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NIAGARA ANGLICAN



A Gathering Place and a Sounding Board for the People of the Diocese of Niagara – Since 1955

A section of the Anglican Journal

MARCH 2019

Beyond excited! 12-year-old anticipates her first mission trip this summer

PIPER FERGUSON

For the sixth time, another group from St. Simon's Oakville will be travelling to Belize on a mission trip this summer.

Every two years, since 2009, different groups from the church have gone to Belize to help out at Holy Cross Anglican School.

Some people in the church, like Youth Coordinator Robyn Michell and Rector Darcey Lazerte, have gone every year. As well some other church members have gone a couple times before.

The mission is open to youth going into grade eight and up,

as well as any interested adults from the parish.

Belize is a group of approximately 450 islands and has the world's second largest coral reef. Although there are some wealthy areas in Belize, there are many poor parts as well.

The Belize team travels to San Pedro, where there is a poorer neighbourhood called San Mateo, which is where the school is located.

Each time a team helps out at Holy Cross Anglican School, there are many different things to be done. Whether it be teaching remedial summer school

See *BEYOND EXCITED* Page 2



The 2017 Belize group from St. Simon's Oakville poses in front of Holy Cross Anglican School, San Pedro, Belize.

Photo: Tamara Ferguson



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MAR-JUN 2019

Beyond excited

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

to students, to bleaching and re-painting the walls, to fixing up roofs—they get it done.

The St. Simon's Belize team's main goal is to show God's love by making a difference for others, as well as letting God work through them to help others, so that we may be God's hands in this world.

There are multiple fundraisers for this important ministry,



Piper Ferguson Photo: Submitted

including monthly "Belize Cafés" where each baked good is sold for \$1, baking and selling apple crumble and pumpkin pies at Thanksgiving, annual spaghetti dinners, biennial bottle/can drives, parking for Oakville's Ribfest and many more.

Even during the off-years, the Belize team works very hard with fundraisers for the next mission trip. A lot of time and effort is dedicated to this very important mission, as well as lots of support from the St. Simon's church community and family and friends.

Six out of the ten days are spent working from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., and the other

days include travel time, going to church services and doing different activities native to Belize—like visiting the Mayan Ruins.

This year's Belize team has 15 people going. It's a great opportunity for the youth to bond and get closer, while being exposed to a different culture and way of life.

Everyone always learns from, and enjoys, the experience. This will be my first time going to Belize, and I am beyond excited.

I am looking forward to sharing my experience of Belize with readers after the mission trip.

Twelve-year-old Piper Ferguson is a member of St. Simon's Oakville.

Blasts from the past memories from the archives

For 64 years, the *Niagara Anglican* has been a meeting place where parishes, groups and the diocese can share the good news of God's church.

We have selected five examples from our archives to illustrate significant happenings or milestones in the life of

Niagara Diocese.

You may know more about these events than we do, so share any details you may have which can bring the past more fully alive for our readers. We would love to hear from you.

All photos from Niagara Anglican Archives



Relaxing and enjoying a card game at the Anglican Church Women's educational conference. Date unknown.



(Left) About 200 members of the Church Boys League from across Niagara diocese attended a worship service at Christ's Church Cathedral Hamilton on November 28, 1965, with Dean H.R. Bagnell participating. Joining him were banjoist the Reverend David Blackwood, with guitarists Ann Christmas and Jane Christmas (sisters) from St. Luke's parish (which St. Luke's?) led the singing, including the hymn *The Lord's My Shepherd* to the tune of *The Happy Wanderer*.



(Right) Sod turning for St. David's parish hall in Welland – April 12, 1964.



(Left) "We will remember them" – war memorial, St. James Fergus. Date unknown.

(Above) Children gather for devotions at Camp Artaban. Date unknown.

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HOLLIStorial

Three hockey players ... three life messages

Writers roam the corridors of life probing for stories to inform and inspire readers, viewers and listeners.

Recently, hockey players caught my attention.

Here, I focus on three stories and suggest what the church can learn from their examples.

P.K. Subban: bullying and racism

Ty, a 13-year-old player, has been the object of bullying and racial slurs during hockey games.

Nashville Predators' P.K. Subban sent him a short video message (view it on YouTube).

P.K. told the teenager, "As long as you're still breathing in this world, you've got to believe in yourself and let nobody tell you what you can and can't do, especially if it's because of the colour of your skin."

Sometimes we cannot understand why people do what they do, continued P.K., and that's OK. However, "All we have to do is understand our self, believe



in our self and keep trying and keep pushing forward."

He suggested Ty play hockey because, "You love the game and you want to play. Let nobody take that away from you."

Anonymous: mental health

Anonymous (real name withheld), a professional player, shared his journey coping with mental health (URBANICITY - urbanicity.ca).

He expressed gratefulness for his accomplishment through hockey, especially noting its "glamorous and desirable" lifestyle.

But there is another reality. "The hard part is the mental component behind closed doors that make athletes like myself, struggle with."

Plagued almost daily by anxieties and stresses, he described his constant concerns: worrying what his coaches would think, afraid he may lose his spot on the team and distressed about how opposing teams would react. "It seemed easier to suppress those thoughts and avoid having the tough conversations than attempting to express what was going on in my mind."

After enduring "years of riding (hockey's) mental and emotional roller coaster," Anonymous acted.

He put himself first, sought counselling and began talking with teammates.

Knowing you are not alone and sharing your story, concluded Anonymous, is "the key to creating a ripple effect that will not only change the macho culture around hockey but also the male mental health culture

in general".

Jacob Slavin: a Christian playing hockey

I'm just a Christian playing hockey was my introduction to Carolina Hurricanes' Jacob Slavin (*Toronto Star's* Kevin McGran).

From there I scoured the internet. I learned Jacob enjoys his faith. "It's the most important thing in my life, the most important thing in my wife's life. It's what we try to base every decision off of."

Faith makes him a better player by giving him perspective and identity. "I believe God has given me this platform of hockey as a way to spread the Gospel. That's what I want to use it for."

He told writer Mark Shiver, "I don't stand in the locker room preaching from the Bible, but I'm definitely going to stand for what I believe in and live it out the best I can on and off the ice."

When team mates want to discuss serious issues, he is not



judgmental but speaks from a "place of love and hopefully point them in the direction of something they can (find) hope in and cling to".

Jacob balances hockey and life. "I'm not rooted in the game of hockey, I know hockey will end one day, but God is forever. It puts me at peace knowing God's in control of every aspect of my life."

Messages for the church

Each hockey player presents us with reminders ...

- to stand against bullies and racists and treat all people equally (P.K. Subban);
- to create environments free from fear and open to help people work towards wholeness (Anonymous), and
- to be a Christian in all that we do (Jacob Slavin).

(Share your thoughts with the Editor Hollis Hiscock. See contact information below)

Niagara Diocese, a safe church

MARNI NANCEKIVELL

Safe Church initiatives within the Diocese of Niagara are dedicated to ensuring that the church is a safe and holy place for all people at all times.

We affirm the dignity and worth of all persons, young or old, male or female, rich or poor.

To that end, our protocols apply to all of the people of the Diocese of Niagara in all of our faith communities, no matter what ministry they partake in, be it volunteer, paid, lay or ordained.

By the end of March 2019, I will be relinquishing this ministry as I move into retirement.

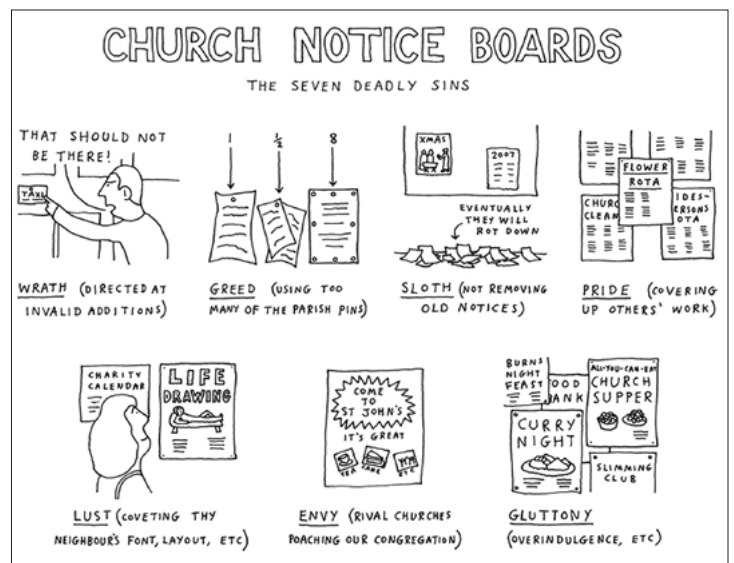
I am aware that throughout the

Ecclesiastical Diocese of Ontario, there are individuals who both separately and together are pondering how to continue to foster an environment within our faith communities that is safe and holy.

Truly, the Spirit moves in our midst as we come to terms with what it means to be the Christian Church in the days of #MeToo and #ChurchToo.

May we open our hearts and minds to the voice of God in our midst.

The Reverend Canon Marni Nancekivell, Director of Safe Church, Volunteer Management and Screening (From Marni's report to the most recent Niagara Synod.)



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cartoonchurch.com

NIAGARA ANGLICAN

The official publication of the Diocese of Niagara, published 10 times a year from September to June as a supplement to the *Anglican Journal*.

The Diocese of Niagara lies at the western end of Lake Ontario, encompassing the Niagara Peninsula, Hamilton, Halton Region, Guelph and portions of Wellington and Dufferin Counties.

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Printed and mailed by:
Webnews Printing Inc., North York, ON

Available online at:
niagaraanglican.news (blog)
niagaraanglican.ca/newspaper (PDF)

Subscriptions: \$15/year.

Submissions:
Submission information and deadlines are printed elsewhere in the paper.

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Hamilton Ontario L8R 2L3

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Anglican Churches join others for the environment

EcoWHam and EcoLocke Groups in Hamilton area

SUE CARSON

Ten years ago at a KAIROS conference, parishioners from some Dundas Churches decided to start a Christian Environmental group in Dundas.

Since then the Eco Churches of West Hamilton have been meeting monthly and planning three or four events annually. At the present time the churches involved include: Anglican, Presbyterian, three United Churches, Unitarian and a Quaker group.

EcoWHam's mission statement is: to practice and advance ecological sustainability in keeping with Christian principles of stewardship. The Chair, Wayne Poole, is happy EcoWHam has developed a strong relationship with the Association of Dundas Churches. "It is a major achievement getting ADC, the clergy and the local community concerned about the environment."

The events EcoWHam has hosted include Earth Hour services, clean-up days, speakers from Environmental Defence, farmers groups and climate change movies with Hamilton 350. They have also sponsored joint events with groups such as Environment Hamilton, Greening Sacred Spaces, the City of Hamilton and KAIROS.



(Above) Hamilton's EcoLocke Committee, comprised of representatives from four churches, is planning an Earth Hour event on March 30th to discuss Changing How We Live: Housing Development and Energy Efficiency.

(Right) EcoWHam members participated in the Cactus Parade Dundas. Dundas used to have many green houses and a company that grew cactuses, selling them around the world. Somehow the event stuck even after the company left town. The Cactus Festival lasts from Thursday night to Sunday, when the local street is closed for the festival.

Photos: Sue Carson



In 2016 churches in the Locke Street area of Hamilton decided to start a similar group. The churches participating directly include members of St. John the Evangelist Anglican Church, St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Church, Melrose United Church and The First Unitarian Church. Eco Locke is always glad to have members from other churches in the neighbourhood join them.

Member Norm Newbery from St. John the Evangelist com-

mented that as Christians, "We are following more closely Jesus Christ's command (John 17:11) that they may be one as we (he and the Father) are one".

Both groups have experienced greater support, more resources and a larger attendance than if they were working alone. Working alongside similarly committed environmentally conscious Christians has meant we have an increased base and networking links.

Planning events has been easier with this shared commitment, and by combining resources we have a stronger voice for environmental change in our community and beyond.

Everyone is welcome to attend EcoLocke's Earth Hour event on Saturday, March 30th, at 7:00 p.m. at the First Unitarian Church, 170 Dundurn Street South, Hamilton. The topic is Changing How We Live: Housing Development and Energy

Efficiency.

If you would like more information or ideas on how to start a similar group in your community, we would be happy for you to contact us.

Sue Carson, St. James Dundas
d.carson@sympatico.ca
 Norm Newbery, St. John the Evangelist Hamilton
normnewbery@gmail.com

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Synod Council members commissioned

Prayerful retreat begins new term for the executive body of Niagara

BILL MOUS

"As a member of synod council, you are to be prayerful in your discernment, diligent in your preparation, respectful in your speaking, fair in your deliberations and faithful in your decision-making," said Secretary of Synod Bill Mous, as Bishop Susan Bell commissioned the executive body of the diocese.

The commissioning happened during a eucharistic service, part of an all-day synod council retreat at the School Sisters of Notre Dame (SSND) mother-house in Waterdown.

Beginning the day with the Eucharist was a highlight for Siobhan Bennett, a lay representative for Brock region. "I find that it really grounds the work that you're about to do as a team in prayer," adding that doing so emphasizes that "decisions need to be made prayerfully".

Rooted in worship and fellowship, the retreat sought to orient new and returning members of synod council for the leadership role with which they have been entrusted on behalf of the synod of the diocese.

"I was deeply moved by the passion, dedication and commitment of all those who presented and participated," reflected Terry Holub, an ordained representative for Brock region.

Orientation sessions included presentations on the Anglican Communion, governance, the canons and enabling legislation, diocesan finances and the synod council process. Ian Rice, a lay representative for Greater Wellington region, noted that through the five sessions he "gained a much greater understanding of the duties and

responsibilities" being a member of synod council entails.

The retreat also offered an opportunity to engage with the emerging call to renewal and mission that Bishop Susan has articulated in the first few months of her episcopacy. Canon Christyn Perkons facilitated an energetic session that invited reflection on what is resonating from this call.

Members said a deep commitment to Christ and living the gospel, spiritual authenticity, stewardship focused on abundance, liberation from buildings, willingness to risk and fail, an emphasis on meaning-making and spiritual formation were all concepts to be affirmed.

Synod Council members were also invited to offer ideas about what might be added to more fully paint the vision that is developing.

In small conversation circles, members also participated in the Anglican Church of Canada's Heartbeat of the Church initiative. This comes as part of the 125th anniversary of the general synod, for which Archbishop Fred Hiltz has invited the church to listen to its heartbeat through a four-step process that includes prayer, scripture reading, reflection and dialogue.

In the afternoon, members of synod council had the opportunity to learn more about the ministries of the diocese through several speed-meeting sessions. Regional caucuses rotated from table to table to quickly meet with the diocesan directors and bishop as well as ask questions related to their daily work.

Equipped for their work, synod council members con-



Bishop Susan engaged Synod Council members in her call to renewal and mission which she has articulated during the first few months of her episcopacy.

Photos: Bill Mous



In an orientation session for Synod Council members, Chancery Greg Tweney described and clarified issues related to church governance, its canons and legislative responsibilities.

cluded their retreat with a formal meeting. Among the agenda items was the election of David Anderson, Andrew Clinkard, Mike Deed, Cathy Hanson and Janice Whiteley to serve as members of a coordinating team. This group, along with the Bishop and Secretary of Synod, are responsible for planning synod council meetings.

"Overall, the day was just a wonderful experience," said Siobhan Bennett of the retreat that kicked off the beginning of this synod council term.

"I look forward to the challenges and rewards that lie



Canon Christyn Perkons facilitated an energetic session that invited reflection on what is resonating from Bishop Susan's call to renewal and mission.



In his new ministry as Secretary of Synod, Canon Bill Mous explained to Synod Council members their various roles and responsibilities in Niagara Diocese.

ahead as we join together towards our common goal of serving Christ and our communities," concluded Terry Holub.

The Reverend Canon Bill Mous is Secretary of Synod and Director of Administration.
bill.mous@niagaraanglican.ca

The Organist wakes the giant

MARIE LEONE

Proudly stands the church organ,
its glorious sound echoing through the rafters.
The Organist plies his talents bringing the music
to life with each gentle touch.
There is a majesty in the way the Organist
scales to the heights of heaven and
plunges to the depths of despair.

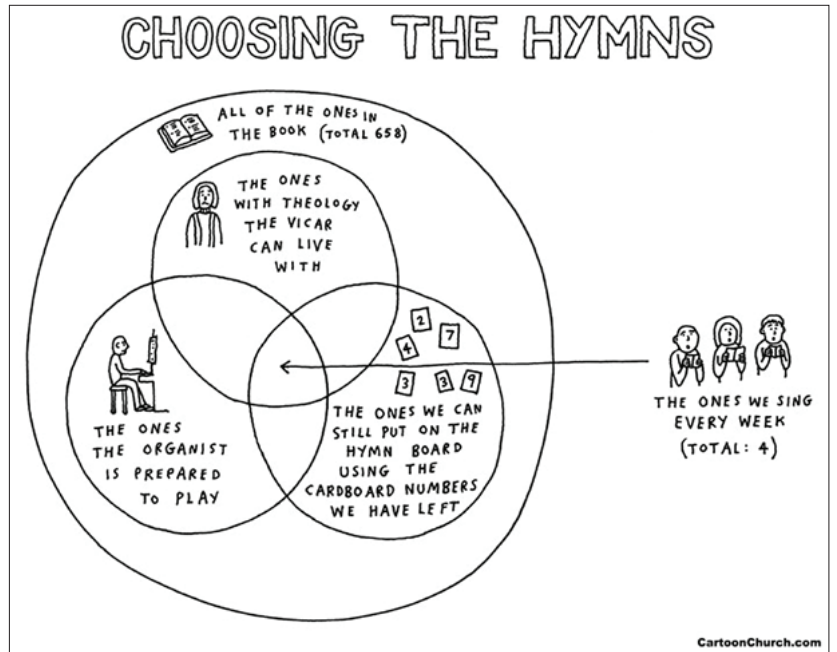
The music takes on a life of its own,
that reverberates in the heart and soul
of the listener.
Defly touching each pedal, each key, the player
strokes every note and brings to life the
exciting energy of a composer's score.
Mozart, Bach, Handel ... all reborn and in the hands of a Master.

Who can say why the organ sound is so loved?
It stirs emotion ... its powerful energy creates excitement.
Long after the final note is played, it echoes through
the church touching each person's soul.
It is the Organist who wakes the giant and brings it to life.

Marie Leone is Office Administrator at The Church of the Ascension Hamilton.

Marie wrote, "Here is a poem I wrote about organists inspired by listening to our own John Laing rehearsing in the church during weekdays while I was working in the parish office."

(The Editor—contact information on page three—welcomes original poems appropriate for the *Niagara Anglican*.)



CartoonChurch.com

Book Review

Exploring an eternal question

Why Religion? A Personal Story
(Harper Collins, 2018)

ROB ROI

About 30 years ago I began to have questions and doubts about my faith. I was having trouble understanding the Bible and the Christian religion with its dogmas and creeds—I wanted to understand more.

Then I heard an interview with New Testament scholar John Dominic Crossan, who had just published a book entitled *The Historical Jesus; the Life of a Mediterranean Jewish Peasant*.

Well I got the book. I didn't understand much of it—Crossan wasn't writing for a layperson like me.

However, one thing that did jump off the page was the Gnostic Gospels. I'd never heard of them, so I asked Derek Pringle, our rector at the time, and he told me to get the book *The Gnostic Gospels* by Elaine

Pagels. It was the beginning of my journey into the history of Christianity.

I have just finished reading Pagels's latest book, *Why Religion? A Personal Story*.

In the first part of the book she explains how she wanted to find "the real Christianity", moving away from her background of the evangelical faith and church dogma. She joined Harvard University to study and find the essence of Christianity.

In her search she found cabinets filled with secret gospels she'd never heard of: the Gospel of Thomas, the Gospel of Philip, the Gospel of Mary Magdalene, the Gospel of Truth, with many others – all stamped TOP SECRET and only available to scholars.

She was "blown away" when she began to read the Gospel of Thomas, a list of 114 sayings of Jesus. She quotes # 70, "If you bring forth what is within you, what you bring forth will save you. If you do not bring forth

what is within you, what you do not bring forth will destroy you."

She explains that these gospels are called the Gnostic Gospels, gnostic meaning knowledge or insight.

In 1945 a farmer found them at Nag Hammadi, an Egyptian village. They were hidden in a cave, sealed in a six-foot jar. They were hidden because two powerful bishops named Irenaeus and Athanasius called them illegitimate secret books. They considered them heretical and ordered Christians all over Egypt to reject the books.

Pagels decided to share her findings, and so published her first book *The Gnostic Gospels* in 1979, despite the negative response from some of her colleagues.

She continued her memoir of loss, spiritual struggle and insight. A rare lung disease killed Elaine Pagels's six-year-old son, and about a year later her husband fell to his death while mountain climbing. Through

rage and terror and despair so overwhelming that it made her faint, she held on.

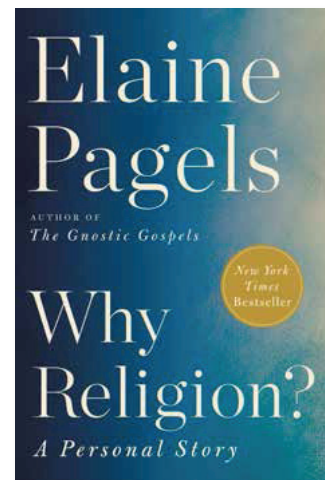
"I had to look into that darkness," she says at the opening of her new memoir, *Why Religion?*, "I could not continue to live fully while refusing to recall what happened."

Pagels acknowledges that "no one escapes terrible loss," but as a popular historian of religion, she gives us a unique reservoir of spiritual wisdom to bear on the thousand natural shocks that flesh is bound to encounter.

She kept studying the Gospels, the letters of Paul, the Gnostic texts and the insights of Buddhism and Trappist monks until she understood that suffering is an essential and common element of human life.

She ends the book with an ancient Jewish prayer, "Blessed art Thou, Lord of the universe, that you have brought us alive to see this day".

The Reverend Rob Roi is a parish deacon at St. James' Dundas. margroi@sympatico.ca



Evangelism: some invitational approaches (Part Three)

DARCEY LAZERTE

This month we conclude our series on evangelism and how we begin locally by looking at what is often termed "invitational" evangelism.

This is something most Anglican churches in Canada have little experience in, as in the past we have primarily depended upon the "attractive" model of evangelism.

We built good churches and for a time filled them, through favourable immigration policies (England and the West Indies), with the hope that we would retain young families when they brought their children to be baptized.

Immigration patterns have changed, and infant baptism rates have plummeted, which means that we need new methods of evangelism, hence invitational evangelism.

When looking at the mission field, experts often speak of the "unchurched" and the "dechurched". In my opinion this forgets "new Canadians", a group



which has filled our churches since the beginning.

Also, it needs to be noted that first nations people are a significant part of our identity, but addressing this is beyond the scope of this article.

So, let us take a look at each of these areas with an eye to evangelism and with the understanding that there is no set solution, but rather something communities need to discern, sometimes alone and sometimes in partnership with other churches and dioceses.

It also should be noted that

alongside these evangelical initiatives there needs to be a high-profile online presence, as a majority of people do learn about faith communities on the internet.

The Unchurched

The Unchurched are a group which is growing and, according to all data, are spiritually hungry.

With no foundation in the Christian tradition they do not speak the language of the Christian faith, but they do share the same existential questions we all face. Many argue that this group is not unlike the Gentile converts to early Christianity.

Approaches with some success have been Alpha, church in a pub, lecture/discussion series, some of the missional church endeavours and social justice partnerships where the lived faith is seen.

The Dechurched

The Dechurched are another growing segment in Canadian

society.

Fully twenty-five percent of Canadians indicate "no religious affiliation" as of 2011, the bulk of which are one-time Roman Catholic, United and Anglican church persons.

The challenge here is that those who have stepped away from their faith often have a deep cynicism when it comes to organized religion.

Approaches which have produced some results are "Back to Church Sunday", the pastoral offices and personal invitation. As well, parish records (parish lists to pastoral office) of past and lapsed parishioners, can be approached in an invitational manner.

New Canadians

At over 350,000 per year, New Canadians are a group which should not be forgotten.

Many readers of this paper are familiar with the Oakville Chinese Missional initiative. This builds on others' experience, most notably, the diocese of Toronto where retired Bishop

Patrick Yu leads an investment made of \$100,000 a year for five years meant to reach out to this community.

It also builds on a long church tradition of locally raised up missionaries/evangelists who know how to contextualize the Christian gospel to new communities.

As Canada truly is a nation of immigrants, this is an initiative which needs to move beyond just the Mandarin community.

Closing thought

While far from comprehensive when the mission field is looked at in this manner, what it does is allow evangelism initiatives to be clear about where and in what context the gospel is being proclaimed.

It also lets a church identify their mission field and put a prayerful plan into place.

The Reverend Canon Darcey Lazerte is Rector of St. Simon's Oakville. darcey@stsimon.ca

Through the eyes of the Magi

Matthew 2:1-12

BAHMAN KALANTARI

The Magi are also referred to as the Wise Men or the Three Kings.

Those who know something of the origin of the word Magi often point out how incorrect these other titles are. But, when we carefully consider the word Magi, we realize that all three titles are right and proper.

Magi is the plural form of the word Magus, a westernized version of the Persian word Mogh. The Moghs or the Magi were the clergymen of the Zoroastrian religion at the time of the infant Jesus.

The Magi existed before Zoroaster (the Persian Prophet). They served a polytheistic religion in which the sun (Mithra) was worshipped along with other natural phenomena like water (Anahita) and fire (Agni).

The Magi were theologians, astrologers, historians and clerics. They formed a social caste whose duty it was to serve the Persian religion. They taught other social castes, were con-

sultants to the authorities and maintained social solidarity.

But Zoroaster was a monotheistic prophet who believed that the Magi of his time were leading the people astray.

During the time of Zoroaster, the Magi performed complicated and seemingly irrational rituals and ceremonies for every simple social act. The worship of agricultural gods through simple feasts in their honour had been replaced by elaborate and costly rituals and ceremonies.

The Magi easily exerted power over the ordinary people and authorities and exploited them.

Zoroaster converted a powerful king and his vizier to the new religion. This King fought against the Magi and converted them to the Zoroastrian religion around 1700 B.C.

In time, Zoroaster's teachings enveloped ancient Iran (Persia), and the Magi, ever adaptable, became the servants of the Zoroastrian religion. They taught the people to worship the one God (Ahura Mazda), to fight Satan (Ahriman) and to

celebrate God's gifts.

When Jesus Christ was born, the Parthians ruled ancient Iran. They were from Parth, the north-eastern province of ancient Iran.

The Parthians established an autonomous system of government. Every province had its own provincial king (Shah), provincial dialect or language, provincial religion, provincial law and occasionally a provincial currency. This whole empire was ruled by the King of Kings. Freedom of religion was an essential part of the ruling system.

Before the Parthians came to power, their chieftains bore the title Kaavi, meaning king-priest. Consequently, the Magi flourished in the provinces as Kaavi.

A few decades before Jesus' birth, the Magi compiled their holy scriptures and called it the Avesta. There are chapters in this book that clearly make reference to the coming of the Saviour of the world.

It was for this reason that the Magi, local kings and astrolo-

gers, followed the star in search of the infant Jesus, the Saviour of the world.

They brought three gifts for Jesus: gold, frankincense and myrrh.

Gold was a royal symbol, a symbol of glory and power. In ancient Iran, local kings used to give gold to the King of Kings as a sign of obedience and homage. They removed their crowns in front of him in a gesture meaning that the King of Kings was the real power in the kingdom.

Frankincense and myrrh were used by different religious groups in the Parthian empire for anointing religious leaders, holy ones and youth who had reached the age of puberty.

The Magi were regional kings, but they did not travel with their wealth or courtiers when they set out to find Jesus.

They had, instead, a holy and specific destination revealed to them by a star. And they had three meaningful gifts to present to Jesus as the heavenly-ordained King of Kings and High Priest.



The Reverend Bahman Kalantari is Rector of the Church of Our Saviour The Redeemer Stoney Creek. bahmankalantari96@gmail.com

Gene editing and “playing God”

NIGEL J. BUNCE

Last November a Chinese scientist, Dr. He Jiankui, announced the birth of gene edited twin girls named Nana and Lulu.

Dr. He claimed to have altered their DNA to protect them from HIV-AIDS.

Gene editing involves replacing a piece of an organism's genetic code with something different (like cut-and-paste with a word-processor), using a technique called CRISPR (Clustered Regularly Interspaced Short Palindromic Repeats), pronounced “crisper”.

Nana got two copies of the protective gene; she probably has complete immunity from HIV. Lulu got only one copy (not deliberately; CRISPR didn't change the other copy); she will likely be susceptible to HIV.

The announcement scandalized the scientific world.

Dr. He crossed an ethical “red line” by altering the fetal genetic code immediately after fertilization, in defiance of international agreement not to take that step.

“Is there a theological argument against playing God?”

Not only are there unknown possible side effects, but such changes are heritable, meaning that they will pass to future generations.

A UK bioethics policy organization described the work as a “premature, inexplicable, and possibly reckless intervention that may threaten the development of future applications of genome editing”.

Leaving aside whether Dr. He's actions were justified, genome editing offers the promise of eradicating inherited conditions such as Huntington's disease and hemophilia. More controversial is whether conditions like congenital blindness and deafness should be treated as “diseases” to be eradicated. Even greyer is the possible creation of “designer babies” with DNA “tweaked” to promote intelligence or physical attributes.

In a 2016 survey by the US Pew Center, almost equal numbers of respondents approved and disapproved the eradication of genetic diseases on moral grounds, but religious people voted nearly 3:1 against.

Christians who assert that life begins at conception, and that human beings are divinely created in God's image, argue that it is wrong to “play God”. Yet, at a trivial ethical level, we “play God” whenever we treat disease through surgery or medication, instead of letting nature take its course.

Realistically, the term gets most used when invasive procedures are new and unfamiliar. Blood transfusions, in vitro fertilization and organ donation were initially controversial, but most people, including most Christians, now accept them.

Is there a theological argument against playing God?

In our earliest Scriptures, the mythical first humans were expelled from Paradise because they ate fruit from the tree of knowledge of good and evil. But the specific reason is found in Genesis 3: 22: “Then the Lord God said, See the man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil; and now, he might reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life.”

Yet because God created humanity intelligent and curious, it was inevitable (and desirable) for us to know the difference between good and evil. The Welsh monk Pelagius, a contemporary (and adversary) of Augustine of Hippo, argued that the freedom to choose good or evil is evidence of God's goodness (*Letters of Pelagius*, trans. Robert van der Weyer, Little Giddings Books, 1995, p. 8). Without it, we would be simply God's puppets, without freedom.

Now that the “red line” has been crossed, it seems inevitable that technologies like CRISPR will be used to edit DNA. Applications like the eradication



of inherited disease may become widely accepted, if undesirable side effects can be avoided. Whether any line can ultimately be drawn concerning ethical acceptance is unknown. Will designer babies be used to flaunt wealth and power?

God has given us the ability to choose to do good or evil. We must pray that this fruit of the knowledge of the tree of good and evil will be used wisely.

Nigel J. Bunce is Priest-in-charge, St. George's Lowville. nigelbunce@hotmail.com

Infinitely More wins two Covenant Awards

HOLLIS HISCOCK

“We are so surprised and grateful” expressed Allison. “How blessed are we that we get to lead the country in the songs and words that God gives us,”

Gerald exclaimed, referring to the hundreds of Canadian worship leaders gathered together.

Infinitely More—husband and wife duo, Gerald Flemming and Allison Lynn—had just won the Covenant Award for Folk

Album Of The Year for their new album *The Beauty Of The One*.

This collection of Infinitely More's original worship and inspirational songs celebrates the wonder found in God's glorious creation.

Recorded in Kitchener under the creative vision of 3-time GMA Producer of the Year Andrew Horrocks, this CD also features guest performances

by some of Canada's finest Christian music artists: Ali Matthews (20-time GMA winner), Kevin Pauls (100 Huntley Street music host), Hiram Joseph (Juno nominee) and Drew Brown (Juno nominee).

The second Covenant Award was for Collaboration Of The Year for the song *My Soul Is Spoken For*. The song is a collaboration between Drew Brown,

the Canadian Christian music industry.

Founded in 1974, GMA's purpose is, “to promote Christian music in Canada”.

Infinitely More attended the Covenant Awards in Edmonton, Alberta, in January. During that month they also led a musical residency at St. Simon's Oakville as the parish awaited the arrival of their new organist.

Four days after getting the two Covenant Awards, Allison and Gerald were thrilled that their CD *The Beauty Of The One* had been nominated for Inspirational Album Of The Year by the East Coast Music Association (ECMA). The duo will attend the awards ceremony in Charlottetown, PEI, this May.

Last year, Infinitely More travelled over 30,000 kilometres, performing at almost 100 venues in all Canadian provinces, including many churches in Niagara Diocese.



The Beauty Of The One won Folk Album Of The Year at the GMA Covenant Awards, Canada's national awards for the Canadian Christian music industry.

Infinitely More—Gerald Flemming and Allison Lynn—received two awards at the Covenant Awards ceremony, which this year celebrated its 40th anniversary.

Photos: Allison Lynn

former music director of Trinity Anglican Church Streetsville, and Infinitely More.

The Gospel Music Association of Canada (GMA—gmacanada.ca) is the presenter of the annual Covenant Awards, Canada's national awards for

For more information about Infinitely More contact Allison at InfinitelyMore.ca or Allison@InfinitelyMore.ca

CANADA BRIEFS

A roundup of news from other diocesan papers in the Anglican Church of Canada
Compiled by the Anglican Journal's Joelle Kidd

1 London priests launch pub-set podcast

In October 2018, a new podcast re-examining the role of faith and the place of church in society was launched in London, ON from an unlikely place.

The diocese of Huron's Canon Kevin George, rector of St. Aidan's, and the Reverend Rob Henderson, rector of the parish of Holy Trinity-St. Stephen's Memorial, are behind "The Vicars' Crossing." The podcast features the two priests conversing about faith over a pint and is recorded in a local pub.

George was moved to start the podcast "as a way of reaching out to the community beyond the walls of our church," he says. He invited Henderson to join, and the two settled on the formula of casual conversation about the intersection between faith and the public square.

They approached Stephen Rogers, manager at Crossings Pub and Eatery and made a deal: Rogers would cover the cost of the recording equipment and provide a room in which to record, and in return, the pub would get recognition as a sponsor in every episode.

Each episode features a different guest, from best-selling author Michael Higgins to the diocese of Huron's PWRDF representative Canon Greg Smith.

To help with the technical aspects of the project, the two enlisted Iain Stevenson, a member of St. Aidan's and a student at Central Secondary School. All the technical set-up, recording, editing and even the theme music is the work of the skilled 17-year-old.

The podcast is available on YouTube and Soundcloud, and at www.facebook.com/vicarscrossing.

— Huron Church News

2 Youth group strengthens interfaith ties with gingerbread

On December 2, 2018, #Limitless, the youth group at St. James Manotick, ON hosted its eighth annual Advent Lunch and Gingerbread Church decorating event. The all-ages event features gingerbread churches—gingerbread houses topped with an ice cream cone "steeple" and a pretzel cross.

This year proceeds were donated to families of victims of the shooting at Tree of Life Synagogue in October 2018 in Pittsburgh, PA.

As an additional demonstration of solidarity and friendship, one of the gingerbread houses was given as a gift of friendship to local synagogue Ottawa Torah Centre Chabad (Barrhaven Synagogue) to mark the occasion of Hanukkah.

On the seventh day of Hanukkah, several #Limitless youth attended a service at Ottawa Torah Centre Chabad and presented the gingerbread creation.

"We often think things we do don't matter; it's the big gestures that matter. And in reality, it can be the small things we do for others, the time we take to build relationships that have the biggest impact on others," says youth group leader Donna Rourke.

Rabbi Menachem Blum, of Ottawa Torah Centre Chabad, invited local media to cover the story. In a message of thanks after the service, he wrote, "On behalf of our community I want to thank you once again for your heartwarming gift ... It truly enhanced our Hanukkah celebration and we are grateful for your friendship."

— Crosstalk

3 NB lay readers, volunteers lead a weekly hospital Sunday service

More than 20 years ago, lay readers from St. John the Evangelist Church in the parish of Douglas and Nashwaaksis, diocese of Fredericton, and volunteers began an interdenominational Sunday service at the Dr. Everett Chalmers Hospital in Fredericton, NB.

It's still going strong. Every Sunday at 10:30 a.m. finds a small group of lay readers leading the service, and volunteers escorting patients from their rooms to the chapel for a service of readings, music and a short sermon.

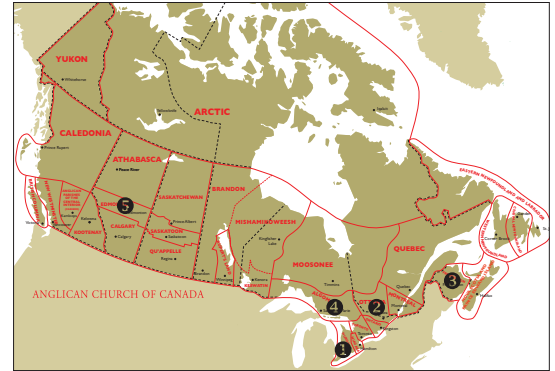
Some patients are one-timers, there only for a short stay. Others have been there for months, waiting for a nursing-home bed. Typical attendance ranges between 12 and 20 patients.

"Patients enjoy it," says Shirley Smith, who usually leads the service, which she has been a part of for at least 18 years. "Some of them may not fully understand what's happening, but others listen very closely to the sermon. It gives us satisfaction that we're helping others, but it's helpful for us to be part of it, too. I think anyone can get fulfillment from helping others."

The Reverend Paul Ranson says he's blessed to have inherited such a ministry at his parish. "The human component our volunteers and lay readers have with patients is irreplaceable. It's not just the service, but the interaction before and after that makes it special."

The long-running ministry is in need of more volunteers. They don't have to be Anglican, and lay readers needn't be from the parish of Douglas and Nashwaaksis.

— The New Brunswick Anglican



4 Indigenous ministry fund established in Algoma

The diocese of Algoma has established an Indigenous Ministry Fund to be used as seed money for a ministry.

The fund was created after the diocese received a \$78,000 refund from the federal government on the money it contributed toward the national Residential Schools Settlement Agreement. (The diocese's contribution exceeded what was required of it under the Agreement.)

Bishop of Algoma, Archbishop Anne Germond, invited the diocese to send in suggestions for use of the funds, and after discussion, the Indigenous Ministry Fund was established.

In determining priorities, Germond says, she will give preference to grass roots ministries with support from a local congregation, community or ministry. She also says she anticipates utilizing interest only from the fund, amounting to approximately \$3,000-\$4,000 each year.

Ministries must use the funds to further the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and link in the Marks of Mission of the Anglican Communion. Consideration will be given to intergenerational ministries and events.

Congregations in the diocese will also be encouraged to contribute to the fund so that it is ongoing.

— Algoma Anglican

5 Food bank ministry helps neighbours

St. Mary's Anglican Church is reaching out to its neighbours in the Highlands neighbourhood of Edmonton, AB through a food bank program.

The majority of the Edmonton Food Bank's 44 hamper distribution depots are churches.

St. Mary's food bank ministry has been running for more than 15 years.

When Canada's first food bank opened in Edmonton in 1981, St. Mary's food bank depot co-ordinator Suzanne Brown admits that she, believed it was for "down-and-outers: people who don't want to work, who are on welfare or drugs. I found out that's not true".

She recalls one morning when she met an elderly woman at the door of St. Mary's hall. "Her husband was in a nursing home and she couldn't afford to buy food."

The Reverend Ruth Sesink Bott puts on a pot of coffee and creates a welcoming space where people can enjoy a hot drink and, if they wish, to smudge.

Recently, one Indigenous family told her they felt welcome the moment they walked through the door and smelled the aroma of sage.

"One of the hardest things about poverty is loneliness," says Sesink Bott. "It prevents people from engaging in their community and often creates shame. We want people to know they are welcome here just as they are."

— The Messenger

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Reading the Bible in a year Challenge and responses

Beginning January 2018, people at St. Christopher's Burlington were invited to read the whole Bible in one year. A number accepted the challenge. By the end of the first year some had completed their reading of the Bible, others were continuing, and others have stopped (hopefully to start reading again later).

The *Niagara Anglican* posed questions to those who completed or are continuing the Bible Challenge. These are their stories:



Rector Michelle Boomgaard

I offered the Bible Challenge as a way of encouraging my parish to learn more about their faith. At the time, I was short on staff, so I didn't have time to put together a lot of intentional Bible studies. The Bible Challenge offered a devotional which included reflections on the day's readings. Many of the participants used that.

Also, I wrote a quick synopsis of the various books we were reading. My hope was that when

we were done, I would be able to offer a more intentional Bible Study on an individual book of the Bible.

Perhaps people would have a better sense of which book they would like to study or understand in greater depth, or which of the contributors to the devotional they would like to read again.

I also did it because my usual prayer practice had started to grow tired, so I needed something new. I did use the devotional, which gave me an opportunity to contemplate where I fit into some of the things I was reading.

This time, I was really struck by the connections between the Old and New Testaments; the way Jesus, Paul and others wove the language, stories and metaphors from the Hebrew Bible into the Good News of the Gospel.

Many people commented on how violent the Bible seemed. I concur with that.

Since we read both the Old and New Testaments simultaneously, it sometimes seemed hard to find the good news. The Exile of the Jewish people seemed to weigh down much of the reading.



John Stephen

My familiarity with the Bible began as a chorister at age nine.

I decided I should read the Bible. I got to Exodus and decided to put it off for a while.

More than half a century later, this challenge came along. I knew this was the time. My wife was also interested in taking the challenge and together we ventured into the complete Bible.

We started on familiar ground - Genesis and Exodus. I knew these from my days in and teaching Church School. I wasn't

so familiar with the way they all fit together. Some incidents never came up in Church School or even read at Church services. I was surprised at the violence and even more so at the sexuality in some episodes.

I was grateful to have the plan to attack Leviticus. I was amazed at the rules. Even so, it was enlightening to read the rules that were spelled out in great detail to the people.

Reading through the history books of Samuel, Kings and Chronicles, I was struck that people were always at war with their neighbours - Moabites, Amorites and Philistines. Also, many seemed more interested in following the religious beliefs and customs of their surrounding nations.

I always considered that the Israelites followed God and the commandments in the face of the neighbouring peoples, but it seems the prophets were constantly reminding them of their special laws.

Then there was the great impact the Assyrian and Babylonian empires had on people. I knew this era was important but hadn't realised how much the Hebrew Scriptures focused on the anticipation, experience and aftermath of the

destruction of the temple and the exile in Babylon.

Some Psalms were very familiar. They are the texts of numerous anthems and oratorios such as the Messiah and Elijah. I was surprised so many psalms seemed to be whining about human conditions and calling for the destruction of enemies and safety for the right people. Even familiar psalms often had uncomfortable verses.

When we started reading the Psalms for a second time, I decided to read a different translation. Since I read German fairly fluently, I found an app which had Luther's translation of the Bible. I kept it side by side with my New English translation.

Although most passages were reasonably close, some translations were radically different. It made me aware how people spend careers studying, analysing and commenting on different Bible interpretations.

The New Testament takes on a new life when read in the understanding and scope of the Hebrew Scriptures. I saw connections that never occurred to me before, like how disjointed the Gospels are. I had been used

Continued Page 11

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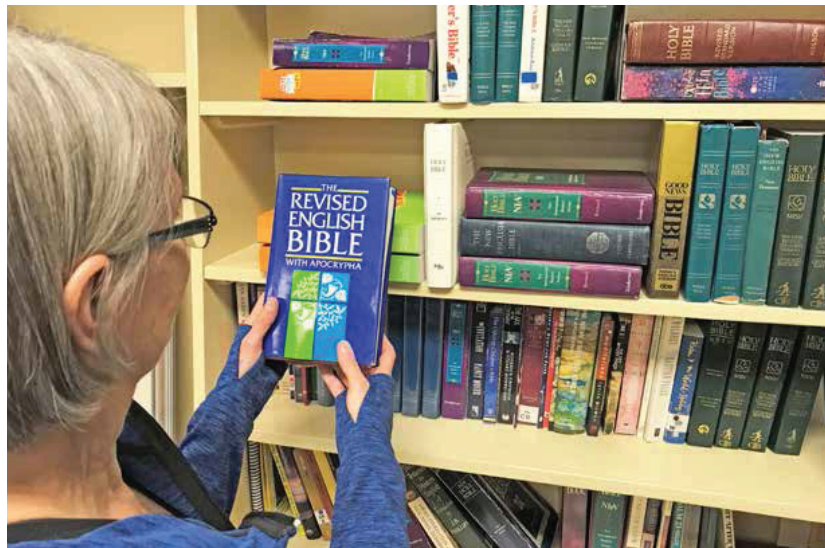
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Reading the Bible in a year

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11



to considering a particular incident or teaching opportunity. To read them as a whole was surprisingly less satisfying.

The range of issues in the epistles was fascinating. With Paul's epistles we see the problems people faced in the new churches and how he suggests dealing with them. In the later epistles, the churches are becoming established and we see more rules being developed for its organization. In both cases, we see certain issues that they were dealing with continue to plague churches today.

I'm glad to have taken the Bible challenge. It gave me a plan to complete a long-felt desire and an insight into the people who were so important in the formation of our religion. It also helped me understand how radical some of Jesus' teaching was. It aroused my curiosity to follow up on many different questions that arose during the year.

Gill Jones

I decided to follow the Bible Challenge to read the bible in the year largely because I felt the discipline of following a program would enable me to

actually complete the course, particularly since I knew that I was not doing it alone.

I was aware that there were many parts of the Old Testament that I was not likely to read otherwise.

On an academic level, I



found reading the whole of the Bible, and in particular the Old Testament, gave me a much clearer picture of the history of the Jewish faith.

I really appreciated getting the "big picture" and found the early books in particular invaluable in enabling my understanding of much of what is said and done in the later books of the Old Testament and in the New

Testament.

So, in other words, for me there was an academic purpose in reading the whole Bible.

However, I must confess that I was profoundly disturbed by the overwhelming picture of God as a jealous and vengeful God, something which seemed at odds with our "Christian" image of a loving and forgiving parent.

On the whole, I did not enjoy the experience of reading the complete Bible in this way – it definitely felt like a chore at times. I did not feel, as I was reading it, that it was in any way enhancing my spiritual journey. So, reaching the end was a relief, to say nothing of an accomplishment.

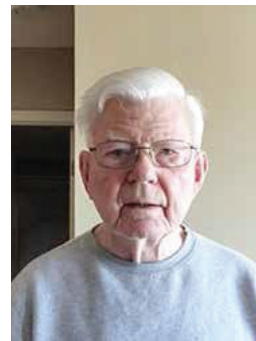
However, within a couple of days of finishing, I became aware I actually was missing that "time out of life" which I had spent in doing my Bible reading. Even as I finished it, I was thinking ahead as to what to do next.

I have decided that I would like to go on and study the Gospels in more depth with the aid of a good Bible commentary.

For the time being, however, I am reading a book of contemplations by Joan Chittister,

Donna Mawhinney checks out the various translations of the Bible available from the library at St. Christopher's Burlington.

Photo: Hollis Hiscok



which I am finding is reawakening my sense of God in the here and now.

Gordon Archbell

For some reason which I can't explain, it seemed an interesting challenge.

Each week Michelle provided the readings for the week.

I found that the Old Testament was a rather difficult read. Regardless, it was still interesting.

The new testament, though somewhat familiar, was quite interesting.

I would certainly recommend that it is well worth the effort.

We want to hear your Bible reading story

In 400 words or less, tell us about your experience of reading the Bible, whether intensively over a year or as part of a regular routine.

People in the news

Appointments

The Reverend **Cheryl Barker**, Rector of St. Paul's Caledonia and the Reverend **Mike Deed**, Rector of Resurrection Hamilton, have been appointed Regional Deans of the Region of Hamilton-Haldimand.

Congratulations

Happy 60th wedding anniversary to **Doug and Mabel Mercer**.

Condolences

Deepest sympathy to Archdeacon **Peter Moore**, honorary assistant at St. George's Guelph, and retired Executive Officer of Niagara Diocese, on the death of his wife, **June Moore**. Keep her family in your thoughts and prayers.

Deepest sympathy to **Margaret Clark** on the passing of her husband of 65 years, the Reverend **Morley Allen Clark**. Morley's kindness and compassion for people led him to ordained ministry. He served in the Anglican Church ministry for 40 years starting in Marathon, Ontario, then to Powassan, Ontario and back to Hamilton as an associate pastor. Keep his family in your thoughts and prayers.

(Source: People in the News - niagaraanglican.ca)

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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Parish votes to disestablish

On Epiphany, the parish of Holy Trinity Hamilton held a special vestry meeting and voted to recommend to the Bishop that their parish be disestablished.

This recommendation, accepted by Niagara's Bishop Susan Bell, was the culmination of a faithful and Spirit-led discernment process over a number of years.

A service to celebrate the parish's 140 years of ministry in Hamilton takes place on Sunday, March 3, 2019 at 4:00 p.m.

If you are interested in attending the service and reception, please email Canon Margaret Murray at megmurray50@gmail.com

Holy Trinity is located at 120 Fennell Avenue East, Hamilton.

We ask you to keep the congregation in your prayers during this transition time and give thanks to God for their faithful witness.



Holy Trinity Hamilton, founded in 1878, voted at a special vestry this January to disestablish. A service of celebration is scheduled for March 3.

Photo: David Triggerson/Google Maps

The Heartbeat of the Church

During the 125th anniversary of the General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada, our Primate Fred Hiltz is calling all of us in the Anglican Church of Canada to come together, form conversation circles and join in dialogue, prayer and reflection.

Conversation circles are guided by four simple steps that will help Anglicans speak from the heart about their faith: where the holy is experienced in our lives, what moves us to pray, and what makes our hearts lift—or ache.

You could explore such questions as ...

- What is the heartbeat of the church?
- Are we in sync with the gospel we are called to embody?
- In what do we rejoice?
- Over what must we repent?
- To what should we aspire?

To read the Primate's letter, download the Conversation Circle Guide or learn more about The Heartbeat of the Church, go to anglican.ca/heartbeat/



Revive – at a bargain price



Revive, a small group program — created by Niagara faith formation coordinator, the Reverend Canon Dawn Davis — that equips lay leaders for spiritual leadership has been launched!

It is available at an introductory price of \$100, but only until March 31, 2019. Starting April 1st, the program will cost \$299.

Niagara is the first Canadian diocese to pilot this program and it's having a transformative effect in several of our parishes.

Both clergy and lay participants are engaging in new spiritual practices and experiencing deepened relationships with one another and with God.

Revive is a great way to explore spiritual formation

and see people in your parish become more confident spiritual leaders and followers of Christ.

For more information, including a video, visit revive.forwardmovement.org or contact Canon Dawn Davis, Niagara's Faith Formation Coordinator, at 416-567-1827 or dawn.davis@niagaraanglican.ca

Bishop's Lenten Book

Bishop Susan has chosen *The Book of Forgiving* by Desmond Tutu and Mpho Tutu as this year's Lenten Book.

Each of us has a deep need to forgive and to be forgiven.

After much reflection on the process of forgiveness, Tutu has seen that there are four important steps to healing.

Step one: Admitting the wrong and acknowledging the harm;

Step two: Telling one's story and witnessing the anguish;

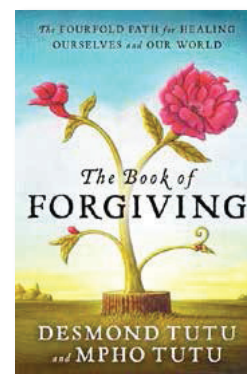
Step three: Asking for forgiveness and granting forgiveness; and,

Step four: renewing or releasing the relationship.

Forgiveness is hard work.

Sometimes it even feels like an impossible task. But it is only through walking this fourfold path that Tutu says we can free ourselves of the endless and unyielding cycle of pain and retribution.

The Book of Forgiving is both a touchstone and a tool,



offering Tutu's wise advice and showing the way to experience forgiveness.

Ultimately, forgiving is the only means we have to heal ourselves and our aching world.

The cost is \$16. To pre-order, contact Jane Wyse by email jane.wyse@niagaraanglican.ca or call 905-527-1316 (420), or check with your parish which may have ordered multiple copies.

