celebrate our deliverance from various kinds of slavery—including our slavery to ignorance, complacency

and fear (especially our fear of death which quickly becomes fear of life).

And, as we come to the end of the Easter season at Pentecost on May 20th, our Muslim brothers and sisters will have just begun their holy month of Ramadan (May 16–June 14), which borrows much of its purpose and ethos from our Lent and Easter.

They take the fast seriously, denying themselves all food and drink from dawn until dusk, and using this abstinence to care for the needy. At the end of Ramadan they celebrate the Muslim feast of Eid, with much festivity and gift-giving.

In our interfaith observances of this rhythm of fasting and feasting, we're reminded of our need to question a culture which preaches non-stop consumption, and the idea that we can never have enough.

For Christians, Lent is a time to slow down our frantic busyness and nonstop consumption, and to make time to reconsider our priorities.

Abstinence and fasting can help us appreciate what we so easily take for granted.

On Saturday, March 3rd our synod delegates will gather to elect a new bishop for our Diocese of Niagara. What kind of church are we called to be? What kind of leadership do we need?

May this holy season lead us to serious and joyful renewal.

A happy Lent and Easter joy to all.

The Reverend Peter Davison is Editor of HAPPENINGS: the quarterly newsletter of St. James Dundas, where this article first appeared. pdavison4@cogeco.ca

Parishes are encouraged to send copies of their newsletters to the Editor. Contact information on page 3.

Youth giving it up for Lent

DONNA ELLIS

Reducing greenhouse gas emissions and calling on the federal government to change policies ensuring Canada moves further and faster towards international climate change goals have the youth at St. John's Ancaster excited during Lent 2018.

The young people are participating in Give it up for the Earth!, a country wide program sponsored by Citizens for Public Justice (www.cpj.ca/for-the-earth).

Across Canada, over 110 groups (including churches, religious congregations, high schools, universities and faith-based organizations) are gathering to make their pledges and sign postcards.

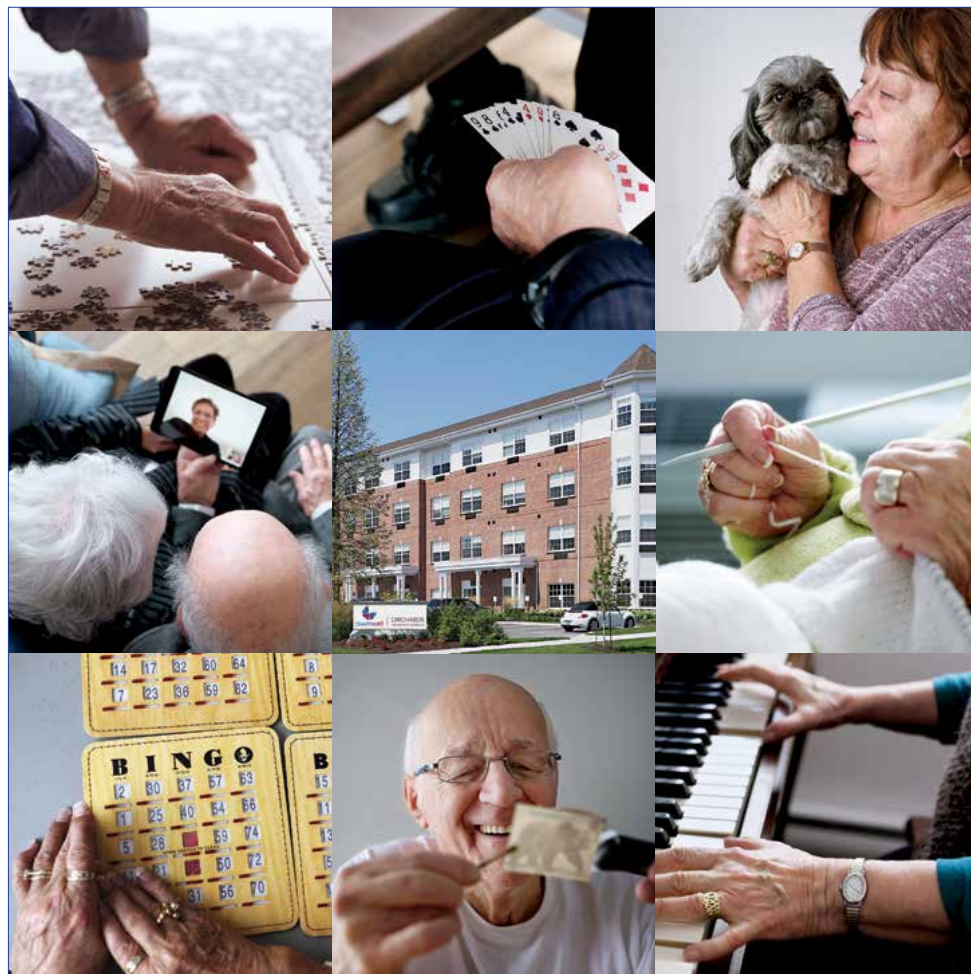
The postcards, addressed to Minister of the Environment and Climate Change Catherine McKenna, call on Canada to end subsidies to the fossil fuel industry right way.

CPJ has already distributed over 15,000 postcards to groups across the country. In the spring, the postcards will be presented to the federal minister.

"Climate change is increasingly understood as an issue of faith. The way we live in this world is an expression of the belief that we are called to protect and care for the Earth," says Karri Munn-Venn, senior policy analyst at CPJ. "Lent offers an opportunity to make a meaningful sacrifice while also making our voices heard."

Donna Ellis is the Youth and Children's Minister at St. John's Ancaster. youth@ancasteranglican.org

"Climate change is increasingly understood as an issue of faith."



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Celebration of Ministry for Bishop Michael Bird

Saturday April 21
1:00–4:00 pm

Christ's Church Cathedral
252 James St. North, Hamilton Ontario

More details to follow as we celebrate and give thanks to God for Bishop Michael's episcopal ministry in Niagara

Women's Groups in Niagara Diocese

Christ Church Niagara Falls

Kathy Lowe writes ...

We are the ACW (Anglican Church Women) at Christ Church Niagara Falls.

ACW began in this place in 1927, and we celebrated our 90th anniversary in November 2017.

We have evolved to become primarily a quilting group now. We have six members and we enjoy the fellowship as we hand quilt baby panels. We meet every Thursday from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. and bring a brown bag lunch.

We have a booth at our annual parish bazaar, where we sell such items as hand quilted baby quilts, cushions and wall hangings. Our members also assist at the annual parish Strawberry Social and Peach Festival.

For the third summer we have cut out and pieced together two Quilts of Valour providing comfort to our Canadian service men and women. We support the Brock University Ecumenical Chaplaincy with a donation. Our annual fundraiser is the sale of the Canadian Church Calendars.

As for the future, we have many projects waiting to be hand quilted and we hope to welcome new members.



The ACW at Christ Church Niagara Falls made two Quilts of Valour to provide comfort for Canadian service men and women. ACW members are (front) Yishu Barry, Bonnie Powell, Amanda Hughes, and (back) Linda Dueck, Jo-Ann McAlpine and Kathy Lowe.

Photo: Ann Czaban

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Women's Groups

Tell us how you are doing

ACW, Altar Guild, Mothers' Union, Daughters of the Church and Women's Auxiliary are some of the names of women's groups in the Anglican Church.

We want to hear from you.

Complete the following (400 words or less) and forward to the Editor (contact information on page 3).

- Name of group and parish
- Why you exist
- Number of members
- Frequency of meetings
- Activities (worship, social, fund raising)
- Outreach projects
- What about the future
- Add any other thoughts

Thank you for sharing.

Spend Lent with *Jesus' Sermon on the Mount* Matthew 5-7

Part II: March 12 to Easter Day (April 1)



A daily Lenten devotion intended for individuals, couples and groups.

Reading and meditating on the word of God is part of the invitation issued to each follower of Jesus Christ in our Ash Wednesday liturgy. Our Lenten spiritual voyage takes us through a forty day journey docking amidst the resurrection and celebration of Easter.

Niagara's College of Deacons has chosen Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, as arranged by Matthew in his gospel, to be the focus of our learning and reflections this Lent.

We thank them for their contributions in enlightening and inspiring us, as well as calling us into a deeper relation with our Lord Jesus Christ.

Here is a pattern you may wish to follow:

1. First, read the recommended Bible passage;
2. Then, read the commentary prepared by our deacons;
3. Reflect on any questions triggered in your mind, and;
4. Ask how the readings apply to your life and what you need to do.

We have included five devotions each week, leaving Saturday and Sunday for any catch up and reflection on how the Bible readings at Sunday worship fit into our theme –Jesus' Sermon on the Mount.

You can have the meditations on your favourite device by downloading the newspaper from niagaraanglican.ca/newspaper.

In addition you can have the Deacons' meditations delivered directly to your email inbox by going to niagaraanglican.news and signing up.

Feedback ... we appreciate your comments, suggestions or questions. Contact information is found on page 3.

For Part I of this feature, see the February Niagara Anglican.

Monday, March 12
Matthew 5:43-48
Love for enemies

This passage of the Sermon on the Mount builds on the previous five verses and you may wish to read those verses again when contemplating the meaning of this section.

Jesus' audience would have been familiar with Leviticus 19:18 where the author tells us to "love your neighbour as yourself." This passage goes much further.

Jesus makes it very clear that God the Father hates evil. Jesus declares that the Father is concerned about the righteous and the unrighteous. Therefore we need to love our enemies and pray for them.

This can be very difficult.

Fortunately, we have been given the gift of the Holy Spirit to help us in this task.

Jesus then ends these verses urging us to be perfect as the Father is perfect. We are called to a very high standard but it reflects what will happen when the Kingdom of Heaven is complete. Pray that it may be so.

It is the kind of struggle that Jesus asks us to undertake.

The Reverend Deacon Roderick McDowell
St. Paul's Fort Erie.

Tuesday, March 13
Matthew 6:1-4
Teaching about Charity

Our relationship with God calls for us to live a righteous life, one where our actions toward our neighbours are all inclusive.

The concept of alms-giving impacts our relationship with God in several ways.

When we give money or help others, we are working on our partnership with our neighbours. When we pray, we are working on our relationship with our God.

When we deny ourselves to follow more closely the way of Jesus, we act on our covenant with ourselves.

All this is private – a matter between ourselves and God.

When we act from a position of pride, we risk failing on all three aspects of our relationship. Seeking and enjoying recognition from others is not how God wants us to live. Pride creates unhappiness and keeps us from achieving inner peace—God's peace.

Jesus reminds us that our true reward in life is our close personal communion with God. Only God observes and evaluates all of our actions. We don't need to worry about anyone else's opinion.

The Reverend Deacon Nancy McBride,
St. Paul's Caledonia.

Wednesday, March 14
Matthew 6:5-8
Teaching about Prayer

The disciples in Luke's Gospel ask Jesus, "Lord, teach us how to pray", a seemingly perennial question we would do well to heed in our ultra-busy world.

I often find my prayers to be transactional, rote or sporadic. They don't allow God to get his word in. And yet, learning from disciples who have heeded Jesus' instruction, I know prayer to be transformational and relationship building; transforming me by opening the eyes of my heart to the actual truth of who I am, and therefore to the truth of God's actual relationship with me.

Prayer is thus nothing less than divine union—union with what is, with the moment, with oneself, with the divine. Scripture tells us to be still and know God, awakening an inner dialogue that, from God's side, has never ceased.

If it is true that *lex orandi est lex credenda*—"the way you pray is the way you believe"—then we still have much to learn.

Teach us Lord Jesus to pray.

The Reverend Deacon Heino Claessons
St. Albans Glen Williams.

Thursday, March 15
Matthew 6:9-15
Teaching about Prayer

I have been watching Netflix's "A.D. Kingdom and Empire" where there is a scene leading up to Pentecost displaying the apostles praying the Lord's Prayer. Shockingly, they do not pray meekly, quietly, heads bowed or with any other signs of reverence. Rather, they pray it loudly, emphatically, with intense emotion and belief.

So I too tried to pray as they did; loudly, forcefully, with conviction. Chewing, like a dog chews on a bone, on every word, every phrase, every nuance, extracting every last quark of spiritual energy. And what an incredible cathartic Holy Spirit experience it was.

So now when alone with my door shut, I pray as the apostles prayed. Not so others can't hear me. Not so I don't appear foolish. But to pray as our Lord instructed us to pray—to pray uninhibitedly, prodding my focus to shift from me to God, letting my spiritual soul fully experience his grace.

The Reverend Deacon Heino Claessons
St. Albans Glen Williams.

Friday, March 16
Matthew 6:16-18
Teaching about Fasting

We read that John the Baptist taught his disciples to fast and Jesus Christ said his disciples would fast after his death (Mark 2:18-20).

Paul and Barnabas prayed and fasted when they ordained Church elders (Acts 14:23).

Jesus Christ fasted 40 days and nights before facing Satan in an epic battle of spiritual will (Matthew 4:2).

Isaiah contrasts selfish fasting with godly fasting marked by care and concern for others (Isaiah 58:3-10).

What is fasting? Why do we fast?

Fasting can be a means to humble ourselves before God and seek his forgiveness, comfort, help, guidance, strength and will.

Fasting allows us to draw closer to God.

It can be a means of humbling ourselves before God, seeking God and his will and guidance in life.

It is a tool we may use to seek a closer relationship with his or her Creator and petition God for help, guidance and a humble heart that is yielded to his will.

Can we take one day a week during this Lent to fast and seek God's will in our lives.

The Reverend Deacon Nina Page
Grace Church Milton.

Monday, March 19
Matthew 6:19-21
Riches in heaven

The words "store up" imply an accumulation beyond that of one's present need.

Like the parable of the rich fool building bigger barns, how much time and energy do we spend trying to secure and maintain material possessions?

Why do we fail to trust that the Lord will provide, as he has promised, for all our earthly needs?

Jesus tells us that the things of this earth will not last, and that we are to store up treasures in heaven.

The intangible riches of our Lord's kingdom—love, peace, justice, equity and mercy—are the things we should truly long for, the things of great value.

St. Ignatius prayed, "Grant, O Lord, that my heart may neither desire nor seek anything but what is necessary for the fulfillment of Your Holy Will."

Take a moment to consider what it is that your heart truly longs for.

In faith, let us set our minds on things above, on building up the Kingdom of God, our eternal dwelling place.

The Reverend Deacon Sister Mary Catharine Robertson
St. Paul's (Glanford) Mount Hope.

Tuesday, March 20
Matthew 6:22-23
Vision

Healthy vision is highly prized among our other senses.

We depend on our eyes for our wellbeing and our activities. Light enters our eyes so that we see clearly what we need to do.

Life without sight can be difficult.

In a spiritual sense, our eyes give light rather than receive it. By showing our light, we demonstrate our faith.

There are many metaphors about the human eye: the lamp of the body, the window on the soul, the conscience or the moral compass by which we act.

When we see with good eyes, our light is generous, offered freely, purposefully and persistently in service to God and our neighbours.

Those who live with an evil eye act from a place of darkness. Intolerant, hateful and destructive, they value self over others and show no light to the world. They deprive themselves of the sheer joy of walking in the light of Christ.

We need no other light than our faith and our trust in God. He loves us and will never leave us alone to lose our way.

The Reverend Deacon Nancy McBride
St. Paul's Caledonia.

Wednesday, March 21
Matthew 6:24
God and possession

It is a truth that we live in a material world rampant with consumerism.

It is also true that materialism, wealth and fame cannot bring happiness, and is too often a harbinger of worry. Unfortunately I know too many that have made wealth their goal, their essence, their god.

Coming painfully close to home, a sage of the patristic age wrote: "... the love of money leadeth to idols; because, when led astray through money, men [I] make mention of those who are no gods, and it causeth him [me] who hath it to fall into madness. For the sake of money I lost my

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A daily Lenten devotion intended for individuals, couples and groups.

children." (Testament of Judah 19:1-2)
 We try so hard to create heaven on earth and when convenient throw in Jesus as Lord as a prerequisite to the so-called good life, the eternal life.
 Yet Jesus proclaims that unless we are willing to serve him holistically in every area of life, and particularly with our material resources, (see 1 Timothy 6:10), we cannot claim to be serving Him at all.

The Reverend Deacon Heino Claessons
St. Albans Glen Williams.

Thursday, March 22
Matthew 6:25-34
Teaching about Worry

Worry is the great disabler, especially when directed toward things material.

There was a time when I made C.S. Lewis' Wormwood and Screwtape proud, whose role it was to deflect believers from God's mission.

My worry over things of this world was all consuming that I forgot to strive "first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well."

I became lost and needed to be found. It was by becoming still, praying Canticle 3, *Ecce, Deus* (Isaiah 12:2-6) over and over again that I was able to return to the knowledge in faith that God clothed me in his righteous love and all will be well.

A healing way of doing so was to confess regularly my gratitude to God for what he is doing, and has done, in preparation for relying on him tomorrow.

It is this faith, this experience, that continues to nurture me during times of uncertainty, a nurture that allows me to keep going when others around me collapse in worry.

The Reverend Deacon Heino Claessons
St. Albans Glen Williams.

Friday, March 23
Matthew 7:1-5
Judging others

We often hear the admonition, "Judge not, lest ye be judged." In a world that values personal freedom, personal choice and the rights of the individual above all else, these words affirm a self-serving attitude. But the passage in Matthew does not end there.

Jesus goes on to say that we shall be judged by the same measure with which we judge, implying that we should judge others as we ourselves would wish to be judged, presumably with compassion, mercy and love. Constant criticism leads to discourage-

ment, and even a sense of defeat. How easy it is to act self-righteously and slip into the trap of idle gossip, pointing out the shortcomings of others or tearing down rather than building up one another.

The next time, before we speak about someone or something, THINK. Is it True, is it Helpful, is it Inspiring, is it Necessary, is it Kind?

This year, let us resolve to live by the wisdom of the Word, rather than the wisdom of the world.

The Reverend Deacon Sister Mary Catharine Robertson
St. Paul's (Glanford) Mount Hope.

Monday, March 26
Matthew 7:6
Judging others

This is arguably one of the sermon's stranger sections.

Are we not called to go and make disciples, to preach about Jesus, to tell everyone about the Good News? Yet, I remain mindful of Robert Heinlein's wisecrack: "Never attempt to teach a pig to sing; it wastes your time and annoys the pig."

I believe what Jesus is telling us is to remain balanced, to be discerning, to be sensitive to context and situation.

There's a form of evangelism that urges Christians to take every opportunity to preach the gospel.

Unfortunately, insensitive evangelism may prove harmful not only to the stiff-necked whose heart is further hardened by the undifferentiating evangelist, but also harmful to the Gospel itself that is being force-fed.

We like to count converts, but those offended and turned away from the Gospel are never tallied. Yet ... some who we think are dogs or pigs will respond to the pearls we have.

Let us be just, kind and humble when sowing seeds of Good News. Prayerfully more will find fertile ground than not.

The Reverend Deacon Heino Claessons
St. Albans Glen Williams.

Tuesday, March 27
Matthew 7:7-11
Ask, seek and knock

Revelation 3:20 reads, "Listen! I am standing at the door, knocking: if you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to you and eat with you and you with me."

What is interesting and compelling for me is not just simply the gravitas of this passage: it is written on a bookmark that

belonged to my father—a bookmark that I discovered decades after his passing—as if I was not meant to discover this message from my father about his faith journey until my own had begun.

Here in Matthew 7 we find the converse of the message of Revelation—God is inviting us to knock at his door; which at our simple request will be opened for us. This offer is one of salvation for each of us, no matter what.

We knock, we enter, we surrender, we are forgiven—a new heart is given to us, and we find a new life.

The Reverend Deacon Paul K. Bates
Grace Church Waterdown.

Wednesday, March 28
Matthew 7:12
The golden rule

The tendency is to interpret this passage in the negative, "Don't treat others in a way you wouldn't want to be treated." But to remain passive or uninvolved and simply do no evil is not enough.

Jesus calls us to DO and this implies ACTION. What action can we take that will further the Kingdom?

God's love is freely given and so we too must freely give ... of our resources, our time and ourselves.

We are reminded of the recent social phenomenon "to pay it forward." Has this ever happened to you? Maybe you were in the drive-thru, only to learn when you reached the window that the person in the car ahead had paid for your coffee. How did it feel to be the recipient of a stranger's generosity and kindness?

Did you ever "pay it forward"? Jesus knows that living with an attitude of giving fills our hearts with joy. Who will you share the joy of Christ with today?

The Reverend Deacon Sister Mary Catharine Robertson
St. Paul's (Glanford) Mount Hope.

Maundy Thursday, March 29
Matthew 7:13-14
Teaching about hard testing

There are two roads, this I know as I walk both.

Likewise I know that the road Jesus calls us to follow him on is a hard road.

Hard because it is not easy to give up the fetters of this world, the seemingly endless promises of success and happiness.

Hard because his road is so counter-intuitive to the majority with whom we walk the highways of this world.

We all are searching for the "happy life", yet few of us are willing to actually embark on a road that requires discipline and discipleship that lead to it.

A road that leads to a sense of peace, that comes from purpose and meaning through being engaged in Kingdom living here on earth as it is in heaven.

A road that surprisingly becomes easier as we practice that what we pray and believe.

Indeed, a road that eventually becomes the only true road the more we become familiar with its contours and vistas of glory.

The Reverend Deacon Heino Claessons
St. Albans Glen Williams.

Good Friday, March 30
Matthew 7:15-20
A tree and its fruit

Many people today, when asked, identify themselves as Christians. They often attend a church on Sunday, and lead moral lives filled with good works. Indeed, there are any number of worthwhile humanitarian causes dependent on support from such generous souls as these.

How then, are we to discern the true believer of whom Jesus speaks when he says, "You will know them by their fruits"?

The "fruits" of which he speaks are those acts motivated, not by a cause or movement, not for personal consolation, but rather those which we do "in the name of Jesus" and for his sake.

In the words of Teresa of Avila, "Yours are the hands through which he blesses all the world".

To truly follow Christ is to see and serve only him, though he comes disguised as the poor, the sick, the homeless or the forgotten stranger. It is that fruit which we bear, out of love for our Lord, that identifies us as the faithful Children of God.

Soli Deo Gloria, All Glory to God Alone.

The Reverend Deacon Sister Mary Catharine Robertson
St. Paul's (Glanford) Mount Hope.

Holy Saturday, March 31
Matthew 7: 21-23
Doing what God wants done

G.K. Chesterton once quipped, "Christianity has not been tried and found wanting; it has been found difficult and not tried."

Jesus tells us being a Christian is more than merely saying Lord, Lord. To be Christian is to believe in that what Jesus believes in.

Twenty-three times in the Gospels Jesus

invites us to follow him—to follow him in doing the will of his Father in heaven.

We are continually being invited to enter into communion with the saints before us, to follow Jesus in the Holy Spirit and to do our part to realize the kingdom of heaven here on earth.

To know what true meaningful life is, John Stott writes, "We recite the creed in church, and sing hymns expressive of devotion to Christ. We even exercise a variety of ministries in his name. But he is not impressed by our pious and orthodox words. He still asks for evidence of our sincerity in good works of obedience."

Let's give Christianity a try, shall we.

The Reverend Deacon Heino Claessons
St. Albans Glen Williams.

Easter, April 1
Matthew 7:24-27
The two house builders

As we come to the end of this teaching, Jesus intones, "Everyone then who hears these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise person." Are we wise and act on them? Are we even capable?

G.K. Chesterton's quip from an earlier mediation doubts it. But I say resoundingly YES, YES WE ARE.

Jesus repeatedly invites us to follow him and is honest about it not being easy. It requires discipleship, discipline and faith, but most significantly it requires love.

A love for our triune God. A love which transcends the love for ourselves, trappings or foibles. A love through which we place ourselves in him taking us onto solid, fertile ground.

A ground that gives us a foundation for life, existence, meaning and purpose.

Truly, such a foundation for us can only be in Jesus, whom we confess as Lord.

As we enter this Easter season, let us give heed to his teachings, teachings that are vindicated through his resurrection immutably establishing Jesus as the truth, the way, and the life.

The Reverend Deacon Heino Claessons
St. Albans Glen Williams.

From your experience with Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, the College of Deacons and the Niagara Anglican hope your Easter will be a joyful celebration of the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. He is Risen, Alleluia!

Canada Briefs

A roundup of stories from other Anglican newspapers across Canada

Prepared by Anglican Journal staff writer Joelle Kidd.

1. Cree veteran praying for justice

Veteran Victor Flett shared his life story in a presentation entitled, "From Racism to Reconciliation" at St. Peter and St. Paul's, Esquimalt, B.C., Diocese of British Columbia, December 2. He was afterward given the status of lay canon of the diocese.

In the presentation, organized by the diocese's Aboriginal Neighbours group, Flett shared about his childhood, growing up on his grandfather's land in Manitoba, his time in the Navy and his civilian life after his discharge.

Flett, who is of Cree descent, said that he learned early in his life to be ashamed of his Indigenous heritage, and experienced racism at school and in the navy.

Flett, who served in Korea on the destroyer HMCS Crusader, shared stories of returning to Korea for ceremonies of acknowledgement of the Canadian contribution and of participation in the 100th anniversary ceremonies at the

Vimy Memorial.

Flett also spoke about his experience in Aboriginal Neighbours, where he found friends who were trying to build bridges between Anglicans and First Nations. He spoke of being encouraged by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's 94 Calls to Action, highlighting the call to repudiate the Doctrine of Discovery, which he believes is the root of the racism that followed in the past 400 years.

When asked what he was praying for now, Flett emphatically answered, "justice," pointing out that even in a land as rich as Canada, some First Nations communities live in poverty and under boil water advisories. He said that he is encouraged to see signs that racism is being replaced by reconciliation, but that there is still a great deal of work to be done.

—*Diocesan Post*

2. Interfaith group gathered for housing plenary

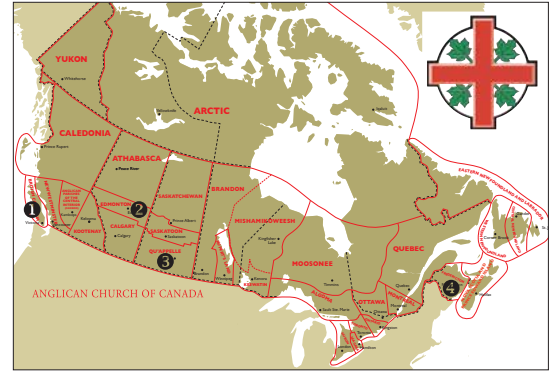
More than 80 people representing 16 different faiths and 13

community organizations, front line agencies and community stakeholders met in Edmonton in November for the Capital Region Interfaith Housing Initiative (CRIHI) Plenary.

Participants were greeted by Anglican Diocese of Edmonton Bishop Jane Alexander, as well as Archbishop Richard Smith of the Roman Catholic archdiocese and pastors Bonnie Hodge and Keith Taylor of Beulah Alliance Church, which hosted the workshop.

Many people—faith community members, real estate developers and City of Edmonton employees—shared their ideas about housing access. This included discussion of the possibility of faith groups opening their doors as part of a city-wide network of safe access points, the creation of a database of churches willing to offer their places of worship as safe spaces and spiritual care for front line workers.

In her address to the plenary, Bishop Alexander said that "when we speak about people who find themselves homeless,



or in need of housing, or are falling through the cracks, it's not them. It's us. When one part of the community hurts, we all hurt. In my denomination, in the Christian faith, we would say when one part of the body hurts, we all hurt."

Working together on housing and the forces that contribute to homelessness, Alexander added, is "building up our entire community for the good of everybody."

Alexander urged support for the City of Edmonton's Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness through her work with CRIHI and as co-chair of EndPoverty Edmonton.

A national housing strategy that recognizes adequate housing as a fundamental right for all Canadians was announced by the federal government Nov. 22, 2017.

"We're in an incredible time of opportunity," said Alexander.

—*The Messenger*

3. Diocese of Qu'Appelle bishop to appoint task force for marriage canon conversations

Bishop of the Diocese of Qu'Appelle Robert Hardwick was instructed by Diocesan Council to put together a task force to facilitate discussions in the diocese about the proposed change to the marriage canon to allow for same-sex marriage.

The task force will help with the consultation process of discussing the marriage canon at every level of the diocese, especially at the parish and regional levels. While Diocesan Council made suggestions in regards to the makeup of the task force, Hardwick will have final say on appointing the group.

Fewer than 10 people will be chosen for the task force, with consideration given to creating a group with a cross-section of skills such as canon law, theology and culture. There is also the possibility of including

one clergy person from each archdeanery.

During the most recent Diocesan Council meeting, Hardwick said that Council of General Synod (CoGS) has sent information to dioceses about the issue and wants to hear about each diocese's particular process. He also said that Archbishop Fred Hiltz, Primate of the Anglican Church of Canada, sent out a letter on behalf of CoGS, encouraging dioceses to engage in this discussion.

"It's important that we as a council grapple with this [issue]," he said.

—*The Saskatchewan Anglican*

4. Bowling tournament expands to fight childhood hunger

A bowling fundraiser in the Diocese of Fredericton is hoping to raise \$100,000 to fight childhood hunger in New Brunswick.

Organizer of the tournament, the Rev. Kevin McAllister, decided to expand the tournament, which last year brought in more than \$7,500 to help build a library at Bishop McAllister College in Uganda.

This year, the tournament will take place in three cities—Fredericton, Moncton and Saint John—with the goal to raise \$33,000 for each city. These funds will be designated to a local charity in each city that addresses childhood hunger.

McAllister says he was inspired to combat hunger by the diocese's Stewardship Day workshop last year, when Anglican diocese of Fredericton Bishop David Edwards spoke about child poverty. "I didn't realize it was that bad ... as a dad and a priest, I don't think it's right that people should be hungry, especially kids."

—*The New Brunswick Anglican*

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Cathedral getting upgrades

Niagara's Christ's Church Cathedral in Hamilton is in the midst of an extensive upgrade and cleaning, with the possibility of a painting facelift.

According to Cathedral Place Manager Derek Smith, "Work to be done is the LED light replacement, upgrades to the emergency lighting and heat detector at the highest point of the chancel."



He went on to explain needed repairs will follow an inspection of all the upper plaster work.

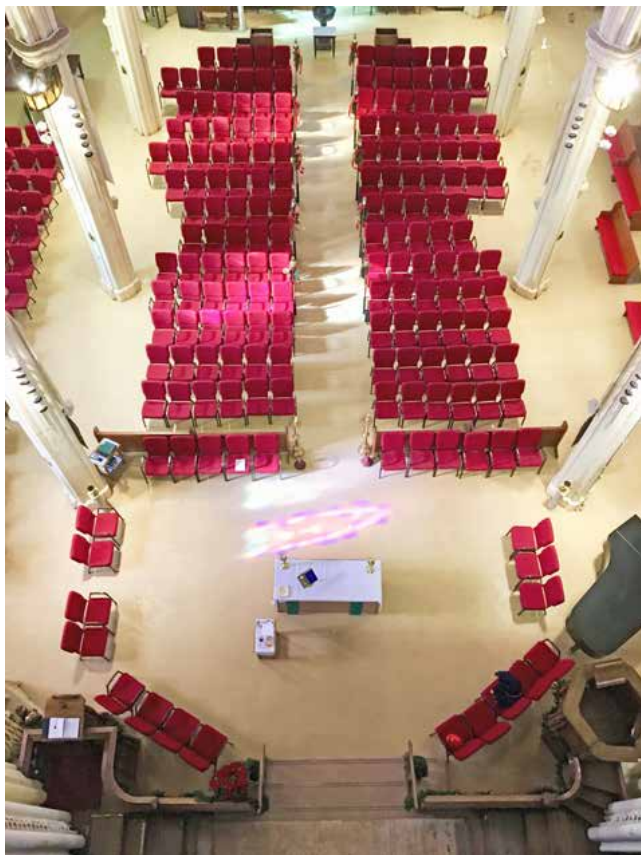
"The entire Chancel will be cleaned, and depending on cost of the plaster repairs, painting the chancel is a possibility."

"There is also work to the organ pipes and cleaning to be done by Cassavant." Derek concluded.



The mammoth scaffolding which enclosed the whole chancel of the Cathedral to allow lighting and safety system upgrades and repair work on the ceiling.

Photo: Hollis Hiscock



While high up on the scaffolding, Cathedral Place Manager Derek Smith took advantage of the height to snap a photo showing the space worshippers will occupy during the Cathedral's makeover.

Photo: Derek Smith

Print in other forms



"The past year was one of growth through change for the *Niagara Anglican*. We are moving to address changes in the way people choose to receive their news," Carol Summers, Chair of the Niagara Anglican Publication Board, reported to delegates attending Niagara's annual Synod.

The blending of print and online media has been a priority, resulting in the creation of niagaraanglican.news.

The page is not the key piece, rather it is a vehicle to share information through different social media (Twitter, Facebook, etc.) via links on the page.

The new format makes *Niagara Anglican* material searchable online and more accessible.

With new forms of communication came the need to re-brand, so readers could be assured the information they were receiving across various media was published by Niagara Diocese, so a new clear and easily recognizable logo was created.

The Board spends a great deal of its time discussing trends and activities within the diocese to keep the information current and relevant to readers.

The *Niagara Anglican* is always seeking knowledgeable writers who can shed insight into important church issues.

The Board keeps a balance between selling advertising space to assist in reducing costs and producing a paper with the maximum number of articles possible.

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The Lord's chieftain

MICHAEL BURSLEM

What most attracts me to Christianity is that God so often seems to choose losers in this world and transforms them into winners.

That's illustrated by the story of St. Enoch, an eastern Scottish princess, in the 6th century C.E., who as a teenager found herself pregnant. Her family were so outraged that on more than one occasion they tried to kill her. They finally set her adrift at sea in an open boat, hoping that would be the last of her and her unwanted child.

However, the boat drifted ashore and she was rescued by a hermit priest, Serf, who not only delivered her child, but shared his meager shelter with them. At delivery, he was so endeared to the newborn that he called him Mungo, or my dearest one. However, at his baptism he named him Kentigern, the Lord's chieftain, which was to be

prophetic.

When he was 15, Mungo left Serf and settled on the west coast on the River Clyde.

He joined a community of young people at Glesgu, which became Glasgow. (I suspect Enoch soon followed him, because she's remembered by the former St. Enoch railway station, now a shopping mall.)

Mungo soon became the leader of the little band and came to the attention of the local king, Roderick. He urged Mungo to be ordained, and by the age of 25 he was bishop of the Strathclyde. He was bishop for 60 years, dying at age 85, on January 13th, 601. His life was so exemplary that he was later canonized as St. Mungo or Kentigern, and is today the patron saint of Glasgow. His mother was also canonized, as was Serf, who later took the gospel to the Orkneys.

I mention these people because they were nobodies in



The Glasgow coat of arms with St. Mungo, or Kentigern, who is today the patron saint of Glasgow.

the eyes of the world, in spite of their royal blood, and yet they're remembered lovingly still today. Serf also was a royal. Their esteemed families are now known only to historians. Mary sang about this in her hymn of praise on discovering she was to become the mother of God. "He hath put down the mighty from their seat: and hath exalted the humble and meek. He hath filled

the hungry with good things: and the rich he hath sent empty away."

God turns our values upside down.

I wonder whether we Anglicans have really got that into our heads, since we're the church of elites. There's little place in our churches for anyone who can't read or write. The real poor are unwelcome.

I agree we're not as snobbish as when I was younger, when sidesmen, not sidespersons, wore formal morning dress with a carnation in the buttonhole. We have changed, thankfully. Some of our churches are even Messy Churches. But we're still resistant to change, especially if it entails taking out a pew or moving the altar into the nave.

We need to remember that it's not furniture that makes a church holy. It's rather the Lord's presence, in his people and especially in the most holy sacrament of his body and blood,



through which he inhabits his people.

God isn't impressed with prestige, unless it's his, not ours. We must therefore forfeit, like Serf, our worldly perks and privileges. Then God will send our way his Enochs and Mungos.

Instead of worrying how we're going to maintain our church structures with shrinking congregations, we'll become Jesus followers, loving those we would normally disdain.

If we welcome them, our churches will soon fill up. Perhaps there'll be a Kentigern among them, the Lord's chieftain.

Michael Burslem is a member of St. George's Guelph. m.burslem@sympatico.ca

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Candidates meet and greet

Over 400 people gathered at three locations on consecutive days around Niagara Diocese to meet the priests who have offered themselves as candidates in the March 3rd election, when a Coadjutor Bishop will be chosen.

Each evening followed a similar agenda, with each candidate describing their personal story and ministry experiences, as well as explaining their leadership styles, philosophy of ministry and future challenges or opportunities of the church.

After the formal presentations, individuals dialogued with the candidates during an informal reception.

The synod youth delegates spent several hours with the candidates at a separate get together.

The gatherings were held in St. Catharines, Hamilton and Guelph.



The Reverend Ann Turner, Chair of the Electoral Synod Nominations and Planning Committee, chaired the meet and greet and introduced the candidates.

Photo: Hollis Hiscock



Candidates for Coadjutor Bishop pose for a group shot before the meeting in St. Catharines. Candidates are (front, l-r) Robert Hurkmans, David Anderson, Susan Bell, (back, l-r) Stuart Pike, Martha Tatarnic, David Burrows and Robert Fead.

Photo: Bill Mous



(Above) All candidates attended a special get together with the youth delegates of synod giving them an opportunity to raise issues and concerns identified by the younger church members. Missing from photo is David Burrows.

Photos: Hollis Hiscock

(Below) Audience members listen attentively during the candidates' meeting at Christ's Church Cathedral.



Deadlines and Submissions for Niagara Anglican

Deadlines:

- May – March 25
- Summer – April 25
- September – July 25

Submissions:

News, Letters, Reviews

(books, films, music, theatre) – 400 words or less

Articles – 600 words or less

Original cartoons or art – Contact the Editor.

Photos – very large, high resolution, action pictures (people doing something).

Include name of photographer. Written permission of parent/guardian must be obtained if photo includes a child.

All submissions must include writer's full name and contact information. We reserve the right to edit or refuse submissions.

Questions or information:

Contact the Editor at editor@niagaraanglican.ca or 905-635-9463.

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After 225 Years of ministry, church building disestablished



Photo: Niagara Diocese website

BILL MOUS

"We gather here this afternoon with heavy hearts and cherished memories of a beloved church and congregation that has had a profound impact," began Bishop Michael Bird in the last homily that would be preached to the parish of St. George's in Homer.

The parish's final worship service took place on Sunday, January 14, 2018, marking the end of over two hundred years of Anglican presence in the area.

The church, its original cemetery, as well as the nearby bridge over the Welland Canal are largely what remain of the once thriving village of Homer.

"I have had amazing things happen during my time at St. George's," said Churchwarden Susie Keller.

Her sentiment was affirmed by Bishop Michael, who invited the congregation to imagine all the prayers, services and ministries that have transpired during the parish's long and faithful ministry.

He told the congregation, "today we will leave here with great thanksgiving for all these things, but we will not leave without many tears as well."

During the final service, the parish was formally disestablished and the church building deconsecrated and returned to common use.

The Reverend Dorothy Hewlett, St. George's Rector, called the parish's legacy bittersweet.

"It feels bitter because our church's ministry has to conclude. It feels sweet because the parishioners and I feel honoured to be a small part in this church's long history of people and priests dating back 225 years to its pioneer founding in 1792."

She added that "as resurrection people we know that God will continue to work in the church, which is really the

people of Christ Jesus."

Churchwarden Bill Smith intends to move to St. George's sister parish, Christ Church McNab. Others are still processing the closure and will try a few parishes out before making a decision.

Over the last decade, the people of St. George's have been discerning their future. The arrival of a letter from the St. Lawrence Seaway Management Corporation in 2014 proved to be a pivotal moment for the parish.

The letter stated the Seaway had deemed the land on which the church building stood to be surplus, and they no longer intended to lease it to the parish as had been done since 1961. After many meetings and much discussion, the parish felt it was not in a position to purchase the land.

St. George's was also involved in a 22-month discernment process with 10 other Anglican congregations in the Greater St. Catharines area. The recommendations arising from this work are being implemented with an eye towards a revitalized Anglican presence that is better equipped to respond to God's call for the church.

All of this led to a special vestry meeting in June of last year.

Of the 22 people in attendance, 20 people voted in favor of disestablishing the parish. This decision was approved by synod council last fall and affirmed by Bishop Michael.

When the lease expires (March 2018), the building and property will be turned over to the St. Lawrence Seaway Corporation.

It's been a difficult journey according to Dorothy but one, she says, that was undertaken "with integrity and God's love."

*The Reverend Canon Bill Mous is Director of Justice, Community and Global Ministries for Niagara Diocese
bill.mous@niagaraanglican.ca*



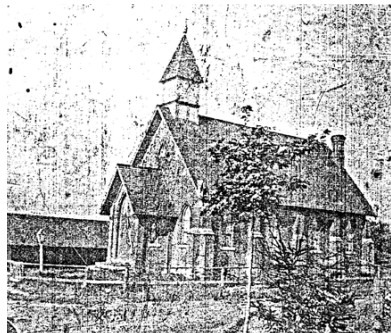
Left) The Reverend Dorothy Hewlett and Bishop Michael led worship at the service disestablishing St. George's Homer as a church building.

(Above) A special cake to celebrate the church's ministry.

Photos: Submitted

(Below, left) The second church building, 1874-1913.

(Below, right) The third church building, 1913-1962.



A brief history of St. George's Homer

- 1792** Church of England missionary priest, the Reverend Robert Addison, was the circuit or itinerant priest who opened ministry in this Niagara area.
 - 1792** United Empire Loyalist farmers from New York State settled, farmed and built a log chapel at Upper Ten Mile, along Ten Mile Creek, later called Homer.
 - 1792** Burial at Ten Mile Creek in cemetery beside the log chapel.
 - 1792** Two baptisms also recorded by the Reverend Robert Addison.
 - 1874** Second church built.
 - 1913** Third, most beautiful church built of Grimsby sandstone quarried locally.
 - 1961** Church and local farm land expropriated by Department of Transportation to build the QEW Skyway overpass.
 - 1962** Fourth and final church built on land leased from the St. Lawrence Seaway Management Corporation.
 - Late 60s** St. Lawrence Seaway Management Corporation discussed ending church lease if a fifth Welland canal were to be built.
 - 1970-71** The Corporation decided that a new, wider canal will not be built.
 - 1988-90** St. George's attempted to buy back lease land but was refused by the Corporation. Lease continued until 2016.
 - 2014** The Corporation announced that the land's owner, the Department of Transportation wanted to sell all leased lands. St. George's obtained a lease extension to early 2018.
 - 2017 April 2** - St. George's celebrated the 225th anniversary with Bishop Michael and Susan Bird.
 - 2017 June** - A Special Vestry passed a motion to stop church ministry on December 31, 2017.
 - 2018 January 14** - Bishop Michael returned for this service of disestablishment to return the church to common use.
- 31 Rectors served this church.**

Prepared by the Reverend Dorothy Hewlett, who was the second woman Rector of St. George's Homer and served in that position for 14½ years before its closing. djhewlett@sympatico.ca