

A Season of Gratitude

BY GILLIAN DOUCET CAMPBELL

"INTO THIS CLIMATE OF FEAR AND APPREHENSION, CHRISTMAS ENTERS, STREAMING LIGHTS OF JOY, RINGING BELLS OF HOPE AND SINGING CAROLS OF FORGIVENESS HIGH UP IN THE BRIGHT AIR. THE WORLD IS ENCOURAGED TO COME AWAY FROM RANCOR, COME THE WAY OF FRIENDSHIP."

— Amazing Peace: A Christmas Poem, By Dr. Maya Angelou

Bishop Susan Bell was thrilled to announce that with the support of Ecclesiastical Insurance we have more than achieved our goal of raising \$10,000 in support of our diocesan Pandemic Response Fund.

"This result simply delights the heart of God — to share our resources with our neighbours like this at this difficult time is so moving to witness," said Bishop Susan Bell. "So many people will be helped by the pandemic ministries which are exemplifying God's great commandment to love our neighbour."

The results of the first-ever diocesan #GivingTuesday matching gift campaign show that in just one week over \$13,125 was raised, primarily through online donations! With the \$5,000 support from Ecclesiastical Insurance the amount of funds raised through the initiative

increases to \$18,125. Additional donations made by cheque and mailed to our diocesan office are still being received.

Thank you to those who were able to contribute to this fund. Each gift will meet the real needs of people in the many communities of our diocese.

Colin Robertson, Vice President, Operations and Risk Control, with Ecclesiastical Insurance was delighted to hear the news, saying, "2020 has been a difficult year. Ecclesiastical is proud to give back to the communities we serve. We're grateful for this opportunity to be with the Niagara Diocese in 2020 in this way as it aligns well with the support we have been able to provide this year to frontline charities across Canada."

Holy Trinity, Welland, parishioner Jim Butts also speaks of gratitude and a desire to give back as his inspiration for

the volunteer work he does through his parish, "When I wake-up in the morning I have all that I need. There are many who don't. So, I give back."

Prior to COVID-19 Holy Trinity, Welland, worked with several churches in the area to provide a meal and groceries for 60–70 people each week. During COVID-19 this number has increased staying closer to 170 a week. "We know there's a lot of need around us. If we can help, we will," said Butts.

Stepping up to meet this rise in demand Holy Trinity, Welland had to increase their freezer capacity and food budget. Normally the funds to support



Holy Trinity, Welland is a recipient of the Niagara Diocese Pandemic Response Fund.

this would come from facility rentals and mini-fundraising events—all things that have been suspended during COVID-19. Now, Holy Trinity, Welland



relies heavily on individual donations and grants, including a grant from the Niagara Diocese Pandemic Response Fund.

Butts says, "I just want people to know we're here for them and if they can, to pay it forward."

Recognizing the mounting challenges and diminishing resources that our parishes are facing we are grateful to all those who have been able to pool their resources of time, talents, and treasure during the Pandemic. Each gift is important and welcomed. Thank you for wholeheartedly embracing the Peace of Christmas—each to each, with kindness, comfort, and compassion, lighting the way for others as we are able.

"These gifts will make such a difference to people like those compassionately supported by Holy Trinity," noted Bishop Bell. "Thank you, more than I can say, to all who have generously offered a real gift of love and hope through their donations to the diocesan Pandemic Response Fund."

In Other Words

The Lenten Disciplines of an Easter Disciple



JOHN BOWEN

I had decided to give up my favorite chocolate biscotti during Lent. The server in my favorite coffee shop was surprised that I wasn't having "my usual." When I explained, she said, "Oh yes, I know about Lent. In my family, we always gave up meat

for Lent. I don't really know why, and I don't go to church, but I still do it." Ah, the power of long habit: we do things without thinking about them! So why do we "give things up" for Lent?

Everything is connected to everything else. I have a working hypothesis that everything in church and the Christian life

connects to Jesus' announcement of the Gospel—the Good News—that God is at work putting the world to rights. Jesus summarized that work by calling it "the Kingdom," but it's the same thing.

As soon as Jesus had announced that the Kingdom was "at hand"

(without drawing attention to the fact that it was being ushered in by the King!), he began to call disciples. In an earlier article, I suggested that a "disciple" is not something weird or religious, but is best understood as an apprentice, someone

See LENTEN DISCIPLINES Page 6

Generosity Gives Hope During the Holidays!

Hundreds of Hamilton families and seniors will have a brighter holiday season this year thanks to the generosity of people across our diocese.

St. Matthew's House reported that their 2020 Holiday Adopt-A-Family Campaign far exceeded past donation levels. Regular cash donations, which usually spike around Christmas, were

also well above expectations. The outpouring of support is an unexpected and overwhelming surprise to Executive Director Renée Wetselaar and Madeleine Bond, Christmas and Development Coordinator.

The annual Adopt-A-Family campaign, which has been running for over 30 years, matches donors to individual families

and seniors in need, providing them with gifts, groceries and other holiday staples. With this year's global pandemic causing so much hardship for so many people around the world and here at home, the team was concerned they would see more modest donation levels.

"The response has been truly amazing," said Wetselaar.

"Through the work that we do, we see firsthand how people have been suffering on so many levels this year. And what we are seeing now with the donations coming in, is such a testament to the generosity of the people of this community."

All of these donations translate into long hours for staff and volunteers. Responding to safety requirements of COVID-19 has meant less people on site to assist with preparations but no one is complaining. "We've had to get creative with how we do things," said Bond. "For example, we limit the number of people coming in and out to pick up their hampers at any one time and make sure that people

maintain a safe distance while they wait."

While there are lots of logistics and new protocols to navigate, Bond says "if it means there are gifts under the tree and food on the table for families and seniors in need, then the effort is more than worth it."

During the first 10 days of December 2019, the Adopt-A-Family campaign raised just over \$5,000. This year, that number is over \$10,000.

"We say St. Matthew's House is where hope lives," said Wetselaar, "and it's the generosity of our community that really keeps this hope alive. We are so grateful to all of you!"

BY NANCY COOMBS



The Prophetess

"Anna, a prophetess... of a great age... departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day. And she coming in that instant gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spake of him to all..." Luke 2:36-38 (KJV)

A temple in the Temple is she. Steadfast yet faceless
Like its worn stone floor, the aged woman disappears yet pulls me closer.
Her prayers, silent but unceasing, compel me.

She eats not. Her devotion fills me.
She never leaves. Her eternal longing won't let me depart.
Spirit, spirit so divine: might thy grace fill her soul to shine?

Her veined hand grabs mine; together, we pant for our Lord.
As a couple passes their baby to a man—Simeon, she whispers—
Light and love fill her gaze, and mine.

Ah, this infant—it is He!
On her knees she falls, knobby finger pointing skyward.
Spirit, spirit so divine: might thy grace fill her soul to shine?

The woman exits, joy pulsing in her ancient feet: He has come!
Who was she? I ask.
Prophetess Anna who awaited the Messiah, the temple-goers murmur.
Lighting a candle, I thank God for the one who knew
The One who saves us.
Spirit, spirit so divine: The Prophetess saw that child was thine.



Members, friends and supporters of St. John's in Ancaster recently donated \$3,700 towards St. Matthew's House Christmas program for families. Madeline Bond, development coordinator at SMH receives the cheque with a festive spirit.

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Guest Column

Anti-Racism Awareness in our Diocesan and Church Cultures

BY THE REVEREND NAOMI KABUGI

As someone who was not born in this land, I am humbled to walk with those who have been in this longer than myself. The people of African descent have carried deep wounds and emotional traumas resulting from racism, based on the colour of their skin, their language, or place of origin. I respect the tenacity, hope, and resilience built over centuries of struggle.

The thing is, racism and discrimination is a pervasive behaviour that finds its way to negatively influence human beings against others in a numbered way, making racism the most dehumanizing behaviour worlds over. It makes cowards out of all of us, and confronting it requires a fair degree of courage and honesty.

Welcome to the diocese of Niagara anti-racism working group. As a member of this working group, I am really proud, and so should you, of our diocesan approach, attention and the urgency that speak of our diocese's commitment against racism, especially anti-black racism.

Already both clergy and lay people working in the diocese, took part in an anti-racism training in November. There are no words strong enough to describe both the process and outcome of that training, but it surely was training that was needed. There was honesty, openness, and yes pain, discomfort and even brokenness but everyone present treated each person's experiences, feelings or story with dignity.

And this is what the anti-racism working group, hopefully, can help local churches engage in a process that would lead to such outcomes.

Starting in small steps: racism and discrimination are a cultural behavior and like any culture, they are learned. Some of these steps might require working on one's attitude on racism. And truth be told, sometimes this might be uncomfortable to process. Some of this might even make you furious. But if it does, it means you are moving forward to becoming aware and doing something about it.

What not to do? Do not ask a victim of racism to retell their experiences. It does not help! It only makes them feel revictim-

ized, and helpless. Maybe by telling you of my own experience, I might help to demonstrate.

The first time I vividly experienced racism, I was already ordained in the Anglican Church of Canada. I was in someone's office. The treatment was horrifying. I first felt confused. So, I tried to explain the issue. I thought of saving the person from of the embarrassing situation we both found ourselves in. Then it dawned on me ... I realized what I was dealing with. My feeling shifted to unexplainable sadness, which redshifted to an immediate reaction of shame, total shame, and embarrassment that this was actually happening. Then I felt very confused; confused about who I am, confused about what to say, confused about what to do. The worst was still to come.

As I write this, I feel it all over again: helpless, desperate, and other feelings that I can neither explain or put in this space.

Overcome by helplessness, I started to shake with fear. I just sat there, unable to stand or walk away. By the time I went through what I call "stages of racism experience," I felt robbed of my human dignity. For a

moment I did not know who I was—like I was no longer human.

That is what racism does, it dehumanizes, and that is why, unless a victim of racism volunteers to tell his or her own story, they should not be asked to retell their experiences. By being asked to tell it, it is inviting him or her to take part in their own victimization.

Lastly, like any hard work, for it to yield a good outcome, anti-racism work must be done in freedom of the spirit, and above all, hope.

Ending with words from



Bishop Susan in her charge to the diocese, the bishop had this to say about hope, "hope is not always comforting or comfortable ... It asks us to open ourselves to what we don't know, to imagine what is beyond our imagination, and to bear what seems unbearable. That hope calls us to turn toward one another when we might prefer to turn away."

Every February, Canadians are invited to participate in Black History Month to honour the legacy of black Canadians, past and present. Learn more about black history here:

- **Black History Month**
canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/campaigns/black-history-month.html
- **Black Anglicans of Canada**
blackanglicans.ca
- **Black History Society**
blackhistorysociety.ca/
- **Being Black in Canada**
cbc.ca/news/canada/beingblackincanada
- **Guelph Black Heritage Society: Resource List**
guelphblackheritage.ca/changestartsnow

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EYES: EYES TO IDENTIFY PRIVILEGE

EARS: EARS TO LISTEN TO THE DISADVANTAGED

HEART: A HEART TO CULTIVATE EMPATHY FOR THE OPPRESSED

HANDS: HANDS TO TAKE ACTION AND MAKE A CHANGE

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MENDING THE CHASM
Addressing Racism and Culture from the Inside Out

As part of the bishop's ongoing commitment to confront racism within our diocese, clergy and lay workers participated in an all-day anti-racism training session. Look for initiatives from the diocesan anti-racism working group in the coming months.

NIAGARA ANGLICAN

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

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

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In addition to the above:
Richard Bradley (Chair)
The Venerable Bill Mous
The Reverend Canon Rob Park
Geoffrey Purdell-Lewis

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

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

Subscriptions: \$15/year.

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

Mailing address:
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252 James Street North
Hamilton Ontario L8R 2L3

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ANGLICAN DIOCESE OF NIAGARA

**CALLED TO LIFE
COMPELLED TO LOVE**



Acting a Fool

THE VENERABLE MAX WOOLAVER

A very serious decision was called for ... and quickly.

I was hurtling down a steep well-polished bannister, side-saddle, over steep marble stairs.

Only seconds before, in the hotel lobby, I had shouted to my friends, "Hey! Watch this!"

I then leapt onto the bannister—a cowboy clown in a circus.

The general shock and disbelief on the faces of those around me was just the reaction I was hoping for. This sort of thing was not usually done at a diocesan synod.

In less than five seconds the shock and disbelief were all mine. Sir Isaac Newton would have been proud to see at least three of his laws of motion playing out impeccably. It was the second of those laws that seized my mind with a violently mushrooming apprehension: the force of an object is equal to its mass times its acceleration. And I had just eaten lunch. My mass was at its peak.

Accelerating at beard bending speed, I knew I had to leap into Newton's boundless but strict universe.

As I hit the stairs my loose-fitting Birkenstocks flew off

in silent, slow motion ... now fragments from a disintegrating satellite; my arms were folded up and behind my back by the immutable forces which command deep space; I was blown across the stairs with the force of solar wind (800,000 to 5 million mph to be exact). My body came to a crimpling (not a typo), humiliating stop.

Laughter erupted from the top of the stairs while I made a silent, invisible inventory of my extremities. I ignored the weirdness telegraphed from my shoulder blades. I took my bow.

Let us leave this madness and proceed to why I have befuddled you with this portrait of idiocy.

It is quite simple: If this madman was willing to risk life and limb simply to entertain, is entertaining a serious Lenten discipline so difficult?

Is there an aspect of your 'inner' life that you have, for fear, not yet turned toward? Is there an element of your day to day life that you have delayed bringing into your walk with Christ? Are there areas of inner challenge which seem to block your deep desire to live a freer life?

Or perhaps there are 'outer' challenges you have always wanted to explore? Have you ever given a hungry person

food? Have you ever sat with someone in the waiting room of a social assistance office? Have you ever written an Amnesty International letter? Have you ever looked at Primate's World Relief and Development Fund material and wondered how you might help? Have you dared to read 'The Uninhabitable World'?

While I was thinking about all this, I remembered a conversation I had a few years ago with a really fine young man in his mid-twenties. He told me that it was easier for him to tell his friends that he was clinically depressed than it was to tell them he had begun a life of faith in Christ. I wonder what you could do to help your church help folks like him?

So, this Lent why not be a Fool for Christ instead of just a fool. Step out. Ask a question. Say hello—to your 'inner' self; say hello to your 'outer' self; do some reading; stay in silence with what you have read; find out about holy reading (*lectio divina*); ask God to guide you, to lead you ... trust what Jesus trusted; love what St. Francis loved; take yourself seriously—God does.

And don't jump on long steep, highly polished bannisters – you won't enjoy what comes next.



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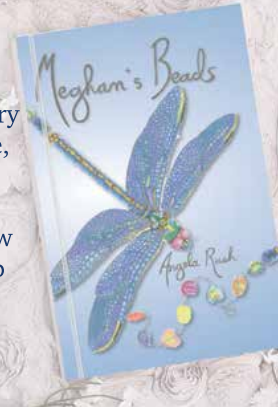
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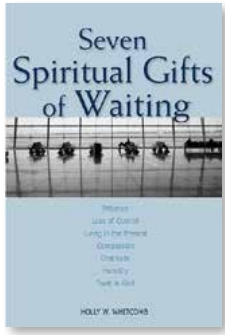
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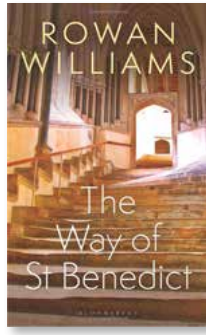


The Bishop's Lenten Books



This year, Bishop Susan Bell has chosen to recommend two books for Lent: *Seven Spiritual Gifts of Waiting* by Holly Whitcomb and *The Way of St. Benedict* by Archbishop Rowan Williams, the former archbishop of Canterbury.

A source of inspiration for the bishop's most recent charge

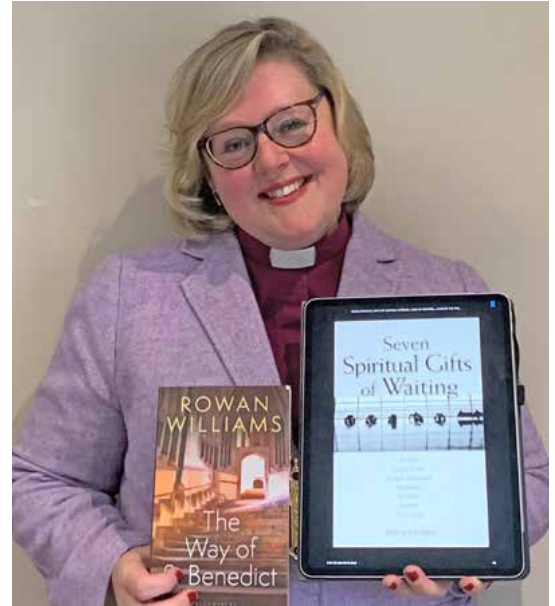


to synod, *Seven Spiritual Gifts of Waiting* is well suited to a time of pandemic, especially during the season of Lent. This book presents seven spiritual gifts that waiting can teach us: patience, loss of control, live in the present, compassion, gratitude, humility, and trust in God. Ideal for online book clubs

or studies, this book includes spiritual exercises and reflection questions.

On the other hand, the latest work by Rowan Williams, one of the bishop's favourite theologians, is recommended for individual study as a way growing in one's faith and discipleship. *The Way of St. Benedict* explores the appeal of St. Benedict's sixth-century Rule—a set of guidelines for monastic conduct—and shows it to be a document of great relevance to contemporary Christians and non-believers alike. The book speaks to the Rule's ability to help anyone live more fully in harmony with others while orienting themselves fully to the will of God.

Both books are readily available through online book suppliers at an affordable price.



Loving Mother Earth



BY SUE CARSON
Climate Justice Niagara Chair

The evening is dark and the weather outside is not inviting. Gone are those long, sunny days that helped us through the pandemic last year. But as we are reminded in Ecclesiastes chapter 3, there are seasons for every activity under the heavens.

Farmers of old knew that soil needs to recover. Crops were planted in rotation and every fourth year the land lay fallow. Modern farming uses chemicals so crops grow but the earth is dead. "A time to heal."

Ed McGaah in his book, *Mother Earth Spirituality: Native American Paths of Healing* wrote:

He [Chief Seattle] might ask, as I do, what it takes to inject a sense of urgency into this country. Do we have to tear a hole in the sky before we wake up? Well, we've done it. Do we have to see the life-giving rain be turned so acidic that it kills fish and trees and endangers human health? Well, we've done it. Do we have to watch the great seas rise, inundate our coastlines, and disrupt agricultural patterns through global warming? Well, we're doing it. Do the clouds of Chernobyl have to spew radioactivity around the globe for us to

declare enough is enough? What does it take to inject a sense of urgency? What does it take to wake up world governments to the global environmental threat? Can we not see that the miner's canary is dying – that we must save the earth if we are to save ourselves?

These words were published in 1990 and 30 years have been lost. If we had heeded Mr. McGaah's advice the world might be healthier.

One evening praying for some inspiration for writing this article I turned on my laptop. Several environmental emails bounced in. My prayers were answered.

Change.org told of orangutans dying in Borneo because the rain forests are being torn up and replaced by palm oil trees. This is not a time to tear down but a time to mend.

From the other side of the world Greenpeace is concerned about the destruction of the Amazon rainforest. This is a time to plant not to uproot.

Closer to home the Ontario Government has cancelled multiple green initiatives in the province. They are trying to take away the powers of conservation authorities and make it easier for builders to get permits. This is the same year that people have flocked

to such places for respite from pandemic restrictions on travel. A time to search.

4Ocean told me that in the US 500 million plastic, non-recyclable straws are used every day. If they were laid end to end, they would reach 2 ½ times around the earth. A time to weep.

Leadnow reminded me that the Trans Mountain pipeline is being built with our public money – we are all shareholders. A time to pick up stones.

Sumofus reported that bees are being killed in Africa with Bayer's pesticides. These are banned in Europe but are being sold in Africa. A time to mourn.

Fortunately, there was some good news from the Ontario Green Party. Dr. Dianne Saxe, former environmental commissioner, will be serving as deputy leader. A time to speak.

The National Observer reported that 7 young climate activists have been given the go ahead to pursue a lawsuit. They are fighting Ontario's weakened climate target which is a violation of their charter rights to life, liberty, and security of the person. A time to embrace.

Sir David Attenborough, in his October 2020 movie: *David Attenborough: A Life on our Planet*, visits Chernobyl and the viewer is struck with how plants, trees, and animals have

started to take up residence in a city that was declared dead.

During COVID-19 we have seen that skies are clearer with fewer planes. Rivers and seas are less polluted. Sir David believes our Earth can heal itself if only humanity would work with nature and not against it. Let our love show this month by giving Mother Earth time to mend and heal herself.

The Lenten Disciplines of an Easter Disciple

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

who follows Jesus in order to learn from him the skills of the kingdom—reconciliation, generosity, healing, passion for justice, and so on.

So how is this connected to Lent? There are two dimensions to God's work of "putting things to rights"—the personal and the societal. We often focus on the second—pursuing justice in the structures of our society—and that's essential. But the personal is equally important. What is wrong with the world is both "out there" and "in here." And the Good News is that God wants to deal with both.

In this way, being an apprentice of Jesus is different from most other apprenticeships. You can learn to be a perfectly competent plumber without your character being changed. If you are a kind person when you began your apprenticeship, hopefully you are still so by the

end. If you were a jerk when you began, well, I don't think there is anything intrinsic to a plumbing apprenticeship that will change that. But in the trade school of Jesus, personal change is right there at the heart of the learning.

Of course, facing the personal change that God wants to bring about can feel like going to the dentist—we put it off for as long as we can. (Hasn't COVID-19 been a great excuse?) But, also like going to the dentist, it really needs to be done.

Hence Lenten disciplines. Of course, no effective apprenticeship can be completed in only forty days! And apprenticeship to Jesus is in any case a 24/7, life-long business, never complete in this life. So why make a big deal of Lent? Maybe we should think of it as a six-week intensive during our apprenticeship, a time when we undertake specific,

Facing the personal change that God wants to bring about can feel like going to the dentist

personal, learning projects.

What might the Spirit bring to our attention as projects needing work? Here are some of the things that seem to be on the Teacher's personalized curriculum for me, to be worked on during Lent. You will have your own list, but maybe there is some overlap.

- Trying to take more pleasure in prayer, rather than regarding it as a chore.
- Praying specifically for the people I find most trying in my life, asking that God will bless their socks off, and help me appreciate their strength and beauty.
- Giving up some of the

things that I know I can become dependent on in an unhealthy way. (The word "Facebook" comes to mind. And Netflix. And coffee.) It could be anything that is a good servant when we treat it as a gift of God—but a harsh master when given too much authority.

The danger of Lenten disciplines, of course, is that we treat them as negative things simply to be endured for a season, after which we go back unchanged to normal life. Instead, we need to view the disciplines as a means to an end: they are one of the ways our Creator uses to shape us into the people we were meant to be.

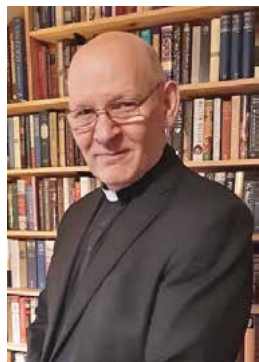
Our son Ben first trained as a jazz trumpeter, and a story from his teenage years helps me get my head around this whole thing. After some years of learning trumpet, Ben got

as a new teacher one of the top trumpet players in Canada. The teacher listened to him and said, "Ben, you're doing it all wrong. If you want to develop in your playing, you're going to have to start over, and relearn your embouchure."

Did Ben do it? He could have said, "No way. I've spent years playing this way, and I feel comfortable with it. I gotta be me. Don't cramp my style." But he didn't. He accepted the discipline recommended by his teacher and as a result was able to move ahead in his playing, way beyond where he would have got to otherwise. (I think he's pretty good these days, but I may be biased.)

Lent is the gift of a loving God who wants only the best for us. The Gospel is that God in Christ is "making all things new"—and that "all" includes making us new—in order to give us joy.

Remembering Walter: friend and story keeper



BY THE REVEREND
MICHAEL COREN

My dear friend Walter died in the second week of Advent. Kind, humble, clever Walter Hooper had entered a nursing home some months earlier and then fell victim to the dark veil of COVID-19. He was 89-years-old, and right up until his last year had been active and busy. As a young man he had worked as secretary to the great C.S. Lewis, during the last year of Lewis's life. As such he had become one of the final conduits for the author of the Narnia books, *Mere Christianity*, *The Screwtape Letters*, and so many others, whose life was dramatized in the play and movie *Shadowlands*.

The last time I saw Walter in Oxford, England he said he had a gift for me, a book. I asked him to sign it, but he said almost apologetically, "Michael, I can no longer write." I asked him what he meant. "I can no longer hold the pen." My heart broke. The gift he had used for more than five decades, the written word, was now denied him.

He was born in North

Carolina in 1931, studied in Britain, and had written to Lewis as an admirer. Lewis replied, and the two developed a friendship, and Walter became his private secretary. After Lewis's death in 1963 Walter went on to become a literary advisor to his estate, an editor of Lewis's letters and papers, and a frequent speaker at conferences on the legacy of perhaps the finest communicator of the Christian message in modern times.

Walter also knew J.R.R. Tolkien, who lived until 1973, and spoke and wrote of the friendship between Lewis and the author of *The Lord of the Rings*. Every time I went to see him, I'd ask for more anecdotes, like some glutton never full, and he wouldn't refuse. He once said to me, "I know that when people visit me from America, Australia, Japan, anywhere, what they really want to know is what was Lewis like." A pause. "And that's okay, that's okay."

In other words, he was aware that he was a point of contact for one long gone and sought after for someone else. But his invincible humility allowed that to flourish, and he embraced

it as vocation. Yet I'll always remember his delight when playing with our children, and I can't help thinking it was partly because they had no motive other than fun, and they were with "Mr. Hooper" rather than a friend of another.

We spoke of Lewis's fondness for beer and tea, his teasing of Walter over his use of American English, the decline he experienced after the death of his wife Joy, his indifference to worldly success, and of course his faith. "Not sure what he'd think of some of these modern Christians" said Walter once over an evening meal at the Trout Inn in Oxford. "They sometimes quote him but I'm not sure if they understand him." And, "he was so confident in Christ that it sometimes put me to shame. His was the faith of Peter and Paul."

Then there was the story of Lewis, a devoted member of the Church of England, attending his local church. He would always leave just as the blessing was delivered, eager to avoid attention. On one occasion he got to the old, heavy door to find it accidentally locked, and

made such a noise trying to open it that the entire congregation turned in silence to look at him. "He was red-faced most of the time" said Walter, "but that day shades of purple began to emerge."

It's painful when a friend departs, leaving an empty space in the familiar map of affection and community. It's strange and jarring, and of course just sad. It reminds us of our own mortality, and of how relatively small is the slice of time we are given. But Walter made the world a better place, influenced countless people, and helped keep alight the flame of a man he revered, and who has also influenced me more than I can say.

No more journeys to that beautiful apartment in Woodstock Close, no more pub lunches, no more sparkling smiles as another story was told. I'll pray for him but most of all I'll thank him, and I know I'll be one of many. His legacy is the love we have, and that's not bad at all. Cheers my friend. Until we meet again.

WOW Grant Recipient WOWed!

SUBMITTED BY THE PARISH

Christ Church, Wainfleet received a WOW grant two years ago to welcome community youth to a children's theatre company. Community discussions had discerned a need and an interest—and was there ever interest!

The growing troupe of 20 enthusiastic actors met weekly for rehearsals, developed skills and camaraderie, and performed an annual spring production (their first was *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*), Christmas pageant, and at community heritage festivals. TCTC (The Children's Theatre Company) was rockin' it!

And then came COVID. Rehearsals, like everything else, stopped. Sadness. For some,

being together and acting had been the highlight of their week. And they had developed a special affection for their leader, our deacon, whom they call Miss Diane and whom they now missed. But gathering together, all the youth and Deacon Diane, was now, like everything else, in limbo.

So imagine our astonishment when the Welland Tribune published its 2020 Readers' Choice Awards. Our small country parish was honoured! The Gold Readers' Choice Award for Theatre Instructor is our own deacon, "Miss Diane" Elliott!

We were gobsmacked to be part of the Welland Tribune's Readers' Choice Awards—and we imagine there are young people, parents, and community members out there smiling and nodding—and eager for COVID to be over and for rehearsals to

resume!

Since 2014 the diocesan Walking on Water (WOW) grants program has provided support and encouragement for new

ministry initiatives that renew or deepen the scope of current ministry, turning dreams into vibrant mission-centered ministries.

Below: The Children's Theatre Company, a ministry Christ Church, Wainfleet, pre-COVID. The much lauded program has been supported by a diocesan WOW grant.



Niagara School for Missional Leadership Pilots Courses

After months of discernment, planning, and hard work, the Niagara School for Missional Leadership is taking shape, and the first of two pilot courses will be offered in February.

One of the foundational elements of the diocesan Mission Action Plan (MAP) is the creation of a school for missional leadership in the diocese, as an expression of the MAP's objective to create and implement opportunities to ignite and strengthen faith.

"Through our consulta-

tions, we heard repeatedly the need for a school that teaches the broad range of missional skills that leaders both lay and ordained need in order to connect with our present culture," said Bishop Susan Bell.

Dr. John Bowen, professor emeritus of evangelism at Wycliffe College and a parishioner at St. John the Evangelist in Hamilton, will offer an introductory course on mission. Bishop Susan Bell will lead the other course, focussed on missional preaching. Both courses will be offered online,



Dr. John Bowen will offer one of the introductory courses.

run for six weeks, and involve about 10 students each.

"The school is an investment in the formation of the skills and gifts for leadership in our time," said Bishop Bell. "A select group of students have been

invited to partake in these first courses, as part of a soft launch of the school."

The aim of these first courses is to test the school's pedagogical model, receive feedback, and refine the school's approach based on the feedback of students.

As it is conceptualized, the Niagara School for Missional Leadership seeks to be rooted in missional praxis, with the basic learning tools for students being practical experience, mentoring, theological reflection, and prayer.

Two additional courses are planned for the spring, including one by Canon Ian Mobsby, newly appointed diocesan canon theologian for mission and mission enabler with the Diocese of Southwark in the United Kingdom.

"We will take full advantage of the possibilities of technology and invite people from across the world to join our team," noted the bishop.

The school's leadership team hopes to launch the school to the wider diocese in the fall of 2021.

Vestry Meetings To Be Held Virtually in 2021

With the pandemic persisting and restrictions on in-person public gatherings continuing for the foreseeable future, all vestry meetings will be conducted virtually in 2021 in accordance with new regulations approved by synod council.

"Moving to virtual vestry meetings—especially for annual vestry meetings at the beginning of the year—is about keeping people safe," said Archdeacon Bill Mous, diocesan executive officer and secretary of synod. "At the same time the decision recognizes the importance of vestry meetings in the life of our parishes and diocese."

At annual vestry meetings,

discernment about local ministry is undertaken, financial statements for the previous year are received, and churchwardens, lay representatives and parish council members are elected or appointed. In addition, a budget for the coming year is passed and any other business connected with the temporalities of the parish is transacted. The canons of the diocese specify that annual vestry meetings are to be conducted no later than March 1 of each year.

Anticipating a second wave of the pandemic, members of synod approved an amendment to Canon 4.1 in November. The change allows for regulations

related to the holding of vestry meetings to be approved by synod council.

In accordance with the new regulations, notice is to be communicated by any reasonable means available, including a verbal announcement during in-person or virtual worship services (as possible), parish-wide email or mailing, individual phone calls and/or posting on the parish website. Virtual meetings may be held by teleconference or videoconference, as most appropriate and accessible for the members of a particular vestry.

In the last year, more and more people have become accustomed to participating in virtual

meetings and online worship services. Synod council has been holding virtual meetings since April and synod convened virtually in November. Several vestry meetings have also convened in this manner since the pandemic began last March.

Many parishes will be using Zoom for their vestry meetings. The videoconferencing platform, with a telephone call-in feature, has seen widespread use in all aspects of daily living, from milestone celebrations to business meetings, weekend socials to pastoral visits.

To assist with planning for virtual vestry meetings, a special online workshop for clergy,

wardens and treasurers was organized in early January. More than 150 people participated in the event, one of several training sessions held in recent months to better equip parish leaders for ministry.

"Our governance structures help to guide, equip, and resource the missional work to which we have discerned the Spirit to be calling us to," said Archdeacon Mous during the workshop. "This important work will still happen this vestry season, creatively adapted as has been our custom since the pandemic began."

Nurturing Opportunities for Children & Youth

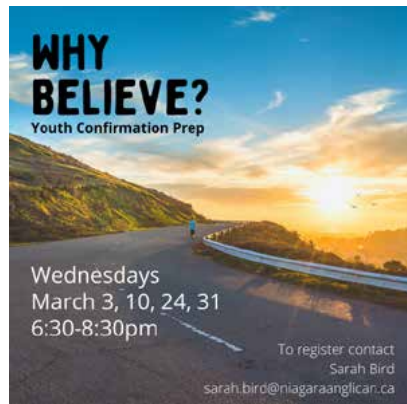
Sparking Children's Faith



Since January, the diocese has been offering weekly online "Sunday" School programming for children in grades 1 to 5 to explore scripture that follows the lectionary pattern. Gathering virtually through Zoom on Wednesdays from 4:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m., the program will

continue to run through the middle of June. These weekly lessons, offered by Children, Youth and Family Ministry leaders, promise to include faith formation, fun, creative opportunities, and a safe space to ask questions.

Why Believe? Youth Confirmation Prep



A new and exciting four-week course launches this spring for youth across the diocese. Why Believe? is not your typical confirmation class, but rather an invitation for youth who are curious or interested in exploring Christianity, the Anglican Church, sacraments, and confirmation. The weekly Zoom gatherings held Wednesdays in March (March 3, 10, 24, 31—no meeting in March Break) from 6:30-8:30pm will feature guest

speakers, including Bishop Susan Bell. Led by Donna Ellis and Sarah Bird, youth will have the opportunity to deepen their relationship with God, learn how the Holy Spirit works within our daily lives, and connect with new people. The process of this course does lead to confirmation; however, participants are free to discern whether they feel called to confirmation.

For more information about either of these programs, please email Sarah Bird, program consultant for children, youth, and family ministry at sarah.bird@niagaraanglican.ca.

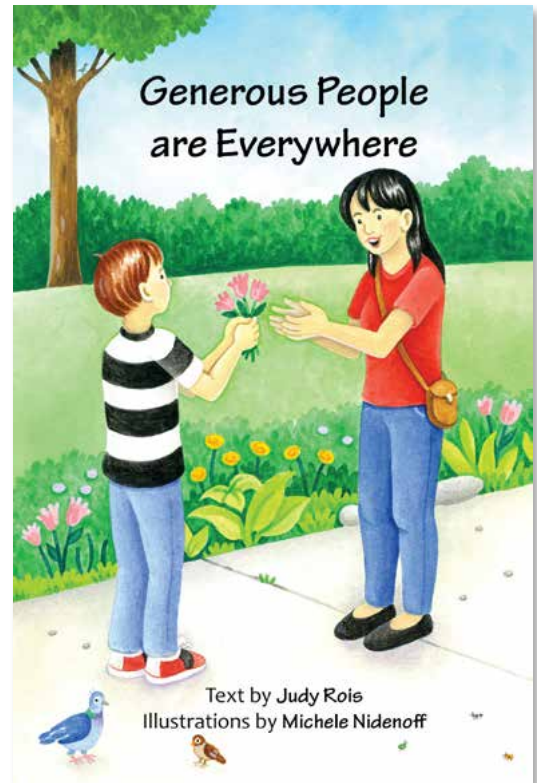
Anglican Foundation Releases New Book on Generosity Tailored for Children and Youth

"Nurturing generous-hearted living may be one of the greatest things we can do for young people," says Judy Rois, Executive Director, Anglican Foundation of Canada. After launching AFC's Generosity podcast in 2020, Canon Rois is deepening this theme in 2021, with her latest children's book, *Generous People are Everywhere*.

"This book asks simple but pointed questions such as: What is generosity? What does generosity look like? Are generous people happier?" says Rois. "These questions are really meant to be a starting point for a broader discussion. We want young people to think about generosity as a way of life: how the spirit of giving flows in them and through them to the wider world."

To get the conversation started, Rois is inviting children, families, and youth ministry leaders to consider the book as a small group or home-based study. Rois says the illustrations and text, geared to ages 8–14, make this an excellent choice for Lent. "I can imagine this book being used by families, at meals or other gathering times, to stimulate a conversation about an important spiritual topic that has the potential to be transformational in a child's life."

In addition to encouraging children and youth to read the



book, the Foundation wants to include their voices in recorded interviews to be featured in Foundation Forward, a podcast inviting Canadians to talk about generosity.

Generous People are Everywhere is Canon Rois' third collaboration with illustrator

and artist Michele Nidenoff. It follows on the heels of *Children's Prayers with Hope Bear* and *Dear God: Prayers for Young Children*.

To order *Generous People are Everywhere*, visit the Anglican Foundation of Canada store at: anglicanfoundation.org/store/

In Memoriam: Canon Judy Dodman 1938-2020



With great sadness, we share the news that Canon Judy Dodman has passed away.

In a ministry which spanned seven bishops, Judy faithfully served in several roles at the diocesan synod office, beginning during the episcopacy of Bishop Walter Bagnall. She served as personal secretary to Bishop Clarence Mitchell; registrar of the diocesan Marriage Commission and office manager at Cathedral Place; coordinator of the Division of Outreach; interim director of Canterbury Hills; and as Secretary of Synod.

A faithful member of the former parish of Holy Trinity, Hamilton, and more recently Church of the Resurrection, Hamilton, Judy was particularly passionate about three things: her family, her faith, and the Hamilton Tiger Cats.

Bishop Susan Bell paid tribute to Canon Judy Dodman's extraordinary and outstanding contributions to the life and ministry of the diocese of Niagara during a funeral service held at Church of the Resurrection, Hamilton on November 27, 2020.

Hindsight is 2020, Foresight is 2021

**BY THE REVEREND
DEACON DIANE ELLIOT**

Just where is God out there ahead of us in all of this?

For seafarers who traveled through the Port of Hamilton this past holiday season, most of whom could not come ashore because of the pandemic, God was in the gift of a handmade quilt with a history of love and compassion that dates back to March 1946.

That was when Canadian Lutheran World Relief (CLWR) was created to help support the basic needs of displaced Europeans following the Second World War by shipping food, clothing and bedding.

We Care, their "long-standing and beloved commodity shipment program," had for decades "provided comfort and care to tens of thousands of people" around the world. Then COVID-19 arrived, and the ensuing travel restrictions brought steep challenges to the shipping industry. Shipping We Care's commodities was not going to be possible. What was the best use of these goods?

CLWR reached out to its local networks to assess needs across Canada, and Pastor Dan Phannenhour, the Chaplain for our Mission to Seafarers in the Port of Hamilton, answered the call. Pastor Dan arranged to pick up over a thousand quilts.

For us at the Mission in Hamilton and for those we serve, COVID-19 has been



Above: Faith Lutheran Church Brantford Quilters

Below: Crew of the Stella Polaris with quilts



very real. Seafarers have been especially hard hit. For an industry that already struggles with social isolation, COVID-19 presents even greater challenges. Many employees are suffering extended contracts because of infrequent crew changes. Lockdowns result in the inability to return home, and workloads have increased due to a greater demand on the world's supply chain.

In many very real ways these

men and women are displaced persons. Fresh food, medical supplies, and even accessible Wi-Fi are not as available during the pandemic. Communication with friends and family is sadly limited, and extended stays by vessels waiting to get a space at the dock to load and unload or receive a needed part for a repair are not unusual.

Seafarers living and working in these trying conditions, in these trying times, come in all



shapes and sizes from all over the world and travel all over the world. They work in some of the most extreme and dangerous places, in some of the most extreme and dangerous weather, carrying tons and tons of cargo, some of which is very dangerous. They are strong, serious, and – in all honesty – salty. Handmade quilts for seafarers?

Knit hats, scarves, toiletries, and chocolate are traditionally what the Mission to Seafarers gives out and are always welcomed with a smile and a "thank you," gifts that they can use immediately or stuff into a pocket and carry easily onto that plane that will someday take them home. But a handmade quilt, made by church ladies (and the occasional gentleman who every quilting group cherishes)?

Hindsight is 2020. Yes, handmade quilts, hundreds of them, are where God was and is. Quilts made with love and compassion. God's handiwork.

Quilts wrapped seafarers with warmth and comfort and all the colors of the rainbow. Quilts touched tough, sometimes homesick, seafarers with love from the caring hands of those who made them, often bringing tears of hope, of faith, and of joy.

Those quilts provided foresight for 2021 that God is indeed out there ahead of us!

We at the Mission to Seafarers in the Port of Hamilton are deeply grateful to We Care and the CWLR for their dedication, compassion, and love. May God continue to be upon us in our caring, prospering the works of our hands and our handiwork (Psalm 90:17).

Below: Deacon Diane delivers quilts to the crew of the Blacky.



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The Pandemic Church

We'll never forget this pandemic year,
The virus brought with it isolation and fear.
We all washed our hands fifty times every day.
And all that we wanted was for it just to go away!

But let's take a moment and not look at the bad,
Let's look at the moments when we were made glad.
Let's remember the ways that we all stayed in touch
And telling our friends we missed hugging so much!

For months the church building wasn't open for prayer
But we reached out to each other with kindness and care.
Let's look at the way that we knew day by day,
That Jesus was with us and it would all be okay.

When the churches reopened many things must be changed
No common cup, no singing and seating arranged.
Yet still in our midst Jesus' light brightly shone.
And we realized... only the trimmings were gone.

Each day morning prayer was sent to us all,
Our Rector was there staying true to his call.
Bible Study continued but was now e-mail sent
And Spiritual Communion became a cherished event.

Our churches were closed once again mid-December
This year will be one we will always remember
And although we're not open the church bells still ring,
As together apart we welcome our King.

For we are His church and not the buildings that hold us
We are His children and his love will uphold us
The Light of His presence shines brightly each day,
And the warmth of His love will show us the way.

So just maybe the pandemic has taught us some good,
About loving and caring as Jesus taught us, we should.
That Jesus is with us all the time everyday
And no pandemic or crisis can ever keep him away.

By Bev Groombridge,
Rector's Warden
The Church of Our Saviour The Redeemer.

All Parishes Moved to Lockdown as COVID-19 Cases Surge

Shortly before Christmas, Bishop Susan Bell suspended all permissions previously granted for parishes to re-open for in-person worship in accordance with the Amber Stage of the ecclesiastical province's pandemic re-opening framework, in advance of a province-wide lockdown which took effect on Boxing Day.

The decision was made in the midst of dire provincial COVID-19 modelling data. Dr. Barbara Yaffe, associate chief medical officer of health, noted that the province is facing "a challenging and precarious situation." Dr. Yaffe added that the earlier work starts to reduce the number of people interacting, the lower the number of cases, ICU admissions, and ultimately deaths.

"I share your pain in moving to a lockdown position yet again," wrote Archdeacon Bill Mous, diocesan executive officer, in an email message to clergy and lay leaders announcing the decision. "Our sacrifice, however, is made for the common good and in keeping with the God-centred vision of our diocese, that in all things we are called to life and compelled to love."



By January, all public health units within the diocese were reporting more than 100 weekly cases of COVID-19 per 100,000 people. As the number of cases grow, the health care system is under increasing strain – as evidenced by a field hospital unit which has been activated at Joseph Brant Hospital in Burlington to serve the region.

The new lockdown ministry guidelines issued by Bishop Susan Bell include:

- church buildings being closed to the public, except for the operation of licensed day care centres, where permitted by the Ministry of Education;
- occasional and time-limited access to church buildings being permitted only in limited and essential circumstances;
- pastoral care being provided primarily by remote means for all but essential visits and/or

emergency care;

- in-person worship not being permitted, except for the purposes of producing online worship services; and
- all weddings, funerals, and baptisms being postponed, except in rare and exceptional circumstances, by permission of the regional archdeacon.

The new measures will be in effect for the foreseeable future, until such time as local case numbers recede, and new guidelines are issued by the bishop.

The province's chief medical officer of health advises Ontarians to "stay home to the fullest extent possible." Trips outside of the home during lockdown should be limited to the community in which one resides and only for essential purposes such as accessing health care and medication, grocery shopping, or supporting vulnerable people.

Parishioners are invited to visit the diocesan Facebook Page (facebook.com/niagaraanglican) or YouTube channel (youtube.com/niagaraanglican) for online worship with Bishop Susan Bell on Sundays, if online parish services are not available.




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Celebrity Break-Ups & The Body of Christ

THE REVEREND CANON MARTHA TATARNIC

My daughter and I had been watching the Instagram feed of one celebrity couple over the holidays, hoping for an engagement. Instead, they broke up on New Year's Eve. Cecilia and I were both crushed. It's been a rough year for the few areas of celebrity culture which I follow. Harry and Meghan left their jobs in the Royal Family, then they left Canada too. Princes Harry and William had a public falling out. And the demise of the love story of this power couple from our favorite reality tv show was just one in a long line of supposed fairytale romances toppled by 2020.

In each of these cases, I felt a personal sense of shock and loss. No matter how irrational it is to care about people simply because they are beautiful and famous, it never fails to feel like a slap in the face when the carefully constructed and shimmering curtain that covers our celebrities and their relationships gets pulled aside.

Alongside the sense of loss though, I found myself asking a question. I know these feelings are silly. But I also know I'm not alone in feeling personally invested in the lives of people I don't know. The fact that people like me feel this way is the cornerstone of the whole celebrity machine. Although my feelings might be silly, they are worth examining.

In the blockbuster teen novel, *The Outsiders*, one of the characters, Two-Bit, gripes about losing his switchblade in the confusion following two of his best friends dying. One of his other friends snaps at him, "Is that all that's bothering you, that switchblade?"

Two-Bit's answer is telling. "No," he says, "but that's what I'm wishing was all that's bothering me."

There is something in Two-Bit's response that offers insight into our collective celebrity obsession. I buried dozens of beloved members of my church last year; my husband's grandmother was diagnosed with COVID-19 before Christmas; I wasn't with most of my nearest and dearest for the holidays; we are all living in a landscape of fear, uncertainty, disease, division and death. Grief for the break-up of people I don't know provides a buffer to a sadness that can be so overwhelming that dealing with it is like trying to drink water from a firehose. Mourning the tattered relationships of reality tv stars and the Royal Family is a way of allowing my grief to be processed more like a water fountain.

In a weird way, I find that the church can act as a similar emotional buffer, even as it ultimately seeks to dismantle any barriers we put up around our hearts. One of my colleagues noted for me when I was first starting out in parish ministry that it tends to be people in their middle-aged years who get most upset about change in the church. Their lives are busy, they are juggling intense demands—as providers, as caregivers, as employees and employers, as people trying to make their mark and people coming to terms with their mortality. They do in spades what all of us at any stage of life can get easily seduced into doing: we attach ourselves to the picture of what religious faith and the religious community should be.

We invest ourselves in a static idea of how worship should go, how our buildings should be set up, how we hope people will act and what we want our leaders to sound and look like. When the reality of the whole thing breaks that picture (change is the constant in Church Land too, and at the end of the day church-goers are just people and so are our

leaders) we can feel crushingly disappointed. Inevitably this disappointment gets amplified when what we actually desperately feel, like Two-Bit, is that it would be nice if that one problem of how things get done in the community of faith were really the only thing off-kilter in our lives.

Caitlyn Chiarelli, a fellow writer and parishioner of St. George's, shared a reflection with me recently, in which she made the radical and simple claim that God is calling us all to be part of the church. She made it clear that she leaves room in that statement for other faith expressions the world over and that she respects the light of God's love in religious traditions different from our own. What she meant though is that every single human being is called to learn to love in the way that Jesus taught and that the church, the Body of Christ allows. She noted her own struggle with having certain expectations of religion that then get dashed and wishing that the church, and especially the people in it, were "perfect and neat." But then she wrote:

I think we are all called to "the church" because this is the place where we open ourselves to a wider circle of love, and force ourselves into those uncomfortable places; this is what love asks of us ... this is what Jesus did. I am not sure we can fully love the way God intended without "the church." The imperfect, messy church.

Jesus' command to his followers, just hours before his death, was that we love one another. We know that if Christians are to be about anything, it is love. But that's the other thing about both celebrity relationships and the Body of Christ: we'd like love to be simpler than it is. We would like "happily ever after" to be as effortless as the end of a Disney movie suggests it to be.

We would like to put people on pedestals and believe through them that goodness and God work through people's lives in ways that we can keep at arm's length from the more complex realities of our own experience. Glossy and filtered pictures, as well as nostalgic and sentimental ideas, of how human beings can be with one another are enormously appealing, even if they always end up being revealed as false or incomplete. The reality of love is that all of us make mistakes and each of us will one day die. There is no way of opening our hearts to one another without loss and fragility and pain.

And as hard as it is to accept this starting premise, as much as we all want to, at one time or another, latch onto a prettier, simpler and more stable version of love, the great thing is that if we follow that calling, which Caitlyn suggests is universal, and we allow ourselves to be claimed by the life of the church, then we also get to be claimed by Jesus.

Jesus disruptively centered his ministry around eating with the rejects of society. Jesus saved his most terrifying parables and most blistering teachings for those, like the rich man in the parable with Lazarus, who walk



by and refuse to see themselves as related to the suffering of others. Jesus enacted a ministry, not by himself, but with a cobbled together assortment of desperate people—fishermen, demagogues, widows, tax collectors, and Samaritans—out of whom he saw, named and called forth gifts for revealing the Kingdom of God. If we are uncertain of what real love might look and feel like, we have Jesus showing us the way.

And then we have Jesus continuing to show us. Jesus keeps shredding those glossy pictures of human life, religious piety, and what it is to love. More importantly, he then promises to take our hand and never let us go, daring us to open our hearts anyway, with us every step of the way in discovering again that the cross-shaped way of costly love is really the way of life.

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- May – March 29
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(books, films, music, theatre)
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- 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.

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St. Mark's, Orangeville organized a Christmas Day drive/walk-through lunch for pick-up by community members in need of a Christmas meal.

Photo: Archdeacon Peter Scott



The Church of the Apostles (St. James & St. Matthias) in Guelph has years of experience with curbside pick-up of Christmas trees. After only 9 days of selling their last balsam fir headed out of the church parking lot destined to bring joy to someone's home.

Photo: Church of the Apostles, Guelph



Above: Migrant Farmworkers Project - a committed team of volunteers drawn from local parishes and the surrounding community continue to make the grocery deliveries to migrant farm workers throughout the Niagara peninsula.

Photo: Migrant Farmworkers Project

Right: St. James and St. Brendan's, Port Colborne has been running its usually season Out of the Cold program on an ongoing basis due to the increased need arising from the pandemic. While the volunteers have not been able to serve meals in the Guild Hall, individuals pick up the pre-made meals for themselves or their families.

Photo: St. James and St. Brendan's, Port Colborne.



Above: St. Luke's, Palermo continue to run its weekly Nourishing Neighbours food program = for all who need food assistance.

Photo: St. Luke's, Palermo



Below: St. John's, Hamilton held an online art auction to raise funds for the newcomer they recently welcomed to Canada. Items included this piece, Awake and Dreaming by Tom Wilson – Oil on Wood (Yamaha Guitar C-310). The auction raised over \$15,000 to support their refugee sponsorship.

Photo: St. John's, Hamilton



Above: Ecumenical Campus Ministry (ECM) at the University of Guelph delivered Advent Care packages to students to help them through the isolation of the pandemic and stress of exams.

Left: St. James, Dundas collected over 300 winter coats, which were safely distributed to people who needed one to stay warm in Hamilton this winter.

Photo: St. Matthew's House, Hamilton.