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A section of the Anglican Journal



NIAGARA ANGLICAN



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

FEBRUARY 2020

The Beatitudes at St. Luke's Smithville



BY JIM HIGGINSON

During the Easter season, St. Luke's, Smithville displays a series of images depicting the Stations of the Cross. When these are taken down after Easter the north and south walls of the church look bare. Recognizing many accomplished and budding artists at St. Luke's, the Reverend Eleanor Clitheroe-Bell planted a seed in peoples' minds about creating a set of eight images depicting the Beatitudes and displaying them on the bare walls during the rest of the church year.

God always delivers.

In this case it was Briar Capes, the oldest granddaughter of long-time parishioners Pat and John Wilson, who offered to take on the project. Briar

said she was inspired to do the Beatitudes project because she loves her grandparents and wanted to give back to them when they have given her so much. She said she attended St. Luke's as a child with her family and she was very grateful to be given an opportunity to give back to such a loving community.

Briar is 21 years old and was raised in Beamsville. She went to school in St. Catharines. She attends Fanshawe College on a sports scholarship and is working on an education degree. Her entire family is very artistic and knows that it is something she has always been exposed to and interested in from a young age. Her parents both went to

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Bishop Clarence Mitchell 1925–2019

Bishop Clarence Malcolm Mitchell, retired suffragan bishop of the diocese of Niagara, died December 17, 2019. He was 94.

"Bishop Clarence was a faithful and dedicated servant with a special heart for our shared musical language of the church," reflected Bishop Susan Bell. "His commitment to and encouragement of lay leaders is remembered fondly and appreciatively by those whom he influenced across the church."

Born in Port Dover in 1925, Bishop Mitchell studied at Western University where he obtained a Bachelor of Arts in 1953 followed by

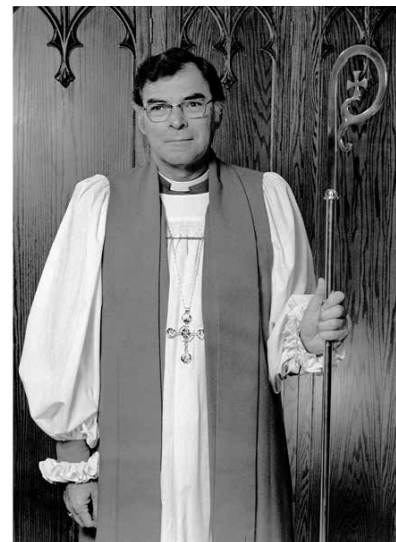
a Licentiate in Theology from Huron College in London. Passionate about church music, he was ordained a deacon in May of 1954 and a priest in November of that same year. He served a number of Niagara parishes, including Holy Trinity, Welland, St. John's, Port Dalhousie, St. Christopher's, Burlington, Church of the Ascension, Hamilton and St. George's, Guelph.

In 1964 he was appointed an honorary canon of Christ's Church Cathedral and later served as Archdeacon of Wellington. Bishop Mitchell was consecrated a bishop on June 8, 1980 and served as suffragan

bishop alongside Archbishop John Bothwell until his retirement in 1990.

In addition to his ministry appointments, Bishop Mitchell served in a number of roles, including as a member of the board of the Halton Children's Aid Society and as its president, as the secretary of the national House of Bishops, and as a senior fellow with Renison College. He was awarded the Centennial medal as well as an honorary Doctor of Divinity degree from his alma matter, Huron College.

Bishop Mitchell devotedly served the Diocese of Niagara throughout his six decades of ordained ministry.



Beatitudes Adorn St. Luke's Smithville

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2



college for art-related programs and her two younger sisters are also very artistic and creative. The family's creative talents are expressed in different ways ranging from painting to sculpting. Her family has created a very fun and encouraging environment in which to grow up.

Briar enjoys sketching and water colour painting. She doesn't use computer-generated art programs so she grew up watching and learning from her both the traditional boards as well as the computer.

Briar believes that throughout her life she has relied on being creative to finding the 'fun' in all situations. She applies visual art to most projects to make

them look attractive as well as using creative strategies when in sticky life situations. She enjoys singing recreationally because the different sounds make her feel calm. As a child, she was exposed to a large variety of music ranging from classical to classic rock and finds now that she is more open to listening to various types of music because of that.

In addition, she says she tends to doodle a lot or create simple art pieces when under pressure. If she has plenty of free time, then she is able to see a simple doodle through to the final product because it's always gratifying to compare the finished result with what

she had from the start. The act of making something beautiful from various scattered ideas is satisfying. Creativity and art have been a very large part of her life and she can't imagine her life without it.

In the planning the Beatitude pieces, her mom, dad, and sisters were all instrumental in the process and helped her brainstorm various ideas. It took about a year to complete the project because she was constantly editing, re-drawing, or re-visiting each individual picture. She wanted to make sure each piece was the best it could be and hopefully translate the message that she was intending.

For the eight pieces, even though they don't have the same meaning exactly, she wanted the audience to feel something when they looked at them both individually and together. For example, the woman crying in the Blessed are the Meek drawing was a piece where she wanted people to understand the sorrow that might have been occurring to her during a time of time of hardship. To Briar art is all about making you feel something, whether emotionally, mentally, physically... anything. She hopes everyone will see

her interpretations and use them to think what a particular Beatitude means to them.

Not surprisingly, Briar has been so busy with her studies and playing and coaching the college volleyball team that she has not been to St. Luke's to be officially thanked. She has been sent photos of Bishop Susan posing with some of the drawings with her grandparents. She received a video "thank you" from Rev. Ellie which she thought was such a beautiful and kind-hearted way to convey thanks from the church.

St. Luke's thanks Briar whole heartedly for her passionate and great effort in creating the Beatitudes. We hope to have

her join us soon in person to thank her. In the meantime, we enjoy being surrounded by the warmth and kindness expressed in the Beatitudes.

Jim Higginson ON is treasurer of St. Luke's (Smithville).

Other images from this Beatitudes series can be found elsewhere in this paper.



Feeding Fort Erie

BY LAURA ARSENEAU

Hunger is all around us. You just can't always see it.

'Kay' moved to Fort Erie to escape an abusive situation and because rents were cheaper than in the big city. Kay went on ODSP (Ontario Disability Support Program) after an injury prevented her from continuing to work as a waitress, a job that came with one hot meal a day. The benefit provides Kay with \$1100/mth. She found an apartment for \$900/month; more than she'd hoped for but she has mobility issues and it's on the main floor with no stairs to climb.

'Jack' is on Ontario Works and receives approximately \$750/month to cover rent, utilities, food and clothing. Jack rents a room in a rooming house, sharing one kitchen and one

bathroom with five other men, for \$600/month.

Both Kay and Jack have less than \$6.00 a day for food.

Kay and Jack are part of a recent in-migration of newcomers from outside the area. Some come from as far away as Orangeville or Toronto. They may be young couples with small children, men discharged from detention centres, or seniors whose only income is a government pension. Every day is a trade-off: deciding on whether to forgo a medication, pay for heat, or to skip eating. As winter hits, more will seek refuge at the library, a safe place with heat. Kay and Jack may be your neighbour or a co-worker. Behind closed doors, they might skip meals or not eat for days. They are hungry all the time.

The shelves of the food bank at COPE (Community Outreach

Program Erie) in Fort Erie's north end, are half full the day Kay pays her monthly visit. She shows her ID and proof she is on ODSP. Manager Barb Volske says people like Kay feel ashamed to be seen going in here. "I tell them the only ones who'll know are you, me and whoever else you share it with." Anonymity and dignity is so important to clients who struggle with the daily stigma and often, isolation associated with low income.

It's a common misconception that all food bank users are on social assistance. They are seeing a demographic shift at The Salvation Army's Gilmore Rd food bank. "With rents skyrocketing and income sources remaining stagnant, we are seeing a number of new families and individuals who used to be able to make ends meet now turning to the

food bank," says The Salvation Army's Community and Family Services Manager, Anne Watters. "In the first 6 months of 2019, 25% of the clients accessing the food bank were first time users. Individuals who are precariously employed, working multiple part-time jobs and/or working for minimum wage are a growing sector."

Community meals, like the one St Paul's Anglican does, is one act of service. The parish has partnered with the Greater Fort Erie Secondary School's Culinary Program for the past four years. Teacher Afshin Keyvani bustles around the church kitchen, directing his crew of chefs-in-training between sips of strong Turkish coffee. The Grade 10s have pre-made cabbage rolls for this month's 'Food for the Soul'. The volunteer parishioners help

serve, then sit down with diners to share lunch before cleaning up. For these churches, it is an outreach where feeding folks comes first.

Food banks and community meals can only do so much about hunger in Fort Erie. In 2019, 20 different organizations, including churches, food bank or social services, met to form the Feeding Fort Erie (FFE) group. By pooling resources, information, brain and man-power, they hope to improve access to healthy food for the vulnerable in Fort Erie neighbourhoods.

(This story was first published in the Fort Erie Observer. It has been re-written and submitted to the Niagara Anglican, with permission.)

From The Editor

My Hero

Clarence Mitchell was my hero.

I first met him when I was seven years old. He had just been appointed rector of my home parish (St. George's, Guelph), and he came to visit the Sunday School. It was a large group—I'm sure we were a little overwhelming—yet he took the time to chat with every class.

He was a tall man—with a very deep voice—and he listened intently to every word that was said. But the thing that struck me most was the twinkle in his eye. It was a twinkle I had only seen once before ... Santa Claus.

Everyone in the parish loved him. He was the ideal parish priest—encouraging members to step up and share their gifts, the whole time being aware of all that was happening.

- Seniors loved him, because he visited and listened, and made sure that the shut-ins and sick always had someone from the church connecting with them
- Parents loved him, because he

preached relevant sermons and spoke about how it was possible to live lives of faith even in a secular world.

- Teenagers loved him, because he allowed them to explore their faith in a '70s context. Experimental liturgies, guitars and saxophones and folk masses, and allowing servers to wear jeans and sneakers under their cassocks.
- Children loved him, because he took the time to stop, address them by name, and listen.

As I grew up and became more involved in parish life, I came to respect my rector even more. He loved to laugh (and in all honesty—the church does give us plenty to laugh about). He often used his humour as a way of knocking down the walls of "stiffness" that the Church had built over the years, and used humour as the great equalizer among us all. And that twinkle was still there.

He was very attentive to the Youth Group and all its members. While some rectors liked to delegate this responsibility to lay leaders and curates, then run away, Clarence stayed connected to the youth and their leaders. Somewhere along the way, he and I developed a small "greeting ritual". Whenever we met we would join right hands (in a traditional handshake) then lift our left hands to each others cheeks and give a gentle and loving "pinch".

When he was elected Suffragan Bishop of Niagara (in 1980) our parish was both thrilled and devastated. The youth group even more so. Among one of our gifts to him was a purple T-shirt with the words "Bishop Mitch" printed on it.

Two months later the Suffragan Bishop visited the Niagara Youth Conference. He arrived in suit and clergy collar ... delivered greetings from the diocese and the bishop ... then

(in front of us all, with that twinkle in his eye) proceeded to take off his jacket, pectoral cross, and shirt ... revealing his Bishop Mitch T-shirt. The crowd went wild. He then returned to his seat, amongst the people, where he felt most comfortable.

Clarence was a people person. It was what made him a great parish priest, and a very pastoral bishop. He believed that being in relationship with others was a keystone of Jesus' ministry, and was the foundation of his own. He knew there would be no shortage of people to fulfill all those other tasks that the church needs in order to function ... but it all hinged on the foundation of relationship.

He taught me (through how he lived his own life) that every person is worthy of dignity and respect, especially those who may think differently than we do—because that is how our church was founded and how we will continue.



Clarence was a practical person. He knew that boilers needed repairing, bulletins needed printing, that shingles will fly off the steeple ... but that should not be our focus or our reason for being. He taught us how to address the one, without compromising the other.

Clarence was a real person. We sometimes forget that about our bishops. He wasn't afraid to admit his own faults, and that was appreciated by many. He showed us that bishops are human, and that endeared him to me even more, knowing the huge task we had laid upon his shoulders. He carried it well, knowing God was always with him.

Our church has said goodbye to one of the greats ... and we rejoice that we were blessed with him in the first place, and that our lives (and our world) are richer because of him.

The Clarence I knew ...

BY CANON WILLIAM THOMAS

Clarence was the most pastoral cleric I have ever known.

I met him first as the father of the two sons I taught at The Guelph C.V.I, then as Rector of St. George's, then as the Bishop who ordained me as a priest, the father of the groom at a wedding at which I presided, and finally as the grandfather of my goddaughter. He knew exactly what his gifts were (marvellous singing voice, attractive and warm personality, great memory for people and places) and his deficiencies (not a great academic or preacher, certainly not an administrator). He had a

prodigious memory for people's names and family connections. He always used people's names when speaking with them, and usually inquired into how the rest of the family (often by name) was coming along.

His warm and involving sense of humour, and humility, relaxed many a tense situation, and opened the door to a deepening trust. Above all, he was a gifted mentor, inviting individuals to grow and blossom in serving the community and the church.

I first met Clarence in 1970, when he became rector of St. George's in Guelph. In those days my normal practice was to drop Jette and the kids off at the church on Sunday mornings

while I hustled off to my office at The G.C.V.I "to get some work done". That was soon to change.

When our son Eric was born, unexpectedly with Down Syndrome, Clarence helped us through the shock, and was the first child he baptized at a main service on Sunday morning at St. George's. Our previous two were baptized in the chapel on a Sunday afternoon. His caring leadership of the congregation resulted in our son being welcomed and involved, rather than being politely ignored as was the common experience of too many in those days.

Having employed his eldest son as a babysitter, and as a team leader for my Gr 13



Clarence Mitchell at the time of his election, with Bishop John Bothwell.

Geography field camps, Clarence and I became closer and better acquainted. Under his gentle mentoring, Jette and I became more and more involved in not only attending church on Sunday mornings, but working with the new curate David Russell, in maintaining the

youth group which had grown hugely in just a couple of years under his predecessor, Ralph Spence.

One memorable incident was the invitation, knowing that I was comfortable around teens,

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**BY THE REVEREND
DEACON JANICE
MALONEY-BROOKS**

"For I was hungry, and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink. I was a stranger and you welcomed me. I was naked and you clothed me. I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me"
Matthew 25: 35-36.

Of the three kinds of Clergy (Deacons, Priests and Bishops), Deacons have a unique role. We stand on the threshold of the church and the world and are charged with a special ministry of servanthood, directly under

the authority of our bishop. In our Diaconal Ordination, we are told "In the name of Jesus Christ, we are to serve all people, particularly the poor, the weak, the sick and the lonely".

In addition to our sacramental work in our home parish, deacons go out into the world interpreting the Church's needs and concerns and hopes of the world. My diaconal work is as a Chaplain and Volunteer Coordinator for the Mission to Seafarers Southern Ontario.

Our mission is to provide a safe place for Seafarers. We aim to help them with their needs be they physical, emotional or spiritual. Usually, their first request is wifi, in order to connect with

their families. Our seafarers, for the most part, are young men and women who treasure their family life, although they go away to work for 8-10 months of the year.

Families, at home far away, can only guess where on the globe they may be until they receive a safe arrival email or call from a wi-fi equipped port. Our seafarers depend on support from home and from our Missions to be able to carry out this dangerous and very necessary work. In fact, we had a great celebration last year! A seafarer, through our wi-fi was able to coach his wife through labour and witness the birth of his child via Skype at our Mission Station in Hamilton.

Providing a home away from home and free wi-fi isn't all we do. We visit each ship that comes to Hamilton, Oshawa and Toronto. We board the ships bearing bags of chocolates for the crew and the officers. The seafarers are astounded that we climb up the gangways to bring them a gift. In their world nothing is free.

We speak to as many of the crew as we can—remembering

it is their place of work and we must be careful that we don't get in the way! We are also on the lookout for anyway in which we can help pastorally because we are the only people aside from agents and Transport Canada inspectors who go aboard a ship.

We keep an eye and ear open to be sure the crew is well treated and receiving their wages, that there is no abuse aboard, that living condition and food is adequate and of good quality and that they are being paid regularly. We are all well versed in maritime law and seafarer's welfare.

Mission to Seafarers is working in 200 ports and in 50 countries. There are approximately 1.5 million men and women seafarers working to bring over 90% of the world trade. It is one of the world's most dangerous occupations. The rate of suicide for international seafarers is triple that of shore workers and they are 26 times more likely to be killed at work. The threat of piracy is also very real.

Our duties can range from counselling a seafarer who is depressed and suicidal to

helping a cook find fresh produce to serve the crew. One day we had a seafarer in, asking how to change money. We told him where to go for a decent exchange rate. When he returned he spoke of how pretty our money is -and he took out a dollar bill. We were heartbroken because before he made it to the exchange bureau, a man had changed all the seafarer's pay for Canadian Tire money.

As a deacon and a chaplain, I am fortunate to spend my days working in a social justice ministry and fully believe that "whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me." (Matthew 25:40)

The Deacon's Bench is a regular feature in The Niagara Anglican. Each month we will hear from a Deacon serving a parish under a Bishop's Letter of Permission. Each will inform us about the ministry s/he conducts in their parish and the wider community. This month's columnist is The Reverend Deacon Janice Maloney-Brooks of The Church of the Ascension (Hamilton)

The Clarence I knew...

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

and drove a VW van, to be one of the drivers to take the Youth Group in to see "Godspell" in 1972 at the Royal Alexandra Theatre. Many of that cast went on to become famous – Andrea Martin, Gilda Radner, Martin Short and Eugene Levy. But for Clarence, the most memorable cast member was Jayne Eastwood, who, spotting Clarence in full blacks in an aisle seat, came off the stage to wrap him in a feather boa, while singing "Turn back, O man, forswear thy foolish ways..." his response, playing along with her, was to endear him to several generations of young people – and to those of us who worked both with him and with them. I soon found myself becoming a Sunday School teacher and advisor to other teachers, and on the staff of NYC.

Clarence was very much a supporter of youth ministry. One of the earliest members of the staff of NYC, he was a great recruiter for that program, and in my experience of him at St. George's, managed to calm

those adults whose feathers were ruffled by the often barely restrained energy and actions of young people: especially when that involved use of the facilities for weekly coffee houses, and the use of electric guitars, candles, and chanting in special evensongs.

Clarence was, in his quiet way, a great evangelist. Feeling guilty that I was teaching in the Sunday School and mentoring a huge youth group, while remaining a Presbyterian, he seized on the opportunity to suggest that Jette (a Danish Lutheran) and I could be confirmed within a couple of weeks, when Bishop Walter Bagnall was scheduled to come – IF we promised to participate in the next year's class.

Bishop Clarence was also a great liturgist. He had a great singing voice, and presence as an officiant. I particularly recall his being called in to perform as the voice of God in a Benjamin Britton concert at the Basilica in Guelph. In preparation for his participation in "Theology 76" at Huron College, he gathered together a community of about two dozen parishioners

to meet in the parish parlour of St. George's at 9:30 on Sunday mornings. We were divided into teams that, Sunday by Sunday, prepared and conducted one of the many "paperback liturgies", including draft forms of services in what was to become the BAS. And we spent some time with him reviewing our reactions to those liturgies: discussing both what we liked and didn't like, and what was disturbing, both positively and negatively. Two of us were moved by that experience to consider ordination, and with Clarence's support, were both ordained.

Underneath all of his many gifts and contributions to the Church in Niagara, was Clarence's first vocation as a husband and father. His was a warm, loving, and welcoming family, who knew solidly who they were, and what values they held, while being encouraged to become the unique individuals they were created to be.

Clarence grew up as the descendent of one of the founding families of Port Dover, and he married a descendent of one of the others. He was related to

just about half of the community, and knew the importance of remembering people's names and who was related to whom. His children and grandchildren have carried on that sense of belonging and community. I suspect that the example and the

personal experience of encountering Clarence was what led so many of his congregations to be welcoming and stimulating places to be, and for this diocese to elect him as their Suffragan Bishop. It was a privilege and an inspiration to have known him.



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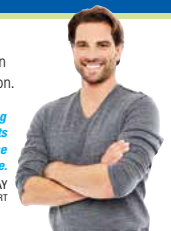
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Equal Marriage In Niagara

BY LORENZO CROMWELL

The Synod of the Diocese of Niagara has declared its full support of equal marriage. This expression of unity, gives acknowledgement to the fact that we are standing with our brothers and sisters of the LGBTQ2S+ community.

For me, this was one of the highlights of Synod 2019. After 32 years of ministering with a denomination that oppressed and devalued my worth, and that of all LGBTQ2S people, it is wonderful to be embraced and allowed to be our authentic self in a Christian church.

I am sure many (like myself) have watched with anticipation for greater inclusiveness within the Anglican Communion. We were devastated by the vote of a few at General Synod, when the amendment to the marriage canon did not pass. Then, like candles being lit across Canada, diocese after diocese have since voted to allow same sex marriages. Many who were or are not Anglican, are looking for an accepting Christian family and have been watching and waiting.

Following the vote at the Niagara Synod, I have come to know of many that have decided

to make the Anglican church their spiritual home. There are couples making plans for weddings during this year and next, which will give local parishes an opportunity to demonstrate in a tangible way, the welcome and love and openness which the gospel provides.

May this be a year of Jubilee, a year of forgiveness and charity toward one another. No matter what your understanding and teaching may be, if we can stand together with mutual respect and presume good faith our future for all in 2020 and beyond will be illuminated by our love for one another.

This can be a time of reconciliation. Bishop Susan has encouraged us by saying "We in Niagara are in an exciting place...we are being buffeted by waves of the storm as also seeing the green shoots of new growth."

Let us truly affirm our missional direction Called to Life – Compelled to Love.

The Reverend Deacon Lorenzo Cromwell is Deacon at St. James & St. Brendan (Port Colbourne). He also has a ministry to the LGBTQ2S community in the Diocese of Niagara.

Mission to Seafarers

BY THE REVEREND DEACON JANICE MALONEY-BROOKS

In 1836 the Reverend John Ashley, looked out his window at the Bristol Channel. There were many steam and sailing ships at anchor and many more docked. Struck by the loneliness and spiritual needs of seafarers; Ashley founded the Bristol Channel Mission. Over the next 20 years several Anglican ministries followed and in 1856 the Mission to Seamen became a missionary society of the Anglican Communion.

Today, a Mission to Seafarers (MtS) Station is open somewhere on the globe - 24 hours per day and 365 days per year. Working in over 200 ports across 50 countries, we care for seafarers of all ranks, genders, nationalities and beliefs. Growing over the past 184 years, MtS has become one of the largest welfare agencies in the world. "The Mission" in Hamilton has been open for over 60 years and now under the direction of the Rev. Judith Alltree, the Mission to Seafarers Southern Ontario (MTSSO) now supports seafarers in three ports (Oshawa, Toronto and Hamilton).

Last year we were nominated



Sue Hawthorne-Bate (lay visitor) and Chaplain Janice Maloney-Brooks prepare for their ministry on-board

for the Best Seafarers Centre in the world. Without the help and support of our dedicated volunteers, we wouldn't be the success we are. Our mission is to care for the shipping industry's most important asset: its people!

We are there to support seafarers when they need us most. The men and women who work at sea can be affected by any number of problems: money worries, mental health issues and loneliness as well as piracy, shipwreck and abandonment. We have a large network of chaplains and volunteers who give seafarers a listening ear, resources and prayer, if requested.

"This time of year, y'all have a hard water problem!" a Houston MtS volunteer told me and indeed from Christmas to

the beginning of April the St. Lawrence Seaway and our ports are closed. However, we use this time for education, training and planning. During our winter 2020 season, we invite you to join our volunteer ranks. Currently, we have volunteer opportunities as Hosts, Minivan Drivers, Ship Visitors and Board Members.

Our Mission Stations give seafarers free access to wifi, a chance to buy SIM cards, toiletries, souvenirs and even treats. Wifi is incredibly important to modern seafarers as most are working away from home

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Synod Council Update

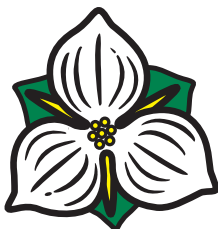
At its final meeting of 2019, Secretary of Synod Bill Mous expressed thanks to members for their leadership, and thanked outgoing members. Canon Christyn Perkons updated synod council about the Mission Action Plan (MAP) and the changes made as a result of the feedback received at synod. It is anticipated that the approval of the MAP will be considered by synod council in January.

Synod council also considered and approved two new policies for its meetings, an In Camera Session Policy and an Electronic Voting Policy.

Meeting as the Anglican Church Ministries Foundation, Niagara, synod council elected directors for the foundation as well as appointed auditors for the 2019 fiscal year. The Foundation was established in 2002 for the purpose of holding investments, including rectory

funds and parish endowment funds. There is currently \$22 million dollars held by the Foundation, managed by Russell Investments.

Other business included the appointment of new members to the diocesan audit committee, approving vestry date extensions for two parishes, authorizing diocesan signing officers for 2020, and approving the annual funding allocation for the WOW grants process.



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Diocese Makes Sizeable Impact on Local Economy

Contribution of local Anglicans pegged at \$114.5 Million in new report

BY BILL MOUS

A new report commissioned by the diocese reveals its eighty-three congregations make a substantial social-economic impact of approximately \$114.5 million towards the local economy.

"This quantitative analysis of the impact of faith communities and our diocese in particular should give us sure confidence – and frankly pride – in our works of faith," says Bishop Susan Bell.

The Halo Canada report indicates that the Diocese of Niagara plays a key role in the social and economic life of southern Ontario. Its direct "Halo" contribution was conservatively estimated to be \$100.1 million in the neighbourhoods

directly served by the diocese. This figure swells to approximately \$106.9 million when the contributions to denominational programs and other ministry and service organizations outside their neighbourhoods are factor into the calculation. Also, when parishioners' secondary volunteer contributions to organizations outside their local congregations are considered, the socio-economic impact increases to approximately \$114.5 million.

"In a time when there's so much talk of the declining numbers in the Anglican church and our diminishing sphere of influence, this data helps us reframe our own story," says Canon Christyn Perkons, Director of

Congregational Support and Development. "The report helps us better understand that our parishes not only help people explore religious beliefs, deal with grief and sorrow, celebrate significant milestones and build community but that they also have a significant economic impact in their neighbourhoods and in the Canadian economy."

Recent studies suggest that for every dollar the average congregation spends, the wider community receives \$3.87 towards its common good. The report also suggests that when these findings are applied nationally, places of worship contribute more than \$15.5 billion to Canada's social economy. On average, congregations in

the diocese had a halo-impact of approximately \$1.38 million.

Canon Perkons also notes that the data in the Halo report can be a real asset as parishes seek to develop partnerships in their communities and as they seek grant funding to support ministries that benefit the neighbourhood in which they're situated. This local impact is drawn from research which suggests that that 80% of a congregation's annual expenditures are spent within a 3 to 5 km radius of their church.

Lincoln region was the area in the diocese with the highest Halo impact, contributing almost a third of the diocese's socio-economic impact. Its fifteen parishes had an estimated



impact of nearly \$35 million dollars, largely as a result of more significant spending by its parishes.

According to the report's authors, "what this study does, most importantly, is affirm the Anglican Diocese of Niagara as a strong and essential contributor to the common good of the community it serves."

The study was conducted by Sphaera Research as part of its Halo Canada Project, which seeks to explore the socio-economic benefit of local congregations on their surrounding neighbourhoods and towards Canadian society in general.

Elders For Climate Sanity

BY ROSE JANSEN

"My granddaughter tells me she will not be having any children because the world will be too awful by the time her babies grow up. She fears that the earth is "hurtling toward catastrophe." This comment was made by a woman attending a presentation of the Hamilton 350 Elders For Climate Sanity.

Maybe some of you are also worrying. How can our grandchildren flourish in a "house that is burning"? About a year ago a few of us older ones in the Hamilton 350 climate group started thinking about seniors and the climate crisis. We had learned that the destructive effects of fossil fuels were already well known by industry and governments 50 years ago. The seriousness of climate change was intentionally hidden from us. Were we participants in letting the climate warm up? How do we look at our grandchildren knowing that, as Greta Thunberg claims so passionately, we grown-ups have failed young people?

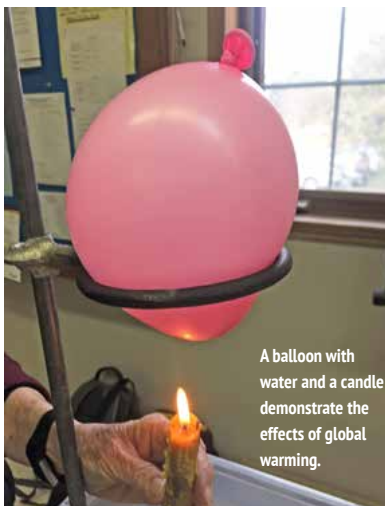
What can we do now? Where do we start? Greta's challenge is that we must mobilize everyone. Does that include you? The children are watching us.

Why seniors? (After all, we won't be around when it gets really bad.) The Elders 4 Climate Sanity recognize that seniors

may be an untapped resource. In many cultures the old ones are considered wise. They are honoured, respected, consulted and emulated. Elders are authentic role models, who embody sound values. After retirement people are freer to speak up and to speak truth, without fear of losing their jobs. Because of their numbers, boomers have considerable political clout.

The prevailing fantasy about our retirement is that it's all about us. After all our years of working, we now deserve leisure and pleasure. Does retirement require that we press pause on our brains? We are not just consumers but still citizens. The stereotypes and jokes about aging (in most birthday cards for example), are actually very untrue. The vast majority of retired persons are on the ball. We have learned so much. We have experience and expertise. Let's tap into this. Everyone is needed. Perhaps by supporting today's young climate activists we can help to build a much-needed bridge between the generations.

Do we understand enough about the science of climate? Enough to advocate successfully and to change our ways mean-



A balloon with water and a candle demonstrate the effects of global warming.

fully? The 350 climate movement mentioned above refers to the quantity of carbon dioxide in the earth's atmosphere, 350 parts per million, which sustained our planet for thousands of years and to which we have become accustomed. The scientific evidence now shows that the level of carbon dioxide has reached 410 parts per million and is continuing to rise

At the front of the room, a candle flickers under a balloon filled with water. Tina, the science teacher in our group, is giving another free presentation. (To date we have had 14 such sessions). The audience is watching this balloon. Surely it will soon burst? In the mean-

time, Tina explains how the scientific method is a continuous process of checks and balances, with scientists always double checking each other's measurements and conclusions. The world's scientists have agreed for a very long time that human burning of fossil fuels has warmed the planet in unprecedented ways.

We can hardly miss the effects of climate breakdown and extreme weather: more heat, storms, and wildfires, flooding and drought, seas rising and acidifying, mosquitoes and ticks spreading. The resulting damage will lead to millions of refugees, food insecurity and huge costs.

Minutes have passed, and the balloon has not burst. This experiment illustrates how the earth's oceans absorb and store the huge quantities of heat being trapped by the greenhouse gases in our lower atmosphere. These gases keep increasing, dangerously, locking away ever more heat. Wildlife struggles to adjust to changes in their habitats as northern regions warm, and glaciers melt. Recognizing how dependent humans are on the planetary flora and fauna for survival, some scientists are predict-

ing the breakdown of human civilization.

So what can we do? In the discussion following each presentation, people ask what is to be done. We easily feel overwhelmed and despairing. Is it too late to make a difference? Our group has prepared a handout of resources and suggestions, about individual and group actions. We recommend Bill McKibbens' latest book *Falter*. We suggest that everyone keep learning and talking. Joining a climate action group can help with feelings of helplessness. Learning about the many good carbon-related projects around the world can be very encouraging.

A few very knowledgeable seniors at one residence planned a trip to City Hall together to demand more action from their politicians. At another retirement home, a group has taken on improving recycling in their building, especially the reduction of plastic waste.

Here is another idea — invite Elders For Climate Sanity to give a presentation to any group that you belong to. Our talks are free!

Rose Jansen is part of Elders For Climate Sanity, and wrote this on behalf of the group. For more information go to elders4climatesanity.com. She can be reached at elders4climatesanity@gmail.com

Done and Left Undone

BY ARCHDEACON VAL KERR

Being in a relationship can mean we open ourselves to being hurt. We find out our friend has gossiped about us, we are hurt; our co-worker is overly harsh and critical of our idea in a team meeting, we are hurt. These are all real and tangible hurts we can experience in our lives but what does it mean for generations of a culture to be hurt by the actions of many people in the world/church?

For "what we have done and for what we have left undone." These words have been recited for many generations in our churches, however, do we really think about what "we have done and left undone" when we say these words or are they simply words we reel off as part of our confession without thinking? With these words in mind, I would like to share some of my personal reflections on the apology for spiritual harm which our former primate, Archbishop Fred Hiltz offered at our General

Synod of 2019.

When we hear the word abuse, physical, emotional, psychological, and sexual forms may enter our minds but how many of us would think of spiritual to be linked with these other abuses, and to be just as damaging? How many would even take note that trying to remake a people "in our own image," as Archbishop Hiltz noted, would be considered a form of abuse?

As Indigenous peoples living here for thousands of years, we had a spiritual relationship with our Creator and with the land we inhabited. The failure of settlers to recognize how our spirituality pervades our family lives, our way of living, our structures and our way of governing has been a huge blow to us as a people and to our culture.

Throughout the years our traditional teachings, our Indigenous spiritualities and our disciplines have been critiqued and looked down upon. Even "demonized" as Primate Fred noted and not consider as compatible with Christian

worship. All this in many ways has caused people to be unsure of who they are and where they fit, what is "right" and what is considered "wrong". If we need to believe in one way of living "Christian" or "Traditional" or if we can encompass both with integrity.

It is a gift (gift implying special favor by God or nature) to Indigenous people who have remained faithful to the Church throughout all these generations and abuses to be able to read and hear these words coming from a someone who has been and still is much loved and respected by our community. To hear acknowledgement of the many hurts absorbed, to hear others acknowledge how far our traditions and ceremonies go towards being wholly the people we were created to be, to realize how important it is for our youth and all of us to learn these traditions and ceremonies so long forgotten or buried, brought me to tears. To be in that moment at General Synod was a gift beyond anything I

could have asked or imagined.

To hear how heartfelt Archbishop Hiltz's remorse is about this painful past, to hear and feel his lament for such "shameful behaviours", to hear these words: "We have offended against thy holy laws, We have left undone those things which we ought to have done, And we have done those things we ought not to have done..." (Confession, p. 4, *Book of Common Prayer*), said with such passion, at such a pivotal time in the life of the church, I hope, will be life giving and life-changing for the church as a whole.

Of course, apologizing means we have to change our ways; the way we have acted, the way we have treated others, the ways we have lived out our faith, or not. This can be a hard task to undertake, however, by continuing on this journey, by committing to learn from each other, by vowing to respect our differences together ... with God our Creator anything is possible.

As Archbishop Hiltz said "I call us to renew our commit-

ment to our baptismal covenant, especially our vow "to strive for justice and peace among all people and respect the dignity of every human being". In living this vow in a good way, let us embrace the Seven Grandfather Teachings: love, respect, truth, honesty, wisdom, courage, and humility." Let us live out together the premise of these teachings in love. Thanks be to our Creator.

"In the name of Jesus Christ, the great Pain Bearer and Peace Maker. I have hope that through Him, we will be able to walk together in newness of life," said Archbishop Hiltz as part of his apology, and I share this hope and feel so blessed to be part of a diocese that takes living together in relationship so seriously and so wholeheartedly.

Archdeacon Val Kerr is Priest-in-charge of All Saints Hagersville, and the Archdeacon for Truth, Reconciliation, and Indigenous Ministries

Taking On the Climate Emergency

BY DEIRDRE PIKE

The Diocese of Niagara has joined over a thousand governments and faith communities covering hundreds of millions of citizens around the world in declaring a climate emergency. The move happened on day two of the 2019 Diocesan Synod, back in early November.

The declaration of a climate emergency is meant to mobilize immediate action, drawing attention to the fact more must be done to avert a climate catastrophe. Although momentum has been growing for years as communities of all sorts and sizes increasingly make these declarations, the movement really picked up in 2019, partly in response to what has become known as the, "Greta Effect."

Ever since Greta Thunberg, a teenaged activist, addressed the 2018 United Nations Climate Change Conference, student strikes and other actions have been taking place every week somewhere in the world and being attributed to Greta's inspiration. Even Bishop Susan Bell was compelled to draw on the

"Greta Effect," when she released her statement on the climate crisis in response to Climate Action Week at the conclusion of 2019's Season of Creation.

"I cannot help but respond to the urgency that is being expressed in the climate strikes, inspired by Greta Thunberg, happening around the world this week, including here in our own diocese," wrote Bishop Bell.

As of mid-December there were 1,261 climate emergency declarations made in 25 countries covering 798 million citizens. Anglicans around the world have been part of action groups helping to make this movement mainstream. Canada became the 8th nation to declare a climate emergency on June 17, 2019.

The second part of the motion was asking Synod to phase out single-use plastics by 2022. This portion of the discussion became very interesting in a positive way. While there was an amendment requested to the motion, it was to ban single use plastics sooner than 2022. Along with Rev. Leslie Gerlofs and Sue Carson, we spent a long time on the stage of the Lincoln

Alexander Centre, while the only scrutinized vote of the entire synod was held.

The amendment failed. One of the reasons we had given the time span of two years was to allow industry time to catch up to these new ways of living without plastic. For example, coffee cups are still largely refuse and not recyclable because they haven't perfected one that keeps the heat without the use of a plastic layer in that cardboard.

The strength of the diocese making the climate emergency declaration and plastics ban was shown at a City of Hamilton council meeting in December. I spoke on behalf of Bishop Bell in response to a staff report identifying the proposed action plan after the city declared a climate emergency in 2019.

We were one of the more than 20 delegations presenting. While most of the delegations affirmed the city for taking some action, we also noted the report as deficient in targets and goals to measure proposed action. This was at the heart of the statement I prepared which

also included references to Bishop Bell's official statement (available at niagaraanglican.ca) on the climate crisis. Parts of that statement along with our recent synod motions to similarly declare a climate emergency and ban single-use plastic by 2022, formed the basis of the presentation.

While the Synod begins to enact the phasing out and eventual ban on single-use plastics, individual parishes are being asked to respond to the climate crisis in a similar way. A vestry motion has been composed for parishes to consider during the 2020 Vestry meetings across the diocese.

If passed, parish leaders would be required to take the following action:

- assess use of single-use plastics, including rigid foam, for parish ministries, and take immediate steps to reduce the purchasing of these products;
- commit to diminish the purchase of single use plastics, including rigid foam, and end the practice completely by the beginning of 2022;
- arrange education for

parishioners about the use of alternatives to single-use plastics in their homes; and

d) report progress on the reduction of single-use plastic to the diocesan Program Consultant for Justice and Outreach each year in September.

Members of Greening Niagara's steering committee are available to help parishes take the required action on this vestry motion. In October we held a "Purging Plastics" workshop led by Rev. Dawn Davis, and we hope to do more of that in this new year. Please connect with me if you have any questions or suggestions.

May 2020 bring us the tenacity modelled by Greta Thunberg and so many others to make the changes we need to reduce our carbon footprint wherever we tread.

Deirdre Pike is Program Consultant for Justice and Outreach. To be more connected to the work in this ministry register for her semi-regular JUSTnews communication. deirdre.pike@niagaraanglican.ca or 905-527-1316, ext. 470.

Diocesan Staff Retirements



60 years, John was appointed to the position shortly after his first retirement in 1993. We give thanks for John's faithful witness to Jesus' Way and wish him every blessing in retirement.

Mr. Gerry Aggus

Our Diocesan solicitor Gerry Aggus, has given notice that he is concluding his legal practice. Gerry has served our diocese faithfully and with great distinction for nearly 30 years, providing legal services and wise counsel to the diocesan staff and to many parishes. We give thanks for his ministry and wish him every blessing in retirement.

The Venerable John Rathbone

Archdeacon John Rathbone, who has diligently served as our diocesan archivist for more than a quarter of a century, will retire (again). An ordained priest for



Life Changing



BY MICHAEL COREN

In October my life changed forever. In Christ's Church Cathedral in Hamilton, the mother church of the Anglican diocese of Niagara, Bishop Susan Bell laid hands on me, and through her episcopal authority ordained me into holy orders. I began the day as one thing, ended it as another. I took oaths, made promises, embarked on a new commitment, and completed a story that formally started in 2016 when my training

for the priesthood began.

Years of study, prayer, and work, all directed toward a vocational pinnacle, fulfilled at the altar of a cathedral with my family, friends, and the assembled church watching. The night before was like all of the Christmas Eves in the world. The day itself I can compare only with my wedding 32 years ago. But back then we had cake; this time only cookies.

Yet in all seriousness, I fully understand why a number of people reading this would be cynical, because they doubt or deny God and Christianity. I say I fully understand because I count some of you as my dearest friends, and to all agnostics and atheists out there I want to apologize. If Christians had done a better job, if we'd acted more like the founder of our faith had demanded, it would be a hard heart indeed that would take offence.

So one of my reasons for deciding on this journey, and one I fully intend to combine

A Year-Long Celebration

BY BERYL MARTIN

The congregation of St. David's (Welland) embarked on a year-long celebration of our 70 years of ministry beginning on St. David's Day as Bishop Susan Bell made her first visit to the parish.

The joyous day began as the children of the parish put on a puppet show under the direction of our Family and Youth Ministry Coordinator, Alison Steele. Following the service everyone was invited to a birthday luncheon; balloons, streamers, a birthday cake and other goodies made it a true Birthday Party, and the Bishop led the guests in the singing of Grace and then distributed cake much to the delight of all who were present.

As the year ramped up several ACW sponsored events followed including the launching of a 70th Anniversary Cookbook, a Fashion Show with fashions from Lillie's Boutique in the Stevensville Gallery modelled by parish members, and a Trivia Night held at the Fonthill Legion, all of which ran alongside our annual Fall Barbeque, Pancake Supper, Plant Sale,



Beryl Martin and Cecil Mitchell had the honour of cutting the 70th anniversary cake, under the watchful eyes of the clergy and their wives.

Thanksgiving Food Drive, and Parish Bazaar. In addition to all these events the Altar Guild generously donated new green altar hangings to replace those which had been used for many, many years.

Special worship services were also conducted. Under the direction of Laura and Randy Scott guest musicians were brought in to perform a Baroque service during which a harpsichord constructed by Randy Scott was brought into the church and played during the service. The event generated great excitement and appreciation from all those who attended.

In honour of the 70th Anniversary, with the help

of Gord Rendell a talented horticulturalist and an active member of our church, the City of Welland created a flower garden which was on display all summer for the residents of the city to admire. Colourful flowers greeted all who passed one of the busiest intersections in the city.

A 70th Anniversary Banquet was held in late October at the Fonthill Legion and we were delighted to be joined by former Rectors: The Reverend Derek Pringle and his wife Pam who travelled all the way from Hampton, Virginia, The Reverend Canon Jim Powell and his wife Bonnie from Niagara

See *ST. DAVID'S 11*

with my media work, is that I want to do all that I can to dissolve the indifference or even hostility that so many good and reasonable people have toward organized Christianity.

I'm a deeply flawed, entirely inadequate person to represent Christ, but what I can try to do is to attempt to explain him, show him, and then simply not get in the way. Christianity is the permanent revolution of breathtaking and roaring love, an encounter with the rebel Jesus that, in the words of the oath we have just taken, calls us "to serve all people, particularly the poor, the weak, the sick, and the lonely."

Ordination is many things, but at its core it's about practical grace. Feed the hungry, comfort the grieving, support the broken, sit with and listen to the frightened, struggle for the abused and mistreated. Love, peace and hope. God. Yes, God. One of my mentors, Father Rob Fead, used to say that God was either everything or nothing,

and I recalled these words as I trembled—sometimes literally—before the steps of the sanctuary.

Rob was killed last year when his motorcycle was struck by a pickup truck. I miss the great man dearly. His widow asked me to take his clerical wear and, dismissing my reluctance, insisted that this is what he would have wanted.

So on this day of thrashing emotions I wore his shirt and collar, and his white cassock. It was a symbol of continuity, a reminder that I am one of many who have gone before, and many who will follow. One of myriad travellers on the road of faith, pilgrims looking to the shrine of the man who 2,000 years ago saw through every lie, every hurt, and every injustice.

For this is not about me, but something far more significant and timeless. When I stood with my four fellow deacons, shining new and surely nervous, and looked into the faces of the congregation, I thought of Rob,

of my parents who sacrificed so much for me, of all of those I had lost and am confident I will see once again. Of dad, who rejected religion but by his love and selflessness reflected God and goodness, of mum who raised me in the moral certainty of kindness and care but knew nothing of church. "Only in the agony of parting," wrote George Eliot, "do we look into the depths of love."

What is before me now is unwinding by the day, and what I shall meet in the future is a pageant still in the making. All I know is that I now take each step not alone, but in the company of those far greater than me. And that gives me more joy than I can ever say.

The Reverend Michael Coren is a deacon in the Diocese of Niagara and a regular contributor to the Niagara Anglican.



The First Born

Proverbs 8:22 (*New Jerusalem Bible*)

"Yahweh created me, first fruits of his fashioning,
before the oldest of his works.
From everlasting I was firmly set,
From the beginning, before the earth came into being.
The deep was not before I was born...
Before the mountains were settled,
Before the hills, I came to birth;
Before he made the earth, the countryside,
And the first elements of the world.
When he fixed the heavens firm I was there...
I was beside the master craftsman,
Delighting him day after day,
Ever at play in his presence,
At play everywhere on his earth,
Delighting to be with the children of humankind."

How remarkable!

The literary output of those who sought to understand the events surrounding Jesus of Nazareth is singular in the history of the ancient world. We have more literary fragments from the world which so influenced our civilization attesting to the life, death and resurrection of Jesus than of any other person or event. By way of comparison, the works of Aristotle had to wait until the 12th century for anything like general translation and circulation.

The deep hunger for comprehension of the person and purpose of Jesus moved the earliest Christians to look deeply into their received Scriptures. As early as St. Paul's first letter to the Corinthians, a mere 20 years or so after the claimed resurrection, Jesus was being identified with the Incarnate Wisdom of God.

The passage quoted above from Proverbs, written almost 1,000 years before Jesus, impressed itself as resonant within the experience of the early church. How beautiful to recognize the Christ (the Anointed One): "at play everywhere on his earth, delighting in

the children of humankind!"

The hunger for understanding the experience of Christ was not limited to a meditation on the past. The followers of The Way, the early term for believers, soon saw their experience as epochal — birthing a new vision of all life, all history to come:
"Christ in you, the hope of glory."

Perhaps even more wondrous is how every generation following has continued to attest, to the possibility of meeting Jesus "for Christ plays in 10,000 places, lovely in limbs, and lovely in eyes not his ..." (Hopkins, quoted above). This future hope and proclamation is rooted in the 1st

As Kingfishers Catch Fire, G.M. Hopkins

"Each mortal thing does one thing and the same:
Deals out that being indoors each one dwells;
Selves – goes itself; myself it speaks and spells,
Crying 'What I do is me: for that I came.

I say more: the just man justices;
Keeps grace: that keeps all his goings graces;
Acts in God's eye what in God's eye he is –
Christ – for Christ plays in ten thousand places,

Lovely in limbs, and lovely in eyes not his
To the Father through the features of men's faces."

century understanding St. Paul expressed of the Christ who "being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him." (Romans 6:9)

The Christ is at play in your life, now playing in 10,000 places, lovely in limbs, lovely in your eyes.

Max Woolaver is Rector of St. Andrew's Grimsby, and Archdeacon of Lincoln. He is gifted at making us see beyond the immediate, often by helping us laugh at ourselves.



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Maybe I'm an Athlete

(And Maybe You're Religious)



BY THE REV. MARTHA TATARNIC

For Mother's Day this past year, my son Gordon filled out a "Mommy Questionnaire" at school as part of my gift. The idea of this questionnaire was that it would give him an opportunity to tell me all of the great things he appreciates about me as his mother. I had a smile on my face as I read the list of adjectives he chose to describe me: nice, loving, smart, etc. It was the last word he had, however, that made me laugh out loud. Athletic.

I grew up knowing that I could do and be many wonder-

ful things in my life. But I knew I was NOT an athlete. I was the awkward kid with zero hand-eye coordination who sounded like a pug dog when I physically exerted myself, particularly when running. I was picked last for every team sport. Along with a few other factors, like my passionate love of musical theatre and book worm-ish ways, my utter lack of athletic ability set a pretty low ceiling on my popularity potential. I comforted myself by making mental lists of the things that I could do well in life. And I tried to do those other things to the best of my ability to make up for such a glaring lack of this one talent.

Now, looking at Gordon's list of descriptors, I couldn't help but call my husband Dan over, point at the word "athletic" and invite him to laugh along with me at such an outlandish word. Dan just raised a quizzical eyebrow. "So?" he asked. "You are running a half marathon next week, aren't you?"

"That doesn't make me an athlete!" I laughed.

"Martha," he said patiently, "what do you think an athlete is?"

That stopped me short. A rudimentary audit of my time

does leave a certain impression. I run a lot, and I cycle too. What's more, I enjoy it, and I tell others that I enjoy it too. I slowly but surely improve. My now stronger lungs only rarely leave me sounding like a pug. Although my self-understanding was long ago formed by knowing absolutely and certainly that I am not athletic, I had to admit that, at least on the outside, a new definition had started to shape my life.

Maybe I *am* an athlete.

I was thinking about my own evolving self-understanding as I thought of a cultural refrain that has been popular for a number of years now: "I'm spiritual, not religious." I know what people mean by these words. It means that they are not members of a faith community. Certainly, we know that for the majority of people across the Western world, the sentiment behind these words is true: they may hold their own private beliefs, but they don't participate in the life of a church. To say they are not religious, however, I almost always find to be false. That religious impulse can be found, and usually not far below the surface. In the

absence of the structure that say a church allows a person—to discern purpose, to mark time, to care for others in prayer and in service, and to explore life's deepest questions—people get religious about a whole host of other things. They add structure, meaning, story and ritual to their lives by joining fandoms, connecting in online groups, adopting different eating practices, or taking on elaborate expectations for how a holiday like Christmas is going to unfold. Even those that vocally claim they are agnostic or atheist will, when probed, describe assumptions about how the world functions according to order and purpose, how they have experienced their lives becoming aligned with a creative spirit and purpose, and how their own lives can and should exist for the sake of caring for others.

Most people are religious. What they are naming, however, is a disconnect between that religious impulse and the possibility of being able to fit in and get something out of a community like the church. I relate to this. I have spent my life not only thinking that I'm not athletic, but also harbouring a mild suspicion of those who are. Aside from the long-ago days of elementary school gym class, athletic people as a whole have never done anything to exclude and belittle me. I have just grown up with the assumption that athletic people are not like me. And therefore, I have assumed their rejection of me outright, even as I have preemptively rejected seeing myself as one of them.

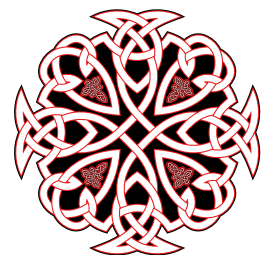
When I had my come-to-Jesus phase, the mid-teenaged years when I suddenly fell headlong in love with Jesus, one of the things that pulled my heartstrings most was his insistence that we redefine what constitutes faithfulness to God away from the typical assumptions of what religious people look like, dress like, how they are labeled and defined. Instead, the brothers and sisters of Jesus are claimed as the ones who spend their time doing things that match up with what God cares about (like caring for the poor and feeding the hungry). He applauds, empow-

ers and commissions the faith of society's rejects, the sinners and outcasts, the nobodies, the desperate. These are people who have had it imprinted upon them that they live outside of the bounds of God's love and provision. Jesus recasts them as beloved children, as evangelists and leaders, healers and teachers, models of faith. Jesus takes away the labels and gives new names instead, because he sees in their words and actions people who can't be anything other than anointed with God's love. He makes it frighteningly simple to know and love God: just pay attention to that hunger deep within you because you are already known and loved by God. Because it's so easy, our labels are mostly revealed as false.

This is bad news for the religious elite, who like their nice categories of who is 'in,' and who feel assured of their privileged position because the riffs are firmly kept out.

It's good news though for any of us who still believe that the world is an enchanted place after all, that God is on the move far outside our human-built pens of religious respectability, that even those who choose different labels to define their lives are still made by the hand of God, are still alive with God's spirit, and therefore have wisdom and creativity that can be a blessing to all of us, have voices we need to hear.

It's good news for the awkward and uncoordinated, like me, who thought that athletic, or perhaps religious, pursuits weren't for us. It really could be as simple as putting one step in front of the other, seeing how our lungs and limbs, and especially our hearts, start to grow stronger, and how a new identity begins to take shape in us.







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In Other Words

BY JOHN BOWEN

Why mission is not the point

I remember seminary students who were hoping to be ordained warning one another of the kind of questions they were likely to be asked in the selection process. "It used to be," they said, "that you had to say something about the importance of the sacraments. But now," they explained, "you better say something about the importance of a mission, or you don't have a chance."

"Mission" has become very tiresome buzz words in recent years, as has its offspring "missional." And, like many buzz words, if mission did once have a clear meaning, now it often seems hopelessly lost in a fog of confusion. "Ah yes," you will hear people say, "we've swapped the organ for guitars and drums, and we've replaced the pews with chairs, so we're missional. Right?" Wrong. No wonder people roll their eyes whenever the word is mentioned.

So does mission have a meaning that is helpful in our present situation? Personally, I think the word is worth redeeming. But to get at its meaning, I actually think we have to start somewhere else—with a different word, the word "Gospel."

Consider the things we talk about in everyday church life: fellowship, worship, ministry, prayer, preaching, money, and of course church itself. Yet in the New Testament, none of those is used anything like as often as the word Gospel. Even the word "church" is only used seventy-two times. The word Gospel? Over a hundred! Maybe this tells us something about the early church's priorities.

I discovered this gap in our church vocabulary when I started asking Anglicans what they think the Gospel—the Good News of Christianity—is.

On one occasion, a lifelong Anglican in his 70s confessed, "I'm not sure I've ever heard anything I would call 'the Gospel.'" Sure, he had heard readings from one of the four Gospels more or less every Sunday—but it had never struck him as particularly "good news." That's just sad.

On the other hand, one woman was very sure that she had heard the Gospel: "Gospel?" she said, "That's easy. Love your neighbour as yourself." But how exactly is that good news? I don't know about you, but it's certainly not good news for me: it's an impossibly high standard. And not particularly for my neighbour. Take in the mail and feed the cat while they're away? Of course. That's easy. But love them as myself? They are going to be disappointed.

Jesus, however, is quite clear what the Gospel is. It is the thing he calls the Kingdom. (I know the word is problematic, but bear with me for now.) And, as the stories of Jesus unfold, we see what "the Kingdom" is: it is the state of affairs where things are done in the way the Creator always intended. Wherever Jesus goes, there people get a taste of the Kingdom: it means healing, wholeness, forgiveness, inclusion, joy—in a word, life! And for those who experience the presence of Jesus, it's very easy to explain what the Good News is.

I was complaining to the bishop recently that we had little grasp of the Gospel. She immediately looked me in the eye, and said, "So what exactly is the Gospel?" Given my pontificating, it was a fair question. I thought for a minute, then took a deep breath: "The Good News of Christianity is that through Jesus Christ God is making all

things new." On reflection, I think I would stick with that, though there are a hundred ways of expressing the same thing.

The Gospel is firstly something God does: it is God who is making all things new. It's not a huge burden simply laid on the shoulders of humankind. That would hardly be Gospel. Yes, we are called to work with God, but it is primarily God's work. And that is Good News.

Secondly, the Gospel concerns all things. Jesus didn't come to make us religious (thanks be to God). God's work is much bigger than that. In fact, God's work of restoration is as big as the world God made. It includes the renewal of relationships, business, politics, economics, law, the arts, and the environment—everything. Wherever human beings have messed up God's good world, there God is at work to put things right.

It's worth adding that did Jesus did not come to make us nice people and good citizens, in spite of Douglas Adams' summary: Jesus was "nailed to a tree for saying how great it would be to be nice to people for a change." (The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy) Jesus was certainly not always nice, and neither did he exactly model good citizenship. Good citizens didn't get themselves crucified. The Gospel is much more radical than that.

Finally, the Gospel is about Jesus. There is no Good News—at least, no good news of the kind Jesus taught and lived—without him. Conversely, unless you understand the Good News, you won't get what Jesus is about. That's the key for understanding his life, his death, his resurrection: they embody God's determination to make all

things new. After all, he is the king of this new kingdom.

So how does this relate to "mission"? At its heart, "mission" is just a theologian's fancy shorthand for summarising this work of God through Jesus Christ to make all things new. It is God who is on mission, God (if you like) who is missional, and God who was these things long before we came along and began to use the words! It is always the nature of our loving God to reach out to places of sin and need and hurt to put things right.

That's mission: the love of God



through Jesus to make all things new. In fact, maybe we could stop using the word mission and just talk about the love of God instead. But I'm not holding my breath.

John Bowen is Professor Emeritus of Evangelism at Wycliffe College in Toronto. He is a parishioner at St John the Evangelist in Hamilton.

St. David's Welland Celebrates

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8



Falls, Archdeacon, The Venerable Dr. John Course and his wife Bev, and our current Rector, The Reverend Terry Holub and his wife Tina. Rounding out the clergy in attendance was The Reverend Deacon Richard Middleton and his wife Linda. Many current and former members attended and renewed friendships and memories. A display of our parish history was on hand including pictures of our Green School House days.

Our year-long celebration was completed when our young families entered a float in the Welland Santa Claus Parade. It featured the nativity scene with real life figures bringing onlookers to tears. Parents, grandparents and children

L-R: The Ven. Dr. John Course, The Rev. Terry Holub, The Rev. Derek Pringle, The Rev. Canon Jim Powell

walked alongside the float and distributed candy canes to all who watched. To our knowledge this was the first time that a Nativity scene was a part of the city of Welland's Santa Claus Parade.

Finally, we are proud to say that all of this celebrating did not interfere with our outreach programs: Hope Centre luncheons, our Gently Used Clothing Store, our Prayer Shawl and Davy Bear ministry along with many other caring programs that serve our community.

Deadlines and Submissions for Niagara Anglican

Deadlines:

- April – February 15
- May – March 25
- Summer – April 24

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 (300 ppi), 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



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What The Hell?

BY THE REVEREND DAN TATARNIC

It was one of those November mornings when the thought of being in bed was more desirable than driving into Hamilton. My dark morning commute was interrupted by a belly-roll laugh. There's something satisfying, very good for the soul, when you happen upon one of those little things that make your day. And growing up on Late Night with David Letterman, this digital sign made my top ten: "Hell Rental: Affordable Rates". Kudos, they obviously noticed the mistake; and by the end of the day, on my drive home, they were offering affordable rental rates on their church hall.

Hell isn't something I spend a lot of time fussing over, though Martha is fairly certain I'm headed there. And I have to admit, I appeal to damnation often, a place I've condemned many a person! Maybe I'm just getting older and bitter, fair enough. But here's the thing. As funny as it might sound in the modern world, the doctrine of Hell is making a comeback; and why not? Who, watching news feeds recently hasn't hoped that an infernal punishment is not awaiting a few (or the many)? Be honest, now!

Hell isn't something I've contemplated deeply. It might seem an anachronistic subject in the modern world. But that hasn't stopped David Bentley Hart from writing a compelling book on hell: *That All Shall be Saved: Heaven, Hell & Universal Salvation*. Hart's book resonates with Hans Urs von Balthasar's controversial essay, "Dare we Hope that All Men be Saved".

Hart's book is about Hell and the reality of Hell. But it is more than that. It is, at its best, a book about the human person, made in the image of God (theological anthropology). Subsequently, it's a reminder of where life begins,

and where life is destined in the end. It's a book about God's limitless mercy and redemptive creativity, the controversial topic which Hart argues is the lens through which all creation will be interpreted. That is the promise of universal salvation; in the end of life is the beginning, "God will be all in all".

A forewarning, Hart's isn't a book for the fainthearted. And it's a book that I'd recommend reading on one's knees, which is exactly what Hart wants the reader to do. By dividing the book into a series of meditations it is a model of classical theology —spiritual discipline grounded in study and prayer. By the end of the last chapter, he has demolished the infernalist doctrine of eternal damnation, and has defended (successfully?) Christian universalism as the only rational position one could concede, as a person of faith.

Hart is a modern orthodox apologist: rigorous in his employment of scripture, and tradition. He leaves no room for mediocrity. The Christian God is no 'god' worthy of devotion if God simply allows a loophole to exist, wherein a soul or even a minute aspect of creation remains unredeemed: "the loss of even one would leave the body of the Logos incomplete, and God's purpose in creation unaccomplished." A god unable to accomplish their own plan of salvation is no god at all, and certainly not the Christian God. "Once [evil] has been exhausted, when every shadow of wickedness—all chaos, duplicity, and violence—has been outstripped by the infinity of God's splendor, beauty, radiance, and delight, God's glory will shine in each creature like the sun in an immaculate mirror."

If you're willing to engage with theology on your knees, Hart's book is worth the effort; if you're looking for rental space, look elsewhere.

Seafarers Ministry CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

for 8-10 months of the year. A great many of them are young married people, often with very young children. Because our mission is there, they are able to read bedtime stories to their children on skype and talk about the day's happenings with their partners on What's App.

Being a Host at a Mission Station is some of the most important work we do! Hosts create a warm and engaging environment – a home away from home. Most of the seafarers we have in Hamilton are from India, the Philippines and Russia and the ability to speak any of these languages is a huge asset but not necessary! Besides being able to help with resources, our Hosts make coffee and engage our seafarers in conversation. A great many of our

visitors learned about Niagara Falls and our Hosts work with taxi companies to provide vans to take them for a visit.

Minivan Drivers pick up seafarers at their ship's gangway and bring them not only to our Mission Station but also to various stores to help the crew replenish necessary stores or to get OTC medications etc. Some of our best pastoral work is done during these rides. Seafarers may talk about their faith, their feelings and what is going on aboard ship. No special driving license is necessary.

Ship Visiting is a very special form of volunteering. After extensive training, volunteers are paired up and board over 700 ships per season. Ship Visitors bring friendly faces full of welcome. Bearing a bag of

chocolates, Ship Visitors let each new ship's officers and crew know they are among friends. A good listening ear and an engaging spirit are necessary for this type of work.

We are always on the lookout for people interested in joining our Board of Directors as well. In all our interactions we follow the example of St. Francis of Assisi who said, "Preach the Gospel at all times. If necessary, use words". We have a strict no proselytizing policy and assist seafarers from all nations and religions.

If you are interested in joining our Mission Crew, drop a message to the Rev. Deacon Jann Maloney-Brooks, Chaplain and Volunteer Coordinator at jann.brooks@hotmail.com or call her at (905) 510-2710.

CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILY MINISTRY 2020

Called to Life - Compelled to Love

The Table

Monthly discussions for adults aged 20 and up
Every third Thursday of the month beginning January 16
See website and social media channels for more information

The Gathering – Coffee House

Saturday, February 1 – Church of the Resurrection, Hamilton
Saturday, May 30 – Church of the Transfiguration, St. Catharines
Saturday, October 24 – St. Luke, Oakville

YLTP – Youth Leadership Training Program

A three-year program for young leaders in the church
(First year applicants: youth aged 12-15/grades 7-10)
Canterbury Hills, Ancaster
Sunday, March 15 to Wednesday, March 18

Youth Synod

(For youth aged 13-21)
St. John, Ancaster
Friday, May 1 to Saturday, May 2

Junior Youth Connections

(For youth aged 10-13 and leaders)
Friday, February 28 – St. John the Evangelist, Thorold
Friday, October 2 – St. Matthew on-the-Plains, Burlington

Youth Ministry Sunday

Celebrating youth ministry in every parish
Sunday, June 7

Niagara in Action

Intergenerational Justice Engagement
Christ's Church Cathedral, Hamilton
Saturday, September 26

Diocesan Synod – Youth Orientation

(For youth aged 16-25, must be parish delegate)
Saturday, November 7

Resource Library

There is a large lending library of books, resources, puppets, labyrinths, games and more for loan.

Calling CYFM Leaders ...

Connect with others from the CYFM community by contacting Sarah Bird.

For more information about these programs or resources, contact:

Sarah Bird 905-527-1316 ext. 430
sarah.bird@niagaraanglican.ca

Jane Wyse 905-527-1316 ext. 420
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