

Niagara Invests in the Future
with PWRDF's World of Gifts

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NIAGARA ANGLICAN



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

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The Bishop's Advent Message

AS WE LIGHT THE CANDLES OF ADVENT and make our sacred journey through the darkness of this season, we are reminded once again of both the beautiful and the profoundly difficult of this world.

We are especially called to remember that, in all things, the world has been redeemed by Jesus, the light of the world. And we are called to wait—and *work and be ready* for God's promise to be fulfilled. And it's in that light that we put our trust and our hope.

So, while the rest of the world gets their retail on, we are getting out our beautiful and hope-filled Advent blues. With them, we are invited to enter an intentional time of introspection and preparation and examination: a time to mull over our commitment to the One who is coming: Jesus Christ, the Son of God and Saviour of the world.



In this time of global crisis, the ways in which we are being called to life and compelled to love are innumerable. To be the hearts and hands of Jesus and to do our best to work for transformation in this world may seem like an especially tall order, if not an impossible one these days.

But this I know with my whole being: that when God shows up, everything changes, and the impossible becomes possible.

And here's the thing: God shows up, again and again.

As we move towards the miracle of the Nativity, may we have eyes to see the world differently and to walk in the light of God more deeply, more fully, and more faithfully as believers in the One who has come, is coming, and will come again—and all the wonderful promise it holds for our world.

Blessings to you this Advent.

+Susan Niagara

Diocesan Synod – Saturday, October 30, 2021

FACING FORWARD: Called to Life, Compelled to Love

Bishop Susan Bell invited members of the 147th Synod of the Diocese of Niagara to "lean into God's provision and protection with joy," in response to the Apostle Paul's call in Philippians 4:4-9.

This passage inspired the theme of synod, Facing Forward: Called to Life, Compelled to Love. Convened on Saturday, October 30, this was the second diocesan synod to be held via videoconference.

After being called to order by the Bishop, Canon Susan Wilson offered a territorial acknowledgment from the garden at St. Matthew on-the-Plains in Burlington, on the traditional lands of the Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe. Janice Whiteley harkened synod back to Archdeacon Val Kerr's words from last year concerning reconciliation. She reminded synod that "What would Jesus do" as a refrain for life can take many forms, but it especially means examining our own hearts with honesty as we move forward with matters of truth and reconciliation.

The Bishop, recalling the voice of God in Isaiah 41:10, the most-searched Bible verse during the pandemic, offered a common refrain throughout synod: "It makes a whole lot of good sense to banish fear with hope that is rooted in God's love." The closing of synod book-ended this sentiment with a reading from Luke 12:22-32—do not worry, and do not be afraid!

Bishop's Charge

Bishop Susan Bell's charge to synod was organized by guiding members through the theme passage of Philippians 4:4-9, considering the moments and ministries that should lead us toward rejoicing.

[Read the text of the bishop's charge to members of synod starting on Page 6.](#)

Diocesan Safe Church Policy Presentation

Archdeacon Bill Mous and Chancellor Greg Tweney presented the diocese's new Safe Church Policy to synod for endorsement. One of the key developments was the implementation of the Anglican Communion Charter for the Safety of People. The new policy enhances the safeguards in place for ministries, and is "intended to support safe spaces for all members of our diocese. It allows us to respond to a wider spectrum of situations that might leave someone feeling unsafe," Archdeacon Mous explained, including conflict, harassment, discrimination, violence, and abuse. Chancellor Tweney reflected that this direction forward "speaks about our commitment to God, to one another, and ourselves," and Archdeacon Mous agreed that it helps us "live even more deeply" into our mission in the diocese.

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Diocesan Synod 2021

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Appointment of Canons

The Bishop, in concert with Dean Tim Dobbin, announced the appointment of three people as honorary canons of Christ's Church Cathedral: Bahman Kalantari, rector of Church of Our Saviour The Redeemer, Stoney Creek; Sue-Ann Ward, regional dean for Trafalgar, rector of Grace Church, Waterdown; and Greg Tweney, diocesan chancellor.

Missional Moments

Two missional moments were shared with the participants of synod to highlight ministries emerging from the implementation of the diocesan MAP. This year, the Niagara School for Missional Leadership was



Canon Greg Tweney, diocesan chancellor.

launched with six courses, and a promotional video was shared highlighting reflections from Bishop Susan Bell and several teacher-practitioners and student-practitioners on the significance and timeliness of such a ministry to engage lay and ordained leaders in theological and pastoral training. Second, a video presented by Archdeacon Jeff Ward reflected on the Mission in Acts ministry, focused on Chinese mission and ministry in Oakville. Through

the pandemic, it continues to serve seniors, children, and youth especially, beginning with newcomers to Canada and to the faith, guided by the leadership of Chinese Anglican Missioner Garfield Wu.

Canon Changes

Members of synod considered and approved three amendments to the diocesan canons. The first amendment, to Canon 1.4, adds flexibility with regard to receiving nominations from the floor for the election of delegate to provincial or general synods. By removing this clause, all regulations related to such elections are left in the care of synod council. The second amendment clarifies the text of Canon 2.1 which describes who is entitled to vote at an episcopal election and aligns eligibility with the membership of synod described in Canon 1.1. The third revision was made to bring a canon more in line with current practice with regards to providing insurance coverage for parish ministries and the buildings and property entrusted to their care, and to add some flexibility for synod council to approve functional replacement or demolition-only coverage in specific situations.

Anti-Racism Working Group

Chair Naomi Kabugi shared about the journey of learning about racism and listening to the movement of the Spirit. "Racism work takes different expressions—but as the working group of the Diocese of Niagara has been listening and wrestling, we ask: what is the difference we are trying to bring here? How does anti-racism based on a Christian perspective work?" She highlighted how reflecting on the promises made in baptism can be a lens through which Anglicans can address

the racism deeply embedded in Christian culture, calling out the evils of this world and mandating the Church to break down barriers and eradicate systemic and structural racism.

A video presentation included reflections by several members of the Anti-Racism Working Group.

Naomi Kabugi also outlined a "Made in Niagara" anti-racism framework that encourages vulnerability and the development of contextual educational programs for individuals and parishes, updates human resource policies, and ensures the establishment of a "Train the Facilitators" program for leadership development in anti-racism work. The Bishop passionately affirmed these calls, and noted that we must not wound our brethren further.

Canon Christyn Perkons then invited members of synod to reflect on their engagement in anti-racism work through their own baptismal vows and share these thoughts in the Zoom chat, which quickly was overflowing with comments. Delegates reflected on the need to listen and learn, as well as to recognize and acknowledge the racism in their midst in order to confront and respond to it. As Canon Penny Anderson,

rector of St. Christopher's in Burlington stated, "My baptism includes a call to engage in decolonizing the Church."

Climate Justice Niagara

Sue Carson, chair of the Climate Justice Niagara Committee, shared plans for reducing the amount of greenhouse emissions parishes contribute to the environment. She reflected that the pandemic has increased the number of challenges we face in our parishes, but that contributing to the reversal of climate change is something we can all participate in. Prayer, education, action, and advocacy are key components of the committee's mandate and will help reduce carbon emissions. Future goals include green auditing and participating in global events to secure the



The Rev. Naomi Kabugi, chair of the Anti-Racism Working Group.

future generations of the world. "We will be showing communities that we care and that we love our planet and stand with those who are already suffering from the effects of climate change." A motion was passed which mandates Climate Justice Niagara to resource parishes to complete a walk-through energy audit of their church buildings by the end of 2022 as a guide to create a parish plan to reach a greenhouse gas emissions reduction target of at least ten percent by 2024.

Diocesan Budget

Archdeacon Peter Scott, chair the Missional Budget Planning Committee, presented the 2022 diocesan budget. Guiding principles for the committee included the continued support for parishes and moving ahead with the diocesan MAP. "There has been a lot to rejoice about this year," shared Archdeacon Scott, citing the generosity of parishioners, parish technology grant for parishes enabled online worship across the diocese, and having received stabilizing funds from the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS). Still, he noted that "these are tough times, and this is a budget for these times." New initiatives include

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Diocesan Synod 2021

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enhancing our ability to “pastor the pastors,” including the Niagara School for Missional Leadership in the budget, adding funding for differentiated curacies, and supporting the work of the Anti-Racism Working Group. Projected expenses for the year have been kept modest as possible, with a \$3.9 million investment in ministry. Revenue has been held to approximately the same as 2020. The sale of property will assist the diocese in reducing the deficit next year and

help fund diocesan missional priorities, with a focus on leadership initiatives. The projected operating deficit is \$91,700, with a cash shortfall of \$169,930 after capital expenses for technology and draws from investments.

Members of synod resoundingly approved the 2022 diocesan budget.

Tenth Sacred Circle

Archdeacon Valerie Kerr reflected on the Tenth Sacred Circle, the national decision-making body for Indigenous

Anglicans in Canada. It was the first Sacred Circle held virtually, commencing with the lighting of the Sacred Fire on July 14. First Nations people, Inuit, and Métis gathered online with Archbishop Mark MacDonald to talk about their experiences, hopes for the future, and relationships with the wider Anglican Church of Canada. The theme was “Returning Home: Remembering the Lost.” Participants met in breakout groups to continue drafting a document entitled Our Way of Life that will serve

as a constitution and by-laws for the emerging, self-governing Indigenous Church.

Election Results

Members of synod voted electronically for delegates for 2022 General Synod, to be held in Calgary in July. Delegates in the order of clergy include Tim Dobbin, Katherine Morgan, and David Anderson. Delegates in the order of laity include Andrew Clinkard, Jodey Porter, and Susan Little.

Synod also elected the fol-

lowing members to the roles of regional representatives to synod council: Rod McDowell (Brock), Thomas Littlewood (Greater Wellington), Cheryl Barker (Hamilton-Haldimand), Rob Towler (Lincoln), Janice Whiteley, and Winston Tinglin (Trafalgar).

Additionally, synod elected Garfield Wu (clergy), Mary Churchill (lay), and Mary Donkin (lay) as representatives from the Diocese of Niagara to the Corporation of Trinity College, for a two-year term.



BY THE REVEREND DEACON SHEILA PLANT

By the time you read this, the Christmas season and all it entails will be upon us. The stores will be full of advertisements, decorations, and Christmas music—which probably began sometime in early November! Children will be busy with their Christmas list. As things begin to open up and vaccination passports become the norm, some people will have reservations made for trips to warmer climes or to visit loved ones, and also to “go home for the holidays.”

Home truly is where the heart is. It is where we gather with family and friends. It is where we widen our circle to include those who have no home to go to. It is also where we embrace those whose heart may be broken or empty. No matter what our circumstances, home is not necessarily a place, it is a feeling: a feeling of comfort,

safety, security, and most of all love. Sometime ago, I came upon a passage called “Home for Christmas” by Elizabeth Bowen. It seems to speak to the feelings that so many of us have around this time of year. It also brings to mind simpler times and simpler pleasures, things that we sometimes lose sight of in all the hustle and bustle of the season.

The passage reads: “This is meeting time again. Home is the magnet. The winter land roars and hums with the eager speed of return journeys. The dark is noisy and bright with late-night arrivals—doors thrown open, running shadows on snow, open arms, kisses, voices and laughter, laughter at everything and nothing. Inarticulate, giddy and confused are those original minutes of being back again. The very familiarity of everything acts like a shock. Contentment has to be drawn in slowly, steadily, in deep breaths—there is so much of it. We rely on home not to change, and it does

not, wherefore we give thanks. Again, Christmas: abiding point of return. Set apart by its mystery, mood and magic, this season seems in a way to stand outside time. All that is dear, that is lasting, renews its hold on us: we are home again.... This glow of Christmas, has it not in it also the gold of a harvest? “They shall return with joy, bringing their sheaves with them.” To the festival, to each other, we bring wealth. More to tell, more to understand, more to share. Each we have garnered in yet another year. No other time grants us, quite, this vision—round the tree, or before the fire, or at table, we perceive anew, with joy one another’s faces. And each time faces come to mean more. Is it not one of the mysteries of life that life should, after all, be so simple? Yes, as simple as Christmas, simple as this. Journeys through a dark night to a lighted door, arms open. Laughter—smothered kisses, smothered laughter. And blessedness in the heart of it all. Dearer than memory, brighter than expectation, is the ever returning now of Christmas. Why else, each time we greet its return, should happiness ring out in us like a peal of bells?”

The last two Christmas seasons have been very different in the life of our Diocese as well as

in our own personal lives, so perhaps it is time to put the frenzy of last-minute shopping, the flurry of Christmas card writing, and the frantic dash to squeeze in allowed visits to friends aside for a short period of time and concentrate on what we often take for granted: the gifts that God bestows on us all the time, not just at this time, but all year long. Let us give Him thanks for all his blessings. So, may we all take time during this holy season to give thanks for the

simpler times—for that night in the stable when that precious child was born in a simple manger, for friends, family, and all of the simple things that this season brings us. As we journey through the season of Advent and all that it is on our journey to the manger, may we all share in God’s gifts and may we all take those gifts and share with one another. May all your days be blessed and may God cradle you in the palm of his hand.

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Publisher: Bishop Susan Bell
905-527-1316
bishop@niagaraanglican.ca
Editor: Charles Meeks
editor@niagaraanglican.ca

Advertising: Angela Rush
905-630-0390
niagaraanglican.ads@gmail.com
Art Director: Craig Fairley
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252 James Street North
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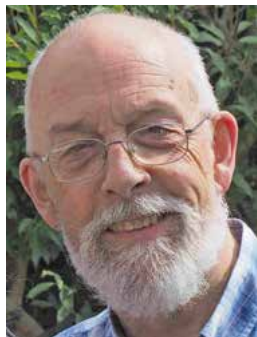


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**CALLED TO LIFE
COMPELLED TO LOVE**

In other words:

“He Came Down From Heaven”—Really?

**BY JOHN BOWEN**

I can't remember who it was that said it, but it stuck with me: “What the church needs is not better arguments but better metaphors.”

Christmas comes with its own metaphors, of course. One of the chief ones is included in the Nicene Creed: “For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven.” I suppose there was a day when Christians believed that “coming down” was literal, since heaven was (naturally) thought to be “up there.” These days, if anything, Christ “coming down” conjures up an image of Jesus stepping out of a spaceship to live among us.

Is there a better way of thinking about this? As with so many things, I think it was C.S. Lewis who got me thinking freshly about this. It's a little footnote in *Surprised by Joy*, his autobiography:

Shakespeare could, in principle, make himself appear as Author within the play, and write a dialogue between Hamlet and himself. The “Shakespeare” within the play would of course be at once Shakespeare and one of Shakespeare's creatures.

When I was doing evangelistic speaking in universities, I was always looking for ways of connecting the Gospel to contemporary culture. One way I did this was in two talks entitled *The Gospel according to Calvin and Hobbes*—yes, the cartoon characters. Well, they are always discussing questions of philosophy—Is there a God? What is life for? Is there life after death? Where do we go when we die?—all the key questions. So it wasn't difficult. (Hobbes's answer to the last one was “Pittsburgh,” but he wasn't sure if that was if we were good or bad.)

In the middle of one talk, I wanted to say something about the incarnation, so I would explain C.S. Lewis's analogy of Shakespeare writing himself into Hamlet. Then I had a revelation: why was I importing Shakespeare into a talk on Calvin and Hobbes, when there was a much easier metaphor ready to hand, by the name of Bill Watterson?

“Who is Bill Watterson?” you may ask. He is the cartoonist who created Calvin and Hobbes. So I began to explain the incarnation differently. What if Bill Watterson wanted to communicate with his creations, Calvin and Hobbes? Maybe they are speculating whether there is a Great Cartoonist in the Sky who created them, or whether they just happened by chance.

What Bill Watterson does is to create a new cartoon character, and writes him into the strip. His name? Bill Watterson. And now he can communicate directly with Calvin and Hobbes, show what he is like, answer some of their questions—even make suggestions about how they could change their behaviour towards their mortal

enemy, Susie Derkins! Above all, he could establish a relationship with them.

Once my university speaking days were over, I actually discovered another cartoon strip which takes the analogy a step further. The strip is called *Overboard*, and it is about a group of pirates and their assorted animal friends on their pirate ship. From time to time, however, an extra character appears in the strip. He sits in his own little office, working away at a drawing board, and from time to time the characters come into his office and chat to him. Pinned to the wall is a little sign: “Overboard Inc.” Who is this character? He is the cartoonist, whose name in real life is Chip Dunham.

The range of conversations is interesting. Sometimes they complain about the things he wants them to do or say—usually difficult or unselfish things. Sometimes they complain about what they perceive as the lack of humour. And at other times they simply come and thank him for cresting such a nice strip for them. On one occasion, the cartoonist has hurt

his hand, and the captain takes over the writing of the story that day, and the result is, well—what shall we say?—a little self-indulgent.

But for my money the most interesting cartoon is a strip where the captain is trying to climb the mast to escape a sea monster which is half shark and half dog—imagine a shark that can walk on land! As you might expect, he is calling out for the cartoonist to help. Meanwhile, the cartoonist is up on his desk, trying to escape another of the monsters he has created—and reaching for the eraser! Once the cartoonist enters his own creation, naturally enough, he is subject to all the difficulties and pains of that world. Enough said.

“He came down from heaven” at Christmas time? Well, yes, and I will say those words—all the time aware that it is a metaphor, and not necessarily a helpful one. But in my mind, I will be thinking, God wrote God's own self into the cartoon strip we call human life—to communicate with us, to love us, and to save us.

Canadian Anglicans to Speak for Youth with Deeds, Not Words

BY THE VERY REVEREND PETER WALL

It was, undoubtedly, the highlight of my year—the entry into this world of my first grandchild: Simone Adelaide Schwartz on April 13 at 11:00 a.m.

Her arrival has changed everything. In her presence, the most mundane objects become new and exciting when enthusiastically narrated, as Grandpas tend to do: this book, that lamp, my chair. In her bright little eyes, the past has no meaning because the present is all-consuming. And when the briefest of naps affords those of us who dote on her the luxury of time, we invariably look to the future, speculating about milestones: the rolling over, the sitting up, the walking, the talking.

The second great highlight of my year was, not coincidentally, the birth of another change-oriented, youthful, exciting, forward-looking endeavour.

We did not mark the date or the hour, but the Anglican Foundation of Canada's Say Yes! to Kids campaign, in which I have had a hand, came to life last January.

By the time you read this, that campaign will have resulted in the largest one-time investment in ministry and outreach to children and youth the Canadian church has ever seen. Some of that investment will bear fruit by funding compassionate, innovative projects right here in the Diocese of Niagara.

I am grateful, beyond measure, to the visionary donors who supported Say Yes! to Kids, and to those who have nurtured youth ministry leaders to step forward, bravely, onto a mission field that now includes youth-focused pandemic recovery. Between the



granting and the giving there has been no shortage of generosity, passion, or creativity in the Diocese of Niagara. Well done!

When I learned that the total

funding requested nationwide was over half a million dollars—for more than 80 projects—it occurred to me that recent experiences with the pandemic have really changed the church, and well beyond livestreaming and zooming. It is possible the pandemic has strengthened our resolve to be missional and has readied us to make a long overdue investment, of a significant scale and magnitude, in serving young people in our parishes and in our communities.

Indeed, it feels as if we are at the forefront of a movement. We are more ready than we have ever been as a church to say without words, but with deeds,

that young people matter to the Canadian church, young people have a place here, and can find a spiritual home in which they have room to live and breathe and contribute here.

When she is older, I hope to travel with Simone to parts of the country I know and love. Our journey might include attending the performance of a children's choir in Alberta, joining a recording session of a youth podcast in Manitoba, or paying a visit to a reconciliation garden in Nova Scotia.

Of course, I will be happy to tell her that she and all these things were born in the same year. Together we will celebrate a visionary, loving church—one that saw beyond that which might be dramatically transformational. What a great day that will be!

Peter is Gift Consultant for the Anglican Foundation of Canada.

Niagara Invests in the Future with PWRDF's World of Gifts

BY JANICE BIEHN

Whether planting seedlings in Uganda or breadfruit trees in Haiti, preparing gift bags for new babies in Lesotho or teaching gender rights in El Salvador, the Primate's World Relief and Development Fund's partners are investing in their communities.

The annual World of Gifts campaign makes it possible for you to invest, too.

Supporting World of Gifts is an investment in a sustainable future for some of the world's most vulnerable communities. This year's guide supports 17 partners as they plan for a healthier and stronger future. Programs include restoring and preserving seeds in Bangladesh, providing families with supplies to raise chickens in Colombia and Zimbabwe, continued support of "smart" dairy farming initiatives in Kenya and, of course, back by popular demand, giving goats to people in Malawi, Zimbabwe, and Cuba.

Goats and these other conservation agriculture initiatives improve nutrition for smallholder farmers, and also improve their yields so they can earn more income in the local markets. Supporters can



still "buy the whole farm" and support a range of agricultural projects with one gift.

Last year, churches and individuals in the Diocese supported World of Gifts in many ways. Despite the pandemic lockdowns, the Church of the Nativity Women's Group in Hamilton designated \$330 for PWRDF, specifically to the World of Gifts. With money raised from the sale of fresh palm crosses and fronds for Palm Sunday services, as well as previous funds from their annual Penny Sale and Christmas Marketplace, the group was able to fund several agricultural items from last year's guide.



Holy Trinity Church in Niagara Falls gave \$1,135 to support Indigenous Youth microfinance through our partner on Vancouver Island, the Nuu-Chah-Nulth Economic Development Corporation in Port Alberni, B.C. And St. Jude's in Oakville gave \$345 to support a community in Kenya with a donkey to carry water and chickens in Colombia.

The clean water project in Kenya will still be supported in World of Gifts in 2021. Through our partner Utooni Development Organization, PWRDF has been supporting the construction of shallow wells, and last year raised enough funds to build 14 wells with a hand pump and one well with a solar-powered pump. If a donkey is not suitable to help a family carry water from the

well, UDO also provides water tanks to store the water.

There are also opportunities to invest in women recovering from sexual violence in Uganda and the Democratic Republic of Congo, and new mothers in Lesotho. Financial support at

these critical times can have an enormous impact.

This year's guide is also promoting our new Indigenous Responsive Programs grant. For 25 years PWRDF has supported and accompanied Indigenous organizations in Canada working to reclaim their language and culture, to improve community health with clean water and safe birth, to support economic opportunities and to engage youth. The new responsive program aims to expand our support of Indigenous communities by providing grants of \$5,000 - \$15,000 to Indigenous-led groups working in Community Health, Climate Action, Empowering Youth or Safe Water. With a gift supporting this program, you

are investing in Indigenous communities as well as Indigenous leadership.

Like any good investment, the return on World of Gifts is high: communities become stronger, healthier and more resilient, and we are able to live out Jesus' commandment for us to love our neighbour, no matter where they may be.

Janice Biehn is the Communications and Marketing Coordinator for PWRDF.

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The Bishop's Charge to the 147th Synod of the Diocese of Niagara

**BY THE RIGHT REVEREND
SUSAN J.A. BELL**

This version of the Bishop's Charge has been edited for length.

A few weeks ago, I was doing some research for a homily, and I stumbled across an interesting fact: over the past couple of years the most searched Bible verse of some 600 million queries has been Isaiah 41:10: "So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed for I am your God."

This is really no surprise, because fear has become the dominant emotion of our time: fear of a virus, fears of systems which prevent some of us from flourishing as God intended—racism, sexism, and colonialism to name a few, and fear of losing the planet as we know it. These things have produced fear of each other and given rise to new concerns too, as inequality grows, and poverty deepens for many, and systemic injustice faced by Indigenous peoples is more and more evident.

I admit there has been a lot to fear. But that's not really the point of Isaiah 41:10, is it? God says, "do NOT fear; do NOT be dismayed." Resting in God's provision and God's protection is the point.

I also heard somewhere that you simply can't be frightened if you're joyful. Taken together, that's why Philippians 4:4-9 was the Scripture chosen to underwrite this year's Synod theme. It might seem odd to choose a passage that begins, "Rejoice in the Lord always"; but in the context of leaning into God's provision and protection with joy, it makes good sense to banish fear with hope that is rooted in God's love.

Let's take a look at what there is to rejoice in as we face forward: called to life and compelled to love.

First, we rejoice that the fourth wave is ebbing and that so many of us are better

protected against the coronavirus—including all of our active clergy—through vaccination. Giving up some of our cherished rituals and practices has been hard and so, facing forward, we're very glad to now be in place where we can loosen some of our COVID-19 protocols, including re-introducing congregational singing. We must still be distanced, sing with masks on, and sing quietly. I, of all people, am going to struggle with the "quietly" piece. But my goodness, with the case numbers low as they are, it'll be wonderful to be able to sing the prayers of the Church again as of All Saints Day in thanksgiving to God.

We have sought to be cautious

"... it makes good sense to banish fear with hope that is rooted in God's love."

throughout the pandemic for the love of our neighbour, and your adherence to the pandemic protocols and our ministry guidelines has demonstrated that love time and again. The pandemic isn't over yet, but we are getting there, facing forward with God's help.

Another change that signals that we are getting there is that the diocesan Sunday Prayer service I have been leading is in its last weeks. As we wind down what has been a privilege and I hope, a help to parishes and leaders, I want to say a word of thanks to all the people who acted as readers and supporters across the diocese, to Michael Bloss and Trevor Price, our accompanists, and a particular word of thanks to Canon Mike Deed, our diocesan liturgical officer who has produced liturgy after liturgy in this season, and to Archdeacon Bill Mous, the technological wizard behind this enterprise.

What else do we have to rejoice about? Well, there is The Bishop's Company, too. In

just under a month, I will host a conversation with +Stephen Cottrell, the Archbishop of York. The archbishop is a good friend to our diocese and one of the most startlingly original and compelling communicators in our Church. We've opened up the invitation to engage with him to the whole Church. I hope you'll invite all your friends and family to come and enjoy time together with him. All proceeds go to support the Bishop's Company, an important fund that helps me to support our ministry leaders in times of difficulty.

I had the pleasure and privilege of ordaining four new deacons and a new priest for

our diocese last month. Randy Williams, Rob Duncan, Matt Gillard, Rob Jones deacons, and Michael Coren, priest. We are blessed by the combined talents of them all. We have also engaged two church planters this year to discern new ministry in our diocese: we welcome Rob Miller and Susie Kim as missionaries. We pray God's blessing on both of these folks and look forward to what God is doing through their leadership.

It's been a pleasure to visit the remarkable lay leaders around our diocese to bestow the Order of Niagara. Truly ignited by the irresistible love of Jesus, these folks have worked out their Christian vocations in as many ways as there are people. It's such a joy to recognize the light of Christ that shines out in their contributions to our common life. We're all deeply grateful for their long obedience in the same Gospel direction.

Imagine our joy as the hard work of 18 months of planning came to fruition with the launch of the Niagara School

for Missional Leadership. This is a school to support lay and ordained leaders to learn new skills for ministry. We have six courses ongoing now, and a full complement for two additional terms in the New Year. Our teacher-practitioners are drawn from all over the church universal, and it's exciting to invite them to share best practices with us. I am indebted to our Chair, Mr. Michael Smith, and to all the launch team members for their dedication and expertise: Archdeacon David Anderson, Beth Green, Chris Houston, Canon Christyn Perkons, Archdeacon Bill Mous, Archdeacon Michael Patterson, John Bowen, and Gillian Doucet-Campbell. I give thanks for our generous supporters, without whom the first steps of the school could not have taken place.

Canterbury Hills is definitely something to be joyful about. Against all odds, we were able to offer a day camp program this past summer. So many thanks to our outgoing Director, Emily Lloyd, for her extraordinary leadership, and to all the counsellors and the board who made this year's camping program possible. We're in the process of hiring a new director who will help guide a renewed faith-formed camping ministry. Thanks be to God for all the developments in this ministry which continues to be dear to the hearts of many in our diocese and beyond.

Here I'd like to pause and recognize three people whom I, in concert with our dean, am appointing as new canons of our Cathedral Church. The Reverend Bahman Kalantari has been a faithful, humble, and much-loved pastor. He cares deeply for all his parishioners and channels the love and joy of Christ in his vocation. The Reverend Sue-Ann Ward has helped several ministries dream big, engage their communities, and build up for ministry.

Chancellor Greg Tweney has faithfully served as our diocesan chancellor since 2018, and has been instrumental in revising our diocesan Safe Church Policy. I congratulate these new canons of Christ's Church Cathedral. We honour your ministry among us and give thanks for your commitment to the Church of God.

We all know the toll on mental health that this pandemic has taken. In order to make sure we are supporting our leaders, I've asked Canon Terry DeForest to create an extension to our Employee Family Assistance Plan. Our clergy and licensed lay workers now have the ability to access more counselling than previously. If that is something that would be helpful to you, please be in touch with Terry.

We have begun to set aside funds for what's called "differentiated curacies" in our missional budget. This is an act of faith in the future. We are investing our money in leadership development because we know—by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ—that there IS a future, that it's going to be exciting, and that right-skilled leadership is a crucial part of it.

Our ordinands come from many different backgrounds, ready for a transformational and educational exchange. Each mature priest is the product of the formation of many parishes as well as teaching rectors.

But we have a functional issue: most of our ordinands will not begin their incumbencies in a large, urban parish. The vocation of priesthood is shaped by the intersection of the gifts and skills that leaders possess with the needs and dreams of parishes in which we serve. Having funds like this will augment the investment that a parish will make so that an assistant curate can help the ministry of a parish flourish. It'll help us build many skills that are appropriate to

Continued on Page 7

Bishop's Charge

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7



context: whether in a resource rich environment or in a community that runs effectively and lovingly on a shoestring; a parish that leans more mature or a church plant that leans younger. It's only in this way that we will discern both where God is leading us and the skills and tools that God has given us in the servants the Lord is raising up as we have need of them in our diocese.

We are also building the ministries of prayer and supplication through the support of Alpha and Revive. My thanks to our Revive coordinator, Canon Leslie Gerlofs and to Tom Vaughn for leading the Alpha team. This is crucial foundational work for the renewal of faith in our parishes and I commend both programs to you.

Former Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams has written a beautiful book of reflections through the pandemic, *Candles in the Dark: Faith, Hope and Love in a Time of Pandemic*, and in it he says this: "To be a Christian is to be in politics...and people of faith have perspectives on how we ought to be living and working together. We have an interest in seeing deep and authentic humanity being nourished. And we have a duty to challenge whenever that deep and authentic way of living is sidelined or diminished."

You might hold these thoughts in your minds as you consider the motion before Synod from Climate Justice Niagara. We know that we as stewards or caretakers of the earth—a sacred charge given to us by Creator—have been failing in that responsibility. Therefore, in order to demonstrate our love of neighbour and fulfil our God-given duty of stewardship,

we must use what influence we have as a faith community to urge private and public action to change the course of current climate policy. We need to do that intentionally and commit our resources to this purpose. This is the most urgent moral crisis of our time.

A similar commitment on our part is to the work of the Anti-Racism Working Group. This is Gospel work. Transforming unjust systemic thinking and action in our midst is a work of obligation and a work of love. I am so grateful to Naomi Kabugi for her principled leadership of this process, and for all the members of the working group. This work is not easy and it takes bravery to face where we are complicit with the principalities and powers that walk among us—even in the Church.

This work goes hand in hand with our ongoing commitment to foster reconciliation, laying bare the truth of our sinful past, acknowledging our wrongs, and lamenting our complicity with the residential schools' system. Together, we must face forward to a future which God envisions; one where treaties are fully honoured, where the culture, history and beliefs of Indigenous peoples are respected, and where our structures and systems are decolonized.

Niagara, there are also many good things to meditate on. Let's start with those goals. The Scriptures tell us that the God of mission has a Church in the world. From Genesis to Revelation, that is God's message. We've been working hard at living into our diocesan Mission Action Plan (MAP) this past year.

Please read Canon Christyn Perkons' report in the Convening Circular, which is a

terrific summary of what we have been doing to fulfill the mandate for the MAP. Coming out of the MAP process for the diocese is a Parish MAP Process. This has been created by Christyn, and we are putting the finishing touches on it in time for Advent. It is my hope that just as the diocesan MAP helped us identify our ministry priorities, so this process will do the same for parish ministry in the coming year.

I am thankful for all of you; the Church is you all. The diocese is all of you: the gathered communities of people who follow the way of Christ. I am constantly moved by the way that you inhabit your beliefs and offer the outworking of those beliefs to your parishes, to the geographical parish that you have spiritual responsibility for, to the wider diocesan ministries that you support with your time, your vast talents and with your resources.

I want to thank our clergy and licensed lay workers for the fulfillment of their ministry among us this year under great strain. I also want to say a word of special thanks to many of our retired clergy, especially those who have served in interim ministries at times of real need in these past years. We could not have moved forward without their help.

There are two people in particular without whom I simply don't work/can't work:

Canon Alison D'Attri. I am her sixth bishop. That length of service represents a true and deep commitment to our diocese. The flexibility needed for that has come in handy this past year as we have had to make change after change to the way we function. And Alison has rolled with it with the same grace and steadfastness that she always does. She makes me laugh on the good days and knows just how to commiserate on the less good days. Alison, your price is above rubies I am profoundly grateful for you.

And my thanks to Bill: reliable, thorough, attentive, supportive, judicious, a fine interlocutor, respectful, an independent thinker, a people and a change manager, a partner in crime and above all a communicator. I am grateful to him for all his many gifts and the ways in which he has offered them in service to me

and to our diocese. Bill's untiring research and translation into workable protocols, his rapid responses to the many inquiries as we puzzled our way through the constantly changing COVID-19 landscape, and the clarity of his communications week by week have collectively lowered our stress and provided us with clear information in a time of confusion and uncertainty. And we—I—am deeply grateful.

I must also thank our Dean, Tim Dobbin, who joined us on January 1st. I prayed for a ministry partner, and that is what the Lord delivered. Tim is a strong, supportive presence, a man of deep prayer, and possesses an ability to listen with the ears of the heart. I am grateful for all that he has done to lead Christ's Church through the last nine months and look forward to a long future together.

We are very well-served by the work that our staff do, from children and youth ministry to outreach and justice, from property management to the intricate and crucial work of those who support payroll and diocesan finances, and in many more areas besides. The staff who do all this work do it in service to the Gospel. I thank them on your behalf for their dedication. As I do our Senior Leadership team: Terry DeForest, Christyn Perkons, Jody Beck, and Gillian Doucet-Campbell work very hard to enact Synod's priorities, support programming, and fulfil every aspect of their subject specialties. I am proud of and grateful for their gifts.

Jody, of course, is nearing the end of her sojourn with us having served as our treasurer and director of finance for more than a decade. Over the years, Jody's leadership has opened new opportunities for God's mis-

sion and helped revitalize our policies and practices, and she has made significant contributions to the governance of the diocese. Many of us also know well the contributions Jody has made to our common life and the ways in which she has cared for us and supported us, and we will miss her very much. So, on behalf of Synod, I thank you Jody and I know that we all pray every blessing on the many new adventures of retirement ahead. Please keep Jody and her family in your prayers during this time of transition.

Thanks also to the members of Synod Council. One glance at the enormous scope of the work that Synod Council undertakes on your behalf between synods is cause enough for grateful thanks for all their time, expertise, and commitment. We are well led by your representatives. Bless you all for the work that you do in Jesus' name for our diocese.

As I draw my charge to a close, let me say this: despite the tragedy and difficulty of the pandemic; despite the fear that has characterized this time, we have done our best to rest in the provision and protection of the Holy One who gives us joy in the midst of adversity and strength in a time of weakness. And you know, that's been enough. It's been enough for us to carry on being the Church; to carry on being the face and hands of Christ as we face forward in faith and hope and love.

To read the full version of the Bishop's Charge, please visit the diocesan website at <https://niagaraanglican.ca/> or you can watch it on the diocesan YouTube channel youtube.com/niagaraanglican.

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ANTI-RACISM: A Journey Towards Healing and Wholeness

A Special Series



Healing Through the Body

This is the seventh installment of this series.

BY NICOLA LI FEN ZHANG

It has been a year since the Anti-Racism Working Group (ARWG) met for the first time in 2020. I have really appreciated this opportunity because I now have a much better understanding of what racism is and how racist I was. It was not easy for me to see this, since I used to believe I was not racist at all, and that North America is the least racist place in the world. The good news is that I was inspired and started to explore paths of anti-racism as I became more aware of the racist reality of the world.

I think we have two main routes to be anti-racist. One is to reduce racism, and the other is to heal the wounded souls

resulting from racism. The most fascinating thing I learned from ARWG is that both routes can be travelled, not only through our heads, but also through our bodies. The intelligent part is easy for me to understand, yet the physical concept took me quite a while to feel, practise, and then see the healing power through body.

My Grandmother's Hands: Racialized Trauma and the Pathway to Mending Our Hearts and Bodies is a book written by Resmaa Menakem. It has been used by our group to reflect on the topic of anti-racism. Being a yellow person who immigrated from China to Canada, I did not see clearly the wisdom of the book at the beginning, since its

background is the racist conflicts between the black people and the white people in America.

However, being a dance lover, I like exploring my body, so I did the body practice instructed at the end of each chapter. Surprisingly, I found that my body is much wiser than my mental awareness since my yellow body directed my Asian-Canadian brain to "see" the racialized trauma in me through "seeing" the trauma that has happened to the bodies of other peoples.

Furthermore, being someone who is neither white nor black, I found my trauma is from both being racially discriminated and being racially discriminating. The body practices told me that I am double-wounded.

Menakem believes that mental wounds can be memorized by the body as physical trauma, and by healing the noticeable physical trauma we can heal our wounded souls. The first step of healing is to learn to listen to our physical trauma, which will lead us see the source of mental wounds. By internal reconciliation with ourselves both spiritually and bodily, we gain the capability and hope to reconcile with others, with the world, and with God.

Anglicans of Canada used to be—and maybe are still—very "white." We can see it from the ethical composition of our congregations and our clergy. However, being "white" is different from being "racist." Ever

since I stepped into the Anglican Diocese of Niagara in 2019, I have been welcomed and loved by white congregations, white priests, white mentors, white chaplains, and our white bishop. Maybe, I just came at the right time when our diocese started to open the door to embrace people with different ethical bodies. I believe that God called me to come to the Anglican Church for many reasons. One must be using my healing wounded body and soul to heal other wounded bodies and souls.

I know that we have a long way to go, but at least I can do something to make our community less racist, and I think this is what each of us can do, starting with our own bodies.

Holy Insignificant: A Theology for Ordinary Joes



THE REVEREND DR DANIEL TARNIC

I was walking along the east bank of the Tiber River toward the Ponte Cavour. In the early calm of eventide, the poplars lining the street shed their leaves as a mild November breeze scattered them across cobblestone streets. I think I caught a glimpse of Audrey Hepburn and Gregory Peck sitting on a perch across the way. The sky was pristine and black.

Somewhere in the not-so-distant there was music; a choir, a haunting refrain, an unknown tune. Where was that music coming from? It could have been coming from anywhere. Beauty leaned into my soul. I leaned against a wall. Listening, I journeyed somewhere: upward, downward, sideways, inward, outward. I lost sense of time. That's why they call it the "Eternal City."

I dream about that night often. But I never hear the music. Just when I think I'm about to hear the angelic voices and the haunting refrain, the dream stops. I wake up feeling deflated, with a longing to hear it again; will I ever hear the song again? God knows I've searched for it on YouTube and Google; there's a lot of music in the world, it's hard to search it all. Maybe I'm not supposed to find it. Hopefully, it will find me

some day.

And, like the poplar leaves that fell and skipped across the cobble stone only to disappear into darkness, like the vision of Hepburn and Peck perched on a stoop, the music, the evening, Eternity's sudden appearing in time seems reluctant to appear again. There's nothing I seem to be able to do about it. It was a gift. The Lord passed by, and like Job sitting in his ashes, the hearing of the ears alerted me to the fact that I had just seen God with my own eyes.

I don't know if this happens to you, but sometimes it happens to me: why does the Lord reveal himself only to retreat again into hiddenness? Why does a momentary experience of beauty lead to an even longer duration of absence? Why does the answer lead to a new set of questions?

Christianity is a revealed

religion, and when I was studying philosophy back in my undergraduate days, that statement was meant to be taken as a derogatory one: lacking in logic, silly, nonsensical, superstitious. Today I take pride in the statement. Yes, Christianity is revealed religion. And this is the time of year that we are most attuned to the dynamics of revelation. Goodness, truth, and beauty are hidden in the depths of the created order; they find us as we go through life, happy-go-lucky without a care in the world.

We search for happiness, but happiness eludes us—until one day, our defenses are down, and it finds us. We question, but we don't know what we don't know; one day the answer finds us. We run to God, we run away from God, and when we finally stop running, we are found by God. We are like the prophet Job—we are Job—sitting in this pile of

ashes (creation), staring at the chaos, what's the meaning of it all? Where is God in this? And then the Lord raises Job's chin a bit higher, "Look up, look beyond the horizon, what do you see?" Who do you see?

Truth, goodness, and beauty reveal themselves like a constellation of stars: "it was in Bobcaygeon, I saw the constellations, reveal themselves one star at a time." Can you make the constellations appear? Can I make the constellations appear? No, you and I can't. We need to be content with numbering ourselves among the average Joes and those holy-insignificants who "were in the fields keeping watch over their flock by night."

We just have to be willing enough to be there, deaf enough to hear it, and blind enough to see it.



Archaeopteryx

BY THE VENERABLE MAX WOOLLAVER

The first step to God is always a question. It is always a question that opens the door; one thinks of the many questions in the Gospels: "Where do you live?" "How can a person be born twice?" "If the rich cannot be saved, then who can be saved?" "My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?"

Sometimes the questions are implied, buried in anguish. "If you had been here, my brother would not have died." "Unless I put my hand in his wounds, I will not believe." "Master, master, we are perishing..." (Luke 8:24).

Some of the questions come from women and men outside the culture of Jesus: "How is that you a Jew speak to me a Samaritan?" And some came from people who had known him all his life: "Isn't this the son of Joseph the carpenter?"

And then of course, there are our own personal questions about God. Our early primary questions often don't seem to be about God at all. I remember very clearly as a young boy, maybe 11 or 12 years old, walking along past Mrs. Anderson's cherry trees. We used to raid her trees when the plump, dark red fruit was in season. I walked past her trees pretty well every weekday from my first day in school at age five to my last day in high school. One day, while walking past her small orchard, out of nowhere came the questions: Who am I? What is a human? What does it mean to be human?

I also remember, about the same time of life, having a fascination with the past. Like many young folks I became interested in the ancient past, ancient animals, ancient wars—the digging around for things! I learned and loved the words "archeology," "ancient history." The words seemed so exotic! My life changed when I learned the word "archaeopteryx"—meaning "ancient wing"—the oldest known bird with claws in its

wings, part lizard, part bird! At that stage of growing up everything began with arche (pronounced ar-kay), having to do with "the beginning," whatever was ancient.

I asked myself: "Where in history would I like to go?" I made a list of three moments I would like to visit from the past. The only moment I can remember listing is the crucifixion of Jesus. When I remembered this years later, I was quite surprised... maybe even shocked. I had not been baptized and I had never been to church. Where did this come from? What was I hoping to see, to learn?

Years later, in seminary, I remember the deep, physical thrill and abiding delight in reading the first words of the Gospel of John in Greek: "In the beginning..." and there it was: arche, "the beginning!"

All of the questions we have of our existence, our meaning, our purpose arise from an arche ("from the beginning")—the Living and Holy Being of God!

God is the Beginning of our questions, the beginning of your hunger to be loved, to be known, to be heard. God has been with you from the Deep Beginning of All Things. God has been with you since before your childhood, all through your childhood, all through your maturation, all through your journey of life, no matter how dark or bright, right up to this moment, as you read these words.

Maybe, as a child I needed to know where, in the ancient history of our ancient world, love could be seen. Maybe that's why the figure of a solitary man on a cross arose, however obliquely, from the depths of my heart, mind and soul.

These many long years after childhood questions, I have come to believe that the answer to the question, "Who am I?" cannot be answered without hearing the question that is put to us all from that solitary man on a cross: "Who do you say I am?"

And yes, the archaeopteryx remains a wonder.

Who Will Protect Creation? Learning To Care About Sustainability



BY SHREYA YUGENDRANAG

I have enjoyed working with Climate Justice Niagara during my placement with Deirdre Pike, Justice and Outreach Program Consultant with the Diocese of Niagara. In working with the members on their action plan to help direct the work for the next few years, I have found a group of people who care and understand the complexities of the climate crisis and are walking with both feet to respond. However, I have to admit that my journey of caring about sustainability had many steps.

Growing up in Dubai, United Arab Emirates (UAE), glittering lights and tall skyscrapers were a common sight for me. The place had its own majestic presence, and I still remember waiting for all the city lights to turn on around twilight. However, as I matured, I eventually learned the UAE had the world's largest ecological footprint. The Global Footprint Network reports that countries need to have a footprint of 1 global hectare in order to be optimally sustainable. Just a decade ago, the UAE measured around 12 global hectares. This surprised me. I saw no evidence of pollution in the UAE at that time. The air was clean, the water was clear, and there was little to no litter in the street!

Further research showed me it was misinformed.

The UAE had extremely high carbon emissions relating to their high electricity and water consumption. As ready as I was to criticize the industrial sector for bad practices, 57 percent of the issue came from unsustainable practices in the household.

The message stood clear to me: I was part of the issue. Each one of us affects the environ-

ment's well-being.

I also reflected on my childhood experiences in India. In many ways, India showed the stereotypical scene of climate justice issues. In any major city, you could easily smell smog in the air. Travellers were only recommended to drink from water bottles, and in general, there was litter everywhere. When arguing about climate justice, the task suddenly seemed too overwhelming. Where do we begin?

I feel bitter about the countless Western companies that set up their manufacturing and production centres in my homeland. I feel bitter when they pollute the waters and expect poorer communities to work in unsafe conditions. And, as a middle-class citizen of Canada, I feel ashamed about my regular visits to these companies. There were other economical and sustainable brands that deserve more of our support.

Once again, the message appeared clear to me: I was part of the issue. Each one of us affects the environment's well-being.

Finally, after moving to Canada, I initially believed the environment was in much better care here. I saw evidence of care that was previously difficult to find. There was recycling, a slight emphasis on Earth Day,

and there was even a political party that considered sustainability first! Then, I found out about extreme weather patterns in the north, the migration of local fish from Atlantic coastal waters, tar sands in the Prairies, and emissions. Some parts of Canada were twice as warm as the average global temperature! Although there is growing awareness about these issues, people generally did not care to talk about the issue or choose sustainable alternatives. Like everywhere else I had lived, we are all reluctant to change our routines or confront unhealthy company policies.

I also realized I contributed to the issue. Despite my high and mighty attitude, I had much to work on. Was I recycling properly? Was I wasting leftovers? Was I contributing to air pollution by leaving my car running when unneeded? Was I voting for candidates who spoke about sustainability, or had I been willing to sacrifice climate injustice for other priorities?

So once again, the message was clear to me: I was part of the issue. Each one of us affects the environment's well-being—by conserving food and water in our homes, by being greener consumers, and by acknowledging climate injustice around us. All we have to do is care.



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Ignite: Faith in the Future

BY GILLIAN DOUCET CAMPBELL

Our forebearers offered so much to ensure that the light of faith shines throughout our diocese. Now that same opportunity has been given to us—to allow us to continue to shine this light in similar ways, and to be a spark plug for new ways.

In addition to our many parish ministries, as a diocese we have ministries and programs that make up Ignite, the stewardship initiative within our diocese. This includes Truth, Reconciliation, and Indigenous

ministries and programs, Migrant Farmworkers Program, Children, Youth and Family, and other Justice and Outreach programs. Some of these ministries were envisioned by generations past, while others are new.

As engaged, generous, and compassionate Christians seeking to live out the biblical definition of stewardship, which is defined as “utilizing and managing all resources God provides for the glory of God and the betterment of God’s creation,” we are serving God and bringing about the Kingdom. Our generosity in sharing what

God has provided each of us has ensured that the ministries and programs of our diocese continue and grow.

Nevertheless, our ministries and programs need greater support than ever before. As we move through the pandemic, our responsibility to serve our local communities and beyond has also grown. The need for our intentional care and partnerships is growing. There are more people than ever in need of the loving care that our ministries and programs provide – and we need your help to ensure we have the leaders, ministries, programs, and tools to do this

for those who need or prefer a Mandarin speaker.

Your support of Ignite provides hope and care for children, youth, and young adults. For instance, along with our ecumenical partners, our diocese supports university chaplaincies at Brock University, the University of Guelph, and McMaster University. The chaplaincies create places on campus for non-judgmental conversation, discernment, and connection with others. Our chaplaincies are well-positioned to offer spiritual care to many students, including those who have left the church, those who remain

with deacons and priests. “The Niagara School for Missional Leadership is the matrix of sharing and learning the best practices and the best theological thinking for building—with God’s leading—the future of the Church,” says Bishop Susan Bell. And if we are learning anything during this global pandemic, it is the need for approaching “church” in a refreshed way and with a missional focus. And this is the school’s mission, to be a Gospel-focused learning community that trains effective missional leaders to respond to the needs of God’s world.

The many ministries and programs of Ignite are a testament to God’s faithfulness and our collective mission as discerned by our Mission Action Plan (MAP). Our attention to the leading of the Spirit and our generosity of time, talent, and treasure tell a story about the diocese of Niagara. And that story is one to be proud of as we continue to engage in God’s dream through the ministries and programs of Ignite.

Each of our Ignite ministries needs our prayers, skills, and time to volunteer as well as to learn the root causes for why the ministry or program is needed and what actions can be taken to change these root causes.

These ministries also require us to give our financial support. Your gifts are important as they continue this work now and for future generations. Together we will Ignite: Faith in the Future.

Visit ignitefaithniagara.ca to learn more and to donate.



good work.

Giving your time, talent, and treasure to Ignite ministries builds up communities. For instance, Mission in Acts, formerly known as the Chinese Anglican Ministry, has provided ways for Mandarin speakers to develop connections, preventing isolation and loneliness. This ministry, led by the Reverend Garfield Wu and with the support of numerous volunteers, has provided online English language learning groups, a WeChat group that provides support, as well as pastoral care

connected but from a distance, and those who have never had a religious affiliation. Regardless of their background, many students have questions about the meaning and purpose of life. We are grateful to be able to provide financial support, guidance, and council to the much-needed university chaplains.

Your gifts invest in lay and ordained leaders. With the launch of the Niagara School for Missional Leadership this fall, we are actively strengthening and developing the skills of parish volunteers along



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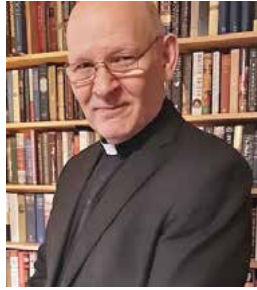
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When Conservatism Collide



BY THE REVEREND MICHAEL COREN

While nobody ever thought they'd be a serious contender for government, the People's Party of Canada made a definite impression in the recent election. They came nowhere close to winning a seat but damaged Erin O'Toole's chances, and tripled their support from 2019, when they averaged a mere 1.6% of the vote. "Unfortunately, we won't be able to carry on this fight in Parliament" said leader Maxime Bernier, "but we will

continue this battle to unite Canadians under the freedom umbrella."

Which is where conservative Christianity enters the scene. Although we don't have precise numbers, the support Bernier enjoyed among fundamentalist and literalist Christians seems to have been deeply significant. Bernier courted them, prayed with them, appeared in a much-viewed video in which he was blessed and proclaimed by a well-known pastor.

Yet here is a party that wants to lift many COVID-19 public health restrictions, expand the oil and gas industry, end official multiculturalism, and drastically reduce immigration levels. At a time of increased racism, and a murderous attack on a Muslim family in London, Ontario, the PPC has said it would repeal the official Multiculturalism Act. Bernier even denied that the discovery of thousands of graves of Indigenous children proved

Canada's involvement in an attempted cultural genocide.

How can such ideas appeal to people who claim to follow Jesus? This was a man who was known as the Prince of Peace, who commanded that we welcome strangers and newcomers, treat every person as a child of God and made in absolute equality, and who repeatedly preached the importance of community, sharing, giving, and empathy. The Bible demands that we care for the planet as stewards, not owners, and that we live not as individuals without responsibility but in direct solidarity with those around us.

The reasons for the conservative Christian support for Bernier are not unique to Canada. We've seen the same with Donald Trump in the US, Jair Bolsonaro in Brazil, and in many other countries. The phenomenon is dangerous for the body politic, and tragic for organized Christianity. It makes the

faith appear to be reactionary and insular when it's in fact—or should be—the direct opposite. People often embrace right-wing ideas when they're challenged and frightened of change, but conservative populism makes the world subjectively smaller.

So, what of the future? While Bernier claims that issues such as abortion and gender identity aren't on his party platform, and was always regarded as more socially liberal, he's attracted a fierce anti-abortion element into his ranks. That clash between Christian social conservatives on the one hand and anti-state activists on the other may have survived the election but will surely expose the artificiality of the People's Party in the months to come.

The future of the conservative Christian place in the Bernier project will depend to a large extent on whether Erin O'Toole remains leader of the Tories. He's declared himself to be pro-

choice and supports a ban on conversion therapy, even though most of his parliamentary caucus disagrees. If, however, he should be removed and replaced by a more conservative alternative—new MP Leslyn Lewis comes to mind—we could see an exodus of evangelical support from the People's Party.

Until and unless all of this, a fringe party that empowers some of the least noble aspects of Canadian society will continue to attract those Christians who see the first-century Jewish son of a carpenter not as someone who called for the world to be turned upside down in a revolution of love and justice, but as someone who called us all to revere 1950s suburbia. If that's not worrying, I don't know what is.

Michael's latest book, The Rebel Christ, was published in October.

Provincial Synod 2021 Calls Us to Love One Another

Convening virtually for the first time, the dioceses within the ecclesiastical province of Ontario joined together on October 13 and 14 to pray, worship, carry out business, and reflect on the church's mission for the 37th time. The theme of this year's Provincial Synod was "In All Our Relations: Love One Another," inspired by 1 John 4:7–21.

Archbishop Anne Germond, metropolitan of the ecclesiastical province, located in Sault Ste. Marie—historically known as "Bawating" in Ojibwe—focused participants' attention on the legacy of the Residential School system in her welcome address. While the Anglican Church of Canada has a long road ahead in reconciliation, the Metropolitan remarked that Bawating stands as a place representing the hope



and healing that is possible when we truly love one another.

Archbishop Germond also connected the theme of loving one another to the ways Anglican Christians in Ontario have supported one another during the pandemic, demonstrating the obedience and prayerfulness with which neighbours have loved neighbours. "As our world was being torn apart by fear, uncertainty, panic, and hopelessness," the Metropolitan shared, "we had the privileged vocation of being living signs of a Love that can bridge all anxieties and heal all wounds." She

extended thanks to many across the province who have served selflessly during the pandemic, including Canon Judy Rois, retiring Executive Director of the Anglican Foundation, and the Diocese of Niagara's Archdeacon Bill Mous.

This theme was echoed by many of the delegates elected from the Diocese of Niagara.

Jodey Porter, a lay delegate, reflected that even with the joyful announcement of our successes, there is still much work to be done. Porter, as layperson experiencing vision impairment, drew attention to the "sacramental act of inclusion" embodied by the ministry of National Indigenous Anglican Archbishop Mark MacDonald. That voice of inclusion, however, was balanced by the frustration

of utilizing a platform like Zoom, which, while often a blessing during the pandemic to draw people together, remains challenging for many to navigate—"like trying to get in a building without a wheelchair ramp." Jodey emphasized the inspiring nature of Primate Linda Nicholls' opening homily to prune our spiritual and church life "back to the essentials" and reground ourselves theologically and culturally as Anglicans.

This synod marked the seventh Provincial Synod for The Reverend Rob Towler, one of the diocesan representatives on Provincial Council, who observed that the theme "was a good framework for beginning the work of the upcoming triennium." Towler was "very impressed by the Provincial

House of Bishops, in particular the energy and effort they put in to being a united team as we all faced an unprecedented situation."

Likewise, The Reverend Deacon Rod McDowell recalled the Primate's call to be compassionate with one another as we live into Christ's mandate to share God's love with all. McDowell was thankful, especially, for the "Missional Moments" shared by each diocese that demonstrated how the various dioceses within the province have been living into that calling.

To learn more about this year's Provincial Synod, view the convening circular, and read the Metropolitan's Report, visit province-ontario.anglican.ca/synod.

Niagara Anglican Deadlines and Submission Guidelines

Deadlines:

- January – November 29
- February – December 29
- March – January 28

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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Exploring Part of Our Heritage



Review: A Visual Tour of Christ's Church Cathedral, Hamilton, Ontario by Alexander (Sandy) L. Darling

One of the many drawbacks of the pandemic has been the inability to step inside Christ's Church Cathedral and take in the sights and sounds of a building teeming with history. When physical church gatherings were cautiously restricted early in the pandemic, however, Sandy Darling had an idea: if congregants and visitors "could not come to the cathedral, I could bring the cathedral to them."

And so, having taken photographs of the intricate details of the cathedral over the course of many years, Darling has now produced not merely a visual tour for all interested readers, but a wonderful guidebook for reflection on the great story of Scripture told through Christian liturgical year. Echoed by Bishop

Susan Bell in the booklet's foreword, "this is a tour based on love: love of a jewel box of a cathedral, love of the cloud of witnesses that has built this community of faith over time, and love of the Gospel of Jesus Christ which continues to inspire us each day."

The booklet is organized as much by the actual physical spaces of the cathedral as the themes of the Christian year. Sandy's initial plan "was to take a virtual tour after entering through the main doors by proceeding in a counter-clockwise direction with a focus on windows." This soon blossomed into telling the story of a plethora of other features of the architecture and the cathedral's spiritual life, including the

cathedral ceiling, the altar carvings, the rhythm of movement during Palm Sunday, the stone reredos, and the intricately carved cathedra and pulpit, to name but a few.

The tour begins in the most apt of locations: Bishopsgate Garden during Eastertide, with a secondary focus on the carved figures on the exterior of the building designed by William Thomas. Before concluding with a postscript about the history of the cathedral's many stained-glass windows, Darling leaves us to liturgically ponder the season of Pentecost with fiery sunlit glass and red, orange, and yellow balloons. It is a striking call to those who enter the cathedral—whether through the front doors, or through this lovely

booklet—to go forth empowered by the Holy Spirit.

This booklet is small in size, but significant in its contribution to the history and life of the diocese. Whether or not you might find yourself stepping foot inside the large, wooden doors off James Street North, Darling's guidebook is one worth keeping at your side.

To order a copy of this book, email cathedral@niagaraanglican.ca. Copies are \$12.00 if received in person, or \$17.50 if you request shipping. Payment can be made via cash, cheque (made out to Christ's Church Cathedral), or e-transfer to the email above.

Reflecting on Niagara-In-Action: What Does Social Advocacy Truly Mean?



BY SHREYA YUGENDRANAG

On September 25, 2021, the Diocese held another successful session of Niagara-In-Action! An annual favourite, this year's event showcased two workshops: "Mapping the Ground We Stand On" and "Creating 2SLGBTQ+ Positive Space." Mapping the Ground explored Indigenous presence and settler arrival on the map of Turtle Island (Canada). Led by PWRDF-trained facilitators, Greg Smith and Cheryl Marek, and Archdeacon Val Kerr, this seminar explored common social misconceptions about "vacant" land in historical Canada.

On the other hand, Creating 2SLGBTQ+ Positive Space training was led by Deirdre Pike, Justice and Outreach Program Consultant. This workshop took a personal, organizational, and political perspective to challeng-

ing heteronormativity. It helped participants identify subtle and explicit forms of heterosexism, cissexism, homophobia, and transphobia. The workshop gave information about being an ally and advocating for the 2SLGBTQ+ community.

As a participant in Mapping the Ground, I was both confronted and humbled by the visual truth. The map of Canada, filled with all its rich and long-standing Indigenous communities, communicated a very clear message to me: that even the land I legally "own" today was stolen. How would I have felt if my home was stolen from me or my family? How would my community survive if our connection to the land—to our medicine, food and shelter—was severed? The workshop encouraged us to ponder these questions.

Similarly, participants in the Positive Space training had their own "a-ha" moments. In general, when confronted by overt homophobia, cissexism, or transphobia, many may feel compelled to react. In fact, some activists and allies may be most familiar with this type of social injustice—when discrimination is obvious and loud. However, a challenging and equally crucial part of advocacy is recogniz-

ing subtle cues. The silent judgment, the exclusion from social events, or the undeserved promotion—each of these can reinforce heteronormativity in equally dangerous ways. How can we advocate in these cases? How can we confront subtly? How can we be better allies, advocates, and accomplices?

Ultimately, Niagara-In-Action challenged participants and helped them reframe their views on social injustices. The workshops taught us to challenge our assumptions and preset knowledge. They taught us that our efforts in reconciliation and allyship may sometimes inconvenience us. It may put us in a place where we ourselves have to change, compromise and feel uncomfortable.

Perhaps, however, it is in these moments that we experience the most growth. After all, we cannot be an ally without giving up some privilege.



"For I Was Hungry..."

BY BEV GROOMBRIDGE

Many families who in the past did not rely on food banks for sustenance now found themselves going there for help. Food banks struggle to fill their shelves at the best of times, but with the increased demand it was a tireless and often relentless struggle.

At the Church of Our Saviour The Redeemer, we asked ourselves: how can we help? How could we read and believe Matthew 25:35 and do nothing? Our regular collection of food for St. Matthew's House that came in week by week had come to a halt with in-person worship not happening. Very early on in the pandemic, we sent out an email inviting parishioners to bring food items for the food bank and asked them to place them in bins outside the church building. The response was

overwhelming!

With the generosity of our parishioners, we are now able to support both St. Matthew's House and Mission Services on a regular basis. We are all blessed so that we can become a blessing to others.

Bev is a parishioner at The Church of Our Saviour The Redeemer, Stoney Creek.

