

Steve Paikin Joins the Bishop

for an Evening Online Conversation on May 26.

Page **3**



Niagara School for Missional Leadership

Pilots Winter & Spring Courses.

Page **7**



Not Your Great Grandmother's Alpha

Learning online about Christianity.

Page **9**



A section of the Anglican Journal



NIAGARA ANGLICAN



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

MAY 2021

Ignite: Faith in the Future

This is the evocative and hope-filled name of a refreshed stewardship initiative within our diocese to support the many ministries and programs shared by parishes and those we serve.

"The Church was born of fire," writes Bishop Susan Bell, "just as tongues of fire descended on the disciples in the upper room at Pentecost, and they were given the gift of the Holy Spirit to go and join and carry-on God's mission of love in the world, we are commissioned in the same way to carry that mission forward."

Ignite: Faith in the Future brings together our efforts to support for children, youth and families; refugees, migrant farmworkers, under one banner, with fewer asks for support and stronger and

improved communications. Missional endeavours such as the Chinese Anglican Mission in Oakville, as well as faith formation, truth and reconciliation and anti-racism activities will also be supported through this initiative.

Bishop Bell says the new name also makes a bold commitment. "It's a statement of confidence in God's church - that the ministries we support with intention now will flourish long into the future. It is also a statement that faith is being ignited in and through works of love and mercy in our parish communities up and down the diocese."

Through the pandemic, it has been clear that there are many

generous people in the diocese who want to support their parish as well as the wider diocesan community, something which was heard through surveys and the town halls held to inform the diocesan Mission Action Plan.

The name Ignite and its tagline, Faith in the Future, were chosen through a survey shared with a variety of people from across our diocese, including licensed lay workers and clergy, diocesan committee volunteers, synod council members, and parishioners.

"Ignite is a great metaphor," said one survey respondent. "It's one we already use in everyday speech, like, 'Ignites my imagination.' It's lively, dramatic, and punchy. With the tagline of 'Faith in the Future,' it's us in the present with having faith in our future, and it's a look at what faith may look like in the future."

Quarterly updates along with Niagara Anglican articles and a dedicated website will provide timely information on the impact parishes, individual volunteers, and donors are making through these ministries and programs we as a diocese are committed to. Updates will also provide information on ways parishes and individuals can participate in supporting these initiatives, be that through their time, skills, finances, or a combination of these.

Like other Anglican dioceses and federated charities, such as the United Way, having one banner for many ministries and programs will simplify and improve communications and reporting. It will also prevent confusion and the many different appeals for support.

Through this renewed approach to diocesan stewardship, guided by Gillian Doucet Campbell, Ignite: Faith in the Future will offer parishes and

parishioners regular updates and an easy way to support the many ways God at work in and through and beyond the diocese.

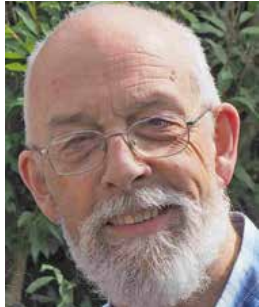
"To ignite something is to bring together fuel and fire. It's to create illumination and energy. It speaks of intention —our intention to share the Gospel through works of faith in our diocese—to ignite the love of neighbour that we know lives in human hearts and is drawn out and blessed by Jesus," observed Bishop Bell. "Giving to support this initiative is another way to bless the communities we are in."

To learn more about the many ministries and programs featured through the Ignite or to sign up for the quarterly newsletter please visit ignitefaithniagara.ca.



In Other Words

Discipleship and Mission: How do They Relate?



BY DR. JOHN BOWEN

Just the other day, I was challenged about the idea of "mission" and being "missional." My friend said, "You can't put mission before discipleship." He cited a well-known missional leader, Mike Breen, who wrote an article a couple of years ago with the startling title, "Why the Missional Movement Will Fail." Let me give you the flavour of it:

It's time we start being brutally honest about the missional movement that has emerged in the last ten to fifteen years: Chances are better than not it's going to fail.

That may seem cynical, but I'm being realistic. There is a reason so many movements in the Western church have failed in the past century:

They are a car without an engine.

A missional church or a mis-

sional community or a missional small group is the new car that everyone is talking about right now, but no matter how beautiful or shiny the vehicle, without an engine, it won't go anywhere.

So what is the engine of the church? Discipleship. I've said it many times: If you make disciples, you will always get the church. But if you try to build the church, you will rarely get disciples. (You will find the full article at www.vergenetwork.org)

Strong language! After all I have written about the importance of mission, and since I have just taught a course called Mission 101, it may surprise you to know that I think he's right. At least 66.6% right. Let me tell you about the two-thirds that I agree with and about the one-third where I think he's wrong.

One way that Breen challenges us is that we may turn to the idea of "mission" as a way to save our church. More than once, I have heard church people say, "How can we get more people in the pews?" and (even more often) "How can we attract more young people?"

But this is where Breen is correct. If our goal is survival, the car lacks an engine. Jesus is highly unsympathetic to the idea of survival. Remember his words: "Those who want to save

their life [i.e., those who want to survive] will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it." (Mark 8:35). So, we need to abandon that idea.

According to Jesus, just trying to survive isn't going to work. In fact, it's counter productive. It only guarantees that we will die.

So maybe we need to ask, what is the "engine" Mike Breen refers to?

He says the engine of mission is discipleship. That's partly true. But I want to go deeper. Why? Because the idea of discipleship can also be a way of grasping at straws to save us from drowning. "What we need is a discipleship course!" And that's not going to work either, because discipleship isn't a program to help us survive, any more than mission is.

Here's the deal. We won't understand either mission or discipleship unless we first understand the Gospel, the Good News announced by Jesus. The core of our problem is that we don't really know what the Gospel is. I have been told, for example, that the Gospel is the command to love our neighbour as ourselves. I'm not sure in what sense that is good news for anyone, either my neighbour or me. One church decided that, since their neighbourhood was

always pleased when the annual garage sale was announced, that was the good news for them and their neighbours. But I have a feeling Jesus had a little more than garage sales in mind when he announced the Gospel.

You know the problem with this kind of answer? They are about us and what we do. We have lost sight of one absolutely fundamental dimension: the Gospel begins with God and comes from God. It's not even about the good news that our Creator loves us—although that itself is a breath-taking surprise, something we would never have figured out for ourselves. It's about the fact that this amazing love of God is at work in the world to deal with sin and suffering, with evil and oppression. Jesus says this work is like yeast working in a loaf, invisible but powerful. And (as Christians understand it) that healing love of God is focussed in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. That's truly Good News: that God is this kind of a God, that God is doing this kind of thing.

Once we grasp that, the rest makes sense. "Mission" is just a fancy word made up by theologians to describe this work of God. And "discipleship" is simply our response to God's gracious invitation to join in this work by becoming apprentices of Jesus.

So what about a "missional church"? One that is committed to the mission of God. A "missional leader"? One who leads their congregation in following the leadership of our missional God.

To put Mike Breen's point another way: you can't participate in this work of God without apprenticing yourself to Jesus. Otherwise, you are like a teenager who refuses the offer of an apprenticeship and tries instead to teach himself plumbing by a process of trial and error. Frankly, that's not someone I'm going to call when my toilet is blocked.

But here's my final reservation about his argument. You can't separate discipleship and mission quite so simply. You don't learn to be a disciple just through a study group, any more than you can learn to be a plumber by attending lectures on plumbing. Neither do you spend a year learning discipleship, then change gears and get involved in mission. The two are inextricably woven together. A plumbing apprenticeship alternates classroom learning and on-the-job training. The two things are symbiotic.

Disciples engage in mission. And engaging in mission shapes disciples. It's as simple as that.

Bishop Advocates for Social Assistance Increase

In a recent letter to local Members of Provincial Parliament, Bishop Susan Bell urged legislators from all political parties to use their voices to speak out in favour of an increase to Ontario social assistance rates.

"In doing so, you will help uphold the dignity of some of our most economically vulnerable neighbours in our communities," wrote the bishop. Over 900,000 people in Ontario rely on social assistance.

Ontario social assistance amounts for individuals are currently pegged at \$733 (Ontario Works) and \$1169 (Ontario Disability Support Program) per month, which equates to levels that are only at 41% and 65% of Canada's poverty line.



Bishop Susan Bell was one of several social auditors from a variety of backgrounds, from faith community leaders and academics to Chamber of Commerce staff and not-for-profit leaders."

The Bishop's letter suggests that these rates should increase in line with the Canada Emergency Response Benefit, which identified \$2,000 as a basic income for

Canadians during the pandemic.

Two years ago, Bishop Bell participated in a local effort to hear the stories of people living with social assistance as well as

the experience of people who participated in Hamilton's Basic Income Pilot Project. Deirdre Pike, diocesan program consultant for justice and outreach, co-authored a report about that effort, entitled *A Brief Flowering of Hope*.

"Their experiences showed us very clearly how the social assistance system was in need of great repair and, even more, how a new system providing an income floor to everyone could be the tool most in need," said Bishop Bell.

At the same time, the bishop says that the pandemic has only exacerbated the needs she heard expressed at the time, especially given rising food prices.

"We all realize that the pandemic has been intensified

by the poor living conditions of low-income people: they are forced to live in crowded accommodation, use public transit, and go to foodbanks to supplement their diet," noted Bishop Bell. "Their health was already compromised by inadequate nutrition before the pandemic, and their communities have the highest levels of COVID-19 infections and deaths."

The diocese has long advocated for an increase to social assistance rates, in solidarity and partnership with local poverty groups, the Interfaith Social Assistance Reform Coalition (ISARC) and others committed to a world where poverty is no more.

To read the *A Brief Flowering of Hope* report, visit: <http://www.sprc.hamilton.on.ca/>

Steve Paikin Joins the Bishop for Online Conversation

Bishop Susan Bell is delighted to announce that Steve Paikin will be her featured guest for a special online event on Wednesday May 26th at 7:30pm, in support of the important work of the Bishop's Company Endowment Fund.

"I am very much looking forward to discussing current affairs, including the pandemic with Steve," said Bishop Bell. "He has his finger on the pulse of our province and its issues, and a unique political memory that few journalists can rival."

Born in Hamilton, Steve Paikin is a well-regarded Canadian journalist, author, and documentary producer. Paikin joined TVOntario (TVO), Ontario's public broadcaster, in 1992 after having reported for

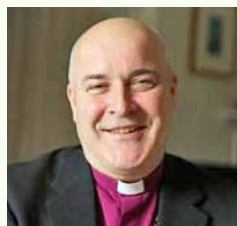
the CBC, CBLT-TV, the Hamilton Spectator and CHFI. He is currently the anchor of TVO's flagship current affairs program The Agenda with Steve Paikin. In addition to being a Hamilton Tiger-Cats fan, Paikin serves as the chancellor of Laurentian University in Sudbury and has received several honorary degrees from universities and colleges, including McMaster University and Mohawk College. He is also an officer of the Order of Canada and member of the Order of Ontario.

"I believe these events are an important way to share fellowship with our members, to hear stories of ministries from those in our wider community, and to hear about the impact we are making through the generous

support of donors," said Bishop Bell.

This special online event is free for members of the Bishop's Company, however, it is also open to the general public as well. Both memberships and tickets can be purchased online through the diocesan website.

Membership in the Bishop's Company enables the Bishop to assist clergy and lay workers, as well as their families, navigate unexpected needs and receive crisis support. The Bishop's Company Endowment Fund also supports, from time to time, initiatives that seek to respond to desperate human need with Christ's loving-kindness beyond the diocese.



Looking Ahead

Archbishop Stephen Cottrell will be the Bishop's special guest for this year's annual event for members of the Bishop's Company.

Archbishop Cottrell serves as the 98th Archbishop of York, Primate of England, and ex-officio member of the House of Lords. He is the author of more than 20 books, including On

Priesthood: Servants, Shepherds, Messengers, Sentinels and Stewards. In 2019, he was the featured speaker of the diocesan clergy and licensed lay workers conference. When not leading the Church of England, he enjoys poetry, music and art. He has also undertaken several walking pilgrimages, including twice walking the

Camino to Santiago de Compostela in Spain, as well as pilgrim routes in England.

Archbishop Cottrell will join Bishop Bell for a not-to-be-missed online conversation during the evening of November 15. To become a member of the Bishop's Company, visit: <https://niagaraanglican.ca/bishops-company>



Family Lenten Activities: Pretzels!

Sydney and Kenzie of St. John's, Ancaster enjoyed making Lenten Pretzels as part of a special Lenten Box created by Donna Ellis and several children, youth and family leaders from across the diocese.

Pretzel making dates back to a young monk in the early 600's who, as legend has it, made pretzels rolling the dough into strips and crossing it over to emulate "little arms crossed over your heart in prayer."

As part of their Lenten focus for the week, the children were invited to light a candle which symbolized love and then to bake and eat their delicious pretzels.



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.

Publisher: Bishop Susan Bell
905-527-1316
bishop@niagaraanglican.ca
Acting Editor: The Venerable Bill Mous
editor@niagaraanglican.ca
Advertising: Angela Rush
905-630-0390
niagaraanglican.ads@gmail.com
Art Director: Craig Fairley
Imagine Creative Communications
Proofreader: The Reverend John Ripley

Niagara Anglican Publication Board:
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.

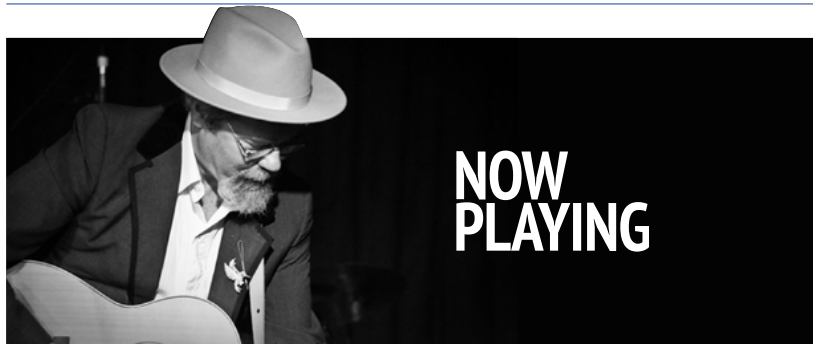
Mailing address:
Cathedral Place
252 James Street North
Hamilton Ontario L8R 2L3

For a complete staff directory and more information, visit the diocesan website: niagaraanglican.ca



ANGLICAN
DIOCESE OF
NIAGARA

**CALLED TO LIFE
COMPELLED TO LOVE**



Dream, Children, Angel, Cross

(In honour of Pentecost)

BY THE VENERABLE MAX WOOLAVER

The church hall was filled with children—running, skipping, letting loose—how easily children get back up on their feet!

There were street folks too—'psychiatric survivors'—one man had fastened lengths of multi-coloured wire to his four limbs ... another man had a particularly fearsome aspect ... we locked eyes and stared at one another long enough for me to see that he couldn't mean any harm ... a young woman had stuffed a pillow under her dress pretending to be pregnant ... (to protect herself on the street?) in the daytime she flooded IBM HQ with love letters to the CEO ... young drifters slept outside on

the ground ...

Were there gang members? Were there hidden weapons? There were waves of feeling—joy, exuberance, flashes of beauty...and then waves of anxiety...is this a church? Where are we exactly?

And then—I was playing floor hockey ... I was stretched out full length on the floor stopping a ball from going into the net... playing with kids—innocently, earnestly ...

After the game—I looked around needing to figure out where I was ...

I pushed the big doors open and walked outside and began to walk slowly down the street.

From behind me a short, portly man came running with his necktie flapping ... he put his arms around my shoulders and held me close as we walked

side by side. He told me it was wonderful to see how I played with the children ... that it was a beautiful thing to see ... to play so joyously.

His warm and loving purity communicated a sense of the angelic ... I felt he was an angel. His warmth and affirmation clothed my inner being ... a kind of holiness.

I awoke at some point in the darkness of an early hour. The tall wardrobe with two mirrors reflected light from the street. My eyes, watery with sleep, refracted this light into a tall, delicate, lace-like cross. The cross pulsated in the watery light and spun domes of precisely interlocking arches—the shape of the eye.

The experience of this 'dream, children, street folk, angel' and the reflected light I found to be deeply moving.

I took it to be a COVID dream. Beneath the anxiety there is an angelic arm on the shoulder—comforting, affirming, loving.

The following words are from Poetry by Pablo Neruda, the great Chilean poet. They evoke Pentecost for me:

... and suddenly I saw
the heavens
unfastened
and open,
planets,
palpitating plantations,
shadow perforated,
riddled
with arrows, fire and flowers,
the winding night, the universe.
And I, infinitesimal being,
drunk with the great starry
void,
likeness, image of
mystery,
felt myself a pure part
of the abyss,
I wheeled with the stars,
my heart broke loose on the wind.



Senior Assistance at its best!

We take care of all the things that you are unable to do.

- Light House Cleaning
- Errands, Shopping
- Pick Up Prescriptions
- Taking Pet to Groomers, Vet, Kennel
- Arranging & Driving to Dr. Appointments
- Appointment Scheduling

Our services also include a Companionship Program for your senior relatives. We accompany them on outings to the mall, the coffee shop and/or spend quality time with them at home.

Serving Burlington, Oakville, Toronto and surrounding areas.



Call Caroline today to get a quote!
Toll Free: 1-866-271-6653
Toronto: 647-895-7079

Caroline@barwoodconcierge.com



Craig Knapman
BROKER OF RECORD/OWNER, BA (ECS)
431 Concession Street
Hamilton, Ontario L9A 1C1
Fax: 905.574.0026
e-mail: craigknapman@realtynetwork.biz



www.realtynetwork.biz

Direct: 905.541.8820
Office: 905.389.3737



Church of St. John the Evangelist



Director of Choral Music

St. John's Elora in the Diocese of Niagara is seeking a Director of Music to lead one of Canada's only fully professional church choirs. St. John's choral music program has a strong regional outreach, online presence, and recording discography. This is an exciting opportunity for a choral leader who can work collaboratively with parish leadership to inspire excellence in the expression of an Anglican musical tradition and practice for singers.

Application Deadline: June 15.
For a full job posting description visit www.stjohnselora.ca.



Make a Smart Investment, choose Pollard

Pollard offers great windows and doors of exceptional value. With 70 years of Canadian manufacturing, you can trust Pollard for expert advice and professional installation.



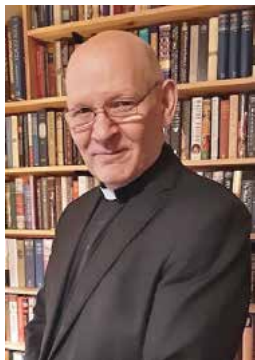
Call **1.800.585.5561**
POLLARDWINDOWS.COM

I'm known for making smart investments which is why I chose Pollard for my home.

SCOTT MCGILLIVRAY
HGTV HOST & REAL ESTATE EXPERT



Abiding with Jesus



BY THE REVEREND
MICHAEL COREN

When I was a small boy, I spent a great deal of time with my grandpa. He was nothing special to most people but everything special to me. Grandpa, Dave Schneider, was patient, strong, and kind. He liked his whiskey—a habit he'd picked up during the war—and at Christmas time after he'd had a drink or two, I'd always hear him humming or singing the same tune.

I didn't know at the time what it was but my mother told me later it was a hymn called 'Abide

With Me." Nothing odd about that I suppose, other than it wasn't a Christmas song and also that grandpa was Jewish. Intensely secular, cynical about all religion, but still Jewish. It was only after his death that I discovered what all of this was about. Grandpa had spent almost four years in the army in the Second World War, rising up the ranks until he was a senior sergeant. Most of the men who had been in his original unit were dead by 1944.

In one of the last engagements in which he took part, Dave and his men sat waiting for the shooting, the anger, and the pain to begin when one of them, a 19-year-old Welsh infantryman, began to sing. Many of the other soldiers joined in. Then the singing stopped and the combat began, and by the end of the fight some of them were dead; including that young Welshman.

The song he had been singing was "Abide With Me," and the battle took place at Christmas. Grandpa Dave never forgot and either out of tribute, sorrow, or something beyond our under-

standing, he kept that fallen warrior's memory alive each year. Grandpa is gone now but I still feel his presence and I, too, still sing that song to myself.

"Abide with me; fast falls the eventide; The darkness deepens; Lord with me abide. When other helpers fail and comforts flee, Help of the helpless, O abide with me."

Christmas was months ago, that holy mystery disguised and perhaps disfigured in tinsel, shopping, and lights, but its meaning continues. It's less about remembering the birth of Christ than living as if that birth changed us and changed the world. Because if it didn't the entire story is pointless. And that story should, if properly understood, oblige us to create a culture of kindness, a form of organized goodness, and thus to rehome a society gone lazy in its sense of fairness and indifferent in its caring.

Christianity is about the rebel Jesus. He came to be a bridge, along which the poor, the forgotten, and the despised may walk.

He came to be a river, in which the marginalized, the broken, and the needy may swim. Jesus the Messiah and Jesus the martyr, but also Jesus the baby, crying out on that first Christmas morning for our concern in His utter vulnerability. His mother was a teenager. His family lived under an imperial occupation, religious hypocrisy soaked the very fabric of their society, and the world groaned for a better, more humane way.

The great test, the defining question, is whether and how we change what is around us, change it so as to reflect the unconditional love that wasn't suggested but demanded by Christ.

Yet the world is understandably doubtful about those who follow Jesus Christ and I don't blame them. More than 81 per cent of white evangelicals voted for Donald Trump, many Christians in Canada seem to care for people just before they're born and just before they die. In between, not so much. Too many of them fight like lions for the right to discriminate against LGBTQ2

people but behave like sheep when challenged with systemic racism and economic injustice.

John Wesley, the great founder of Methodism, famously wrote: "Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the ways you can, in all the places you can, at all the times you can, to all the people you can, as long as ever you can." Imagine for a moment if every Christian acted thus. I care not a fig about whether politicians mouth "The Lord's Prayer" before a meeting, couldn't care less about mentioning God in the national anthem, am totally indifferent to whether we say Merry Christmas or Happy Holidays.

What matters is following the central teachings of the Gospels and embracing Christ. Do not judge others, always forgive, hold the wealthy to account, embrace the poor and broken, welcome the rejected, love and love again, and turn the world upside down. Abide with him, abide with his teaching, and never give up, whatever the cost or danger.

The Person is the Mission: How the Church Missions, Matters



BY THE REVEREND
DANIEL TATARNIC

On a Sunday afternoon in mid-May, 1976, my relationship with the Church was sealed: prophet, priest, and king. They're called charisms—gifts, seals of the Holy Spirit. The Apostle Paul reminds us, "And his gifts were that some should be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry; for building up the body of Christ."

Now, we talk a lot about mission in the Church these days. But what is mission? Is it an idea, a strategy, a statement? Or is mission something more than clear and distinct ideas? Saint Paul implies that mission is personal: we are the mission(s). I am the gift, you are the gift: gifts, given for the life of the world.

Gifts of the Spirit are a burden and a source of freedom. Being the Church isn't always easy; we don't get to choose the persons God gifts to us, a person is called, a person is given. When we pray, at ordinations, "Carry out in tranquility your plan of salvation," we ought to be careful

about what we are asking: God will send us that person!

My point is that God calls persons into ministry; God does not call clear and distinct ideas into ministry. And when the Church missions, when the Church forms people, the Church is participating in the missioning activity of the Holy Spirit to generate saints. We need to take this seriously: how the Church missions, matters.

Each person is the embodiment of a spiritual gift (charism). Each baptized person is a saint, and every saint has a mission. Saint Paul's letter to the Ephesians says that you are the mission! Where is God at work in the world? That's easy—you! You are the saint; you are the flesh and blood arena where God is at work in the world.

So, if we're serious about mission, we would do well by looking at the saints around us. Take a look at the people who have said 'yes' to God; admittedly, it's a bit of a rogue's gallery. And it's filled with people that I find highly irritating, and

who, I'm sure, find me equally as disagreeable. But hey, what can you do? Prophet, priest, and king: like it or not. I like to say that people of good will, on a shoe-string budget, will change the world. Throw some grace into that equation and we might have a fighting chance.

I've failed many times in life to be competent, and no failure to be competent has ever resulted in my being cut off from God's grace. As a matter of fact, I failed my grade twelve religion class. I'll never forget my teacher's parting shot at graduation, "you're a delinquent, and you'll never amount to anything."

The scriptures provide us with a very compelling and inconvenient picture of [leadership] in the Church. In the biblical witness, it is God who graces, "that some should be." The gift of a person is always in proportion to the world's need. When God's people need a prophet, they get a prophet. When God's people need a teacher, the teacher appears. God always sends the right person, at the

right time. What a miracle! What an inconvenience!

Hans Urs von Balthasar, the twentieth-century Swiss theologian, reinforces this holy inconvenience when he writes: "The Spirit meets the burning questions of the age with an utterance that is the keyword, the answer to a riddle. Never in the form of an abstract statement (that being something that is man's business to draw up); almost always in the form of a new, concrete supernatural mission: the creation of a new saint whose life is a presentation to his own age of the message that heaven is sending to it, a [person] who is, here and now, the right and relevant interpretation of the Gospel."

As we stretch out to receive the outpouring of spiritual gifts in this season of Pentecost, we should find both consolation and warning: the faithful Christian is called to be a saint. And that is both a miracle of grace, and a holy-inconvenience; sin boldly!

ANTI-RACISM: *A Journey Towards Healing and Wholeness*

A Special Series



Wade in the Water

This is the second installment of a special series



**BY THE REVEREND
GARFIELD WU**

"God said he was going to trouble the water." I did not anticipate such a substantial impact on my life and my ministry in the beginning when the Anti-Racism Working Group was formed. After a few sessions with our group members, I continue to reflect on anti-racism as a discourse and practice to bring critical conversations to our communities in our diocese.

We do not live in a post-racial context; it is a myth and illusion to hold to this view. I feel very grateful to be part of this lovely multicultural, learning

and research group organized by Bishop Susan and Canon Christyn. Each of us is already seeing growing awareness of systemic racism and awakening to their part in that system. While challenging and painful at times, our dialogue and our differences are wrapped in a faithful commitment to humility, vulnerability, and transformation—for us, and for the diocese.

Race and anti-racism communication and education are significant tasks and responsibilities as we seek to transform the structures of our faith community and our society. While communication and education alone are not enough to address the dynamism of racism and social oppressions, I believe in the power of communication and education and ideas to ignite community transformation, especially from Christian community. For example, skin colour is a critical aspect of any discussion on race, but together, the group has explored and owned the concept that it is not

the only measure or reading of race identity. Unfortunately, those who highlight skin colour's saliency are often heard as simply seeing race as just about skin colour or rejecting the intersectionality of our multiple identities.

The storytelling that led us into animated discussions about the limitations of referencing skin colour to define one another pointed us to the need to craft expectations about how to be with one another in a way that acknowledges the turbulence of the waters in which we tread while also ensuring that we are secured to one another in such a way that we can all stay upright in the currents and eddies.

From a deeply held sense of needed change and only a vague idea of how to take action, the Anti-racism Working Group has created a living document that captures our shared expectations of the process to our next steps: communication and education. It is intended to support each other in our risk-taking adventure, respect the privacy of each individual's identity, and

life experience, norms have been established.

We have been called to be present to one another in a manner that upholds the dignity and worth of each of us, made in the image of God. This group strives to talk about people as individuals with unique identities and avoid language that suggests that people are merely their race or skin colour.

Everyone in this group comes with good intentions but we recognize that our words and actions can unintentionally cause harm, and we commit to moving towards forgiveness and reconciliation when that happens. We agree to give gracious immediate, or appropriately timed feedback that focuses on calling each other in (not out) when someone says something disturbing, hurtful or offensive. Our focus in feedback will be calling one another into the community, not calling out to shame or chastise.

Meanwhile, we recognize that English is not the most comfortable language for all of us, so we agree to take care of what each person is saying and be patient

when we are not quick to speak or struggle to articulate our thoughts and feelings. Everyone comes willing to take risks and be honest about our thoughts, feelings, and opinions, not just saying what others want to hear.

We need to honour and respect each other's truth as their own lived experience while knowing that it is only part of the truth. Talking about racism, race, and inequity is often uncomfortable. Identifying and unpacking our identity groups and the different levels of privilege associated with them is even more painful. And so, our group agrees to allow ourselves to experience some discomfort, and we will resist the urge to change the topic to ease our discomfort.

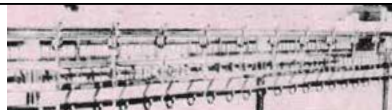
You can see that there are no quick fixes or easy solutions to the complex problems posed by racism and inequity. This group commits to an ongoing dialogue and growth journey together. We trust that our authentic journey will bear fruit for a Spirit-filled plan for diocesan transformation around diversity, inclusion, and equity.

Advertise in the Niagara Anglican!

Reach readers in your area

Affordable advertising!

Contact Angela Rush:
niagara.anglican.ads@gmail.com

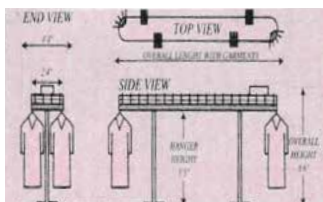


DRY CLEANERS OVERHEAD GARMENT CONVEYOR

40' of hanging space - 18ft 10in size
Space required:
minimum: 5ft depth 20ft in length

Valued at \$8,000 • Clearance: \$500

Contact: dr.andrea@bell.net



BIBLICAL COSTUMING FOR SALE

80 adult size and 14 child-size.
All have matching hats (head-gear).

Every costume is different.
All costumes are \$3.00 each.

Contact: dr.andrea@bell.net



Niagara School of Missional Leadership

Pilot Courses Tested Ahead of Fall Launch

Months before the pandemic disrupted many the patterns and practices of ministry and accelerated the shift to the digital realm, the people of Niagara had already discerned the need for a new kind of learning environment.

The diocesan Mission Action Plan (MAP) envisions the Niagara School for Missional Leadership as a space where lay and clergy leaders could gather to share and reflect upon their experience of ministry and receiving training to respond creatively and faithfully to God's mission.

In February and March, the realization of this vision became much closer to reality as two online course were piloted, a crucial step to test out the model ahead of the planned launch of the school this fall.

Bishop Susan Bell offered a six-week course on missional preaching while Dr. John Bowen, professor emeritus of evangelism at Wycliffe College, offered an introductory course on mission.

"These were people who had been deep in the trenches of parish life for years," observed Bowen whose course was titled Mission 101. "They were not looking for theoretical information to help them somewhere down the hypothetical road, they were hungry for help in real-life situations today."

Bishop Bell's missional preaching course began from a set of convictions: 1) in the digital age, preaching is more important than ever within the ministry of a Christian leader and 2) preaching needs to be shaped in our post-modern, post-secular, post-colonial context and 3) missional preaching evokes faithful living and contextual discipleship.

"If we accept that we are living in a genuinely post-Christendom era, then we have to remember that even for the most church-ed of Christians, our culture no longer necessarily supports nor promotes, nor shares their belief system anymore," said Bishop Susan Bell. "So, discipleship has to constantly be nurtured and supported in words and deeds that connect the mission of God with people's lives and preaching is an opportunity to do that."

The pilot courses drew interest from nearby Huron diocese.



Victor Kischak, rector of the Church of the Holy Saviour in Waterloo said one of the most enlightening aspects of the course was the challenge of writing three-minute sermons without using any church or theological jargon was particularly enlightening.

"As preachers, we commonly use terms like atonement expecting everyone to know what we mean," he said. "However, this course reminded us that our language needs to be just as accessible and inclusive as Jesus was to everyone he met if we want visitors to our congregations to feel welcomed and included in the kingdom of God."

Bishop Susan Bell encouraged her students to focus on the question of why in their sermons, why scripture matters to contemporary listeners. "We should not expect our sermons to inspire others and transform lives unless we can answer the question of why a particular passage of scripture is good news for us today in the context that we find ourselves in," said Kischak.

As it is currently 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.

Bowen's pilot course comprised twelve students, representing four different parishes, three in Niagara, one in Huron. It began with the question: Can the Church change? Each week

was punctuated by videos and lively discussion. There were assignments too, which participants seemed eager to complete, whether it was reviewing the user-friendliness of their websites for unchurched people, or doing a prayer walk around their neighbourhoods.

John Bowen emphasized the necessity of a holistic ministry for the entire Church in which members of the congregation bring their varied gifts and talents to bear, working together with the clergy, and vice versa, as they travel forward going out beyond the walls of the church in new ways, with the support of the bishop and the diocese," reflected Will Alakas, rector of

St. Columba's in St. Catharines, one of the parish teams who participated in the course. He said one of his takeaways from the course was to trust in the promises of Christ and to not be afraid of the challenges ahead when one puts out into the deep.

Alakas appreciated being able to hear the firsthand experience of other clergy and lay leaders from a variety of parishes and their understanding of the Gospel and how it relates to the life of their parish moving forward within the pandemic and beyond.

"Change in traditional congregations happens slowly and often breaks down," observed Bowen. "As a result, I will be

keeping in touch with the four parishes in the coming months, and we have tentative plans to meet again in the fall and work together on Mission 201."

Along the way, there were learnings about the model which the leadership team will evaluate to inform the school's model and approach going forward.

"I asked this first group to collaborate in making this exploration as effective as it could be," said Bishop Bell. "So along with any learning that they were doing, I was also on a learning journey of my own and their feedback along the way was really helpful."

With an encouraging first offering, the courses will be refined and offered again in the fall, alongside as many as six other courses, two of which are currently piloted in the spring. Bishop Bell expressed gratitude to the first participants of the courses, which she said affirmed the overall vision for the Niagara School of Missional Leadership.

"The goal of these courses and the school is to better equip our missional leaders to share the good news as effectively, winsomely and honestly, and deeply as we are able; to share—with joy and conviction that God's mission of love in our world is to draw all people—all people—to God's self and in so doing to unite heaven and earth through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Two More Courses Piloted This Spring

Buoyed by the success and learnings from the initial pilot courses, two additional pilot courses are currently underway through the Niagara School for Missional Leadership.

Introduction to a Missional New Monasticism, with Canon Ian Mobsby

This course is designed for those who are interested in New Monasticism and new forms of Christian spiritual/religious ecclesial communities in the context of building new expressions of Church including the Fresh Expressions initiative. The course is particularly geared towards people who either have no or little experience of such communities, or who want the space to explore them more practically and theologically.

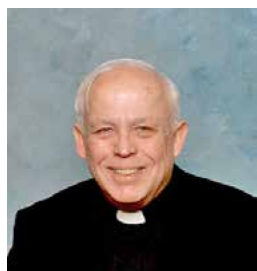


"The Persistent Parish" – Pursuing Missional Movement in Cozy Congregations, with Leanne Friesen

This course is designed to explore the missional movement in the context of churches that may struggle to make space for mission in the midst of their longstanding practices. Some may refer to this as learning about how to "reboot" or "revitalize" a congregation. Some may use the term "turn-around" church. The hope is that participants will see that the missional movement can include more than require creating a church plant or a coffee shop. The space for mission can be created in churches of any age, size, or history. The course seeks to uncover best practices rooted in experience and creates space for questions, wonderings, and mutual learning.



The Process of Becoming a Deacon



BY THE REVEREND DEACON ROD MCDOWELL

For some time now, readers of this paper have seen a column called "The Deacons Bench." Through this space, deacons from across this diocese have told stories of their ministries to help you understand some of the ways in which we seek to live out our calling.

One might now ask who are these people and how did they become deacons?

Well, to start, these faithful people are all members of the order of clergy, ordained by a bishop. There are two types of deacons: those with a license and those with a bishop's permission. The articles you have read through this column are about the latter type of deacons also known as permanent or vocational deacons.

On page 631 of the Book of Alternative Services (BAS), under the title of Preface to the Ordination Rites, the following sentence appears:

Thirdly there are deacons who, in addition to assisting bishops and priests in all their work, have a special responsibility to minister in Christ's name to the poor, the sick, the suffering, and the helpless.

Our diocesan 'Guidelines for Deacons' booklet emphasizes the servant role of this ministry. The guidelines go on to state that the task of a deacon includes "holding before the Church the needs of the world, interpreting those needs to the Church, and enabling baptized persons to discern, exercise and collaborate in the ministry of Christ in the world."

The principal ministry of the deacon is outside the walls of a parish church. In fact, normally about 80 % of a deacon's ministry is there and only about 20% is undertaken inside the parish church.

The journey towards becoming a deacon begins in prayer. A

person must understand that they have had a call from God to ordained diaconal ministry. If a person believes that this is indeed happening, then the next step is to speak to their rector for further discernment.

One of the recent innovations in the process is that the bishop now meets with an inquirer and their rector very early in their discernment. If the Bishop is satisfied that there is a call to this ministry (and not to the priesthood or continued lay ministry) then the person is encouraged to make a formal application. The annual deadline is March 1 each year.

There are multiple levels of discernment in the diaconate process: application; recommendation of the parochial committee; interviews with the diocesan Diaconal Discernment Committee; and affirmation by the parish through a parish commendation, which includes a formal vestry motion.

While it is ultimately the

Bishop who will make the final decision about ordination, this cannot happen unless the parish and wider diocesan community affirms the person's initial call to ordained diaconal ministry.

The entire diaconal discernment process described in detail on our diocesan website.

Once a candidate, the person must then complete education requirements equivalent to a Certificate in Christian Studies, which will include courses in Old Testament, New Testament, theology, Anglican church history, and pastoral care/counseling/active listening. Other courses may be recommended by the Director of Human Resources with the advice of the Director of the College of Deacons.

However, it is critical to understand that anyone who aspires to be a deacon must have already been involved in some form of ministry to those on the margins of society, including the poor, the sick and the helpless.



My own involvement was as a lawyer who had worked in a poverty law clinic and assisted hundreds of refugees to obtain immigration status. Some of my colleagues have been involved in working with the homeless, assisting in grief counselling, helping with issues of food insufficiency, or working with the Mission to Seafarers.

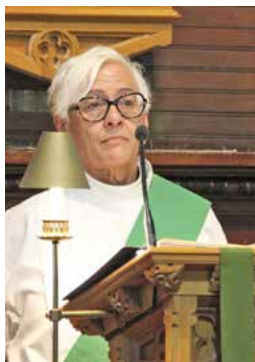
The entire process can take 3 to 5 years. After the candidate has passed through the first diocesan interview, an experienced deacon is assigned as a mentor. After a second diocesan interview, the bishop makes the final decision about whether they are to proceed to

ordination.

Throughout the process the director of deacons for the diocese, Jean Ruttan Yates or myself as deputy director are involved. We are both available to speak to anyone who might be interested in pursuing the process. This also includes rectors who play a critical role in the discernment of a call to this vocation.

In summary, the most important advice I can give is to follow the wish of the Holy Spirit.

For more information about the diaconate, visit: <https://niagaraanglican.ca/ministry/vocations/diaconate>



The Reverend Deacon Jean Ruttan Yates, Director of the College of Deacons

Not Your Great Grandmother's Alpha

BY THE REVEREND TOM VAUGHAN

Now I'm sure all of you are wondering what I am going to say about Alpha in this article. If it's not your great grandmother's Alpha, then what is it? First of all for some it is important to take a step back. What is Alpha?

Alpha is a conversation about Christianity. Participants gather for a presentation on a basic topic of Christianity and there is discussion in a group setting. Before COVID it involved a meal. This was a program that originated out of Holy Trinity, Brompton, in the United Kingdom. The founder, Nicky Gumbel, is interested in how people living in the secular world come to learn about Jesus. Alpha was the result of that interest. Alpha has gone around the world and into many different environments. For those that did the older generation of the Alpha program there was a script to the sessions and a binder and a list of suggested texts. This was your great



grandmother's Alpha. You had to walk uphill in a snow storm both ways to get there but there were always snacks and treats on the counter at great grandma and great grandpa's house!

Over the years Alpha has adapted to the times. The content is delivered with choreographed high definition videos. The materials are directed at a wider audience than before. Alpha online feels more palatable to the whole tent of Anglicanism. The incredible gift is what comes after as participants discuss their experience. There we see God at work drawing people more deeply into what it means to be a follower

of Jesus.

Alpha online has taken off during this pandemic. Holy Trinity Brompton normally has 800 signed up for Alpha and now they have over 1,200. Alpha online has been developing in Churches across Canada.

What are you doing with those who are new? I have found that this is a time many people are asking big questions in their lives. At Holy Trinity Welland we are in our second go round with Alpha online and starting to digitally engage with the people who have found our community during COVID. Alpha online gives the format for a basic experience of the faith and is ideal for the handling of the questions people are having about understanding the world right now.

Going back to the basics of the faith is something wise and discerning people around the church have been suggesting for some time. The pandemic has brought that into sharp focus. John Bowen likens the church to the school of Jesus where we

are all students following and listening to the teacher. Bishop Susan worked with Patrick Paulson and Judy Paulson on *Christian Foundations: A Grounding For a Life of Faith* out of Wycliffe College, which is a basic resource of the faith.

So it's not your great grandmother's Alpha, as wonderful as she is. It is a new Alpha developed for more people at different stages of life's journey who are curious about Jesus.

Bishop Susan has asked me to gather with leaders in our

Diocese to explore Alpha online, to work at understanding how the Diocese may engage this resource to reach newcomers and seekers who may be ready for such a program.

I would love to hear from you if this is something you would like to know more about or if you would like to be a part of the mentoring and coaching on how Alpha online could bless you and your communities.

Tom Vaughan can be reached at tvauhgangs@gmail.com

Technology Grants Equip Parishes for Contemporary Ministry

Over the last year, by necessity, the COVID-19 global pandemic has shifted a great deal of everyday ministry into the digital space.

In response, last fall synod council approved a new one-time innovative grant program designed to assist parishes to improve or integrate technology in the parish to strengthen ministries, especially as it relates to worship, faith formation, and community engagement.

"This is such an important investment in our future missionary pursuits given our new reality," said Bishop Susan Bell. "It has been so encouraging to see our parishes pivot with the pandemic and dream about new possibilities for their ministry by leveraging technology."

Over 35 parish applications were received by the February deadline. Time and again, parishes expressed a desire to increase or develop their online ministry capabilities from weekly prayer to Bible studies to coffee time after online Sunday services.



As a result of the significant interest in the Parish Technology Support Grant program, synod council doubled the initial budget allocation of \$30,000 to support these grants as an investment in the missionary capacity of parishes.

"This support will certainly

help us get our streaming efforts closer to completion and broadcasting," said Karine Snowden, rector of Grace Church, Milton which was one of the grant recipients.

All but \$22 of the approved \$60,000 in funding has now been granted to parishes.

A bright idea from PWRDF

We're bringing clean solar electricity to **51 health clinics** in Mozambique, to support safe labour and birth.

Learn more in the April Anglican Journal or visit pwrdf.org/solarsuitcases2021

GUIDANCE & SUPPORT YOU CAN TRUST!

ARE YOU OVERWHELMED WITH JUST THE THOUGHT OF DOWNSIZING?

Let me be your guide. I have helped many seniors make a smooth transition and would love to do the same for you!

Contact Marion for a complimentary consultation. It's never too early to start developing your transition plan.

MARION GOARD
Broker

Your Seniors Real Estate Expert

905.330.5201
mariongoard@kw.com
RealEstateAgentForSeniors.ca

The Blessings of Hospitality

BY CANON SHARYN HALL

Of the many changes in our lives during this pandemic, one that we will no longer take for granted is the blessings of hospitality. Over the past year, we have been warned repeatedly that gathering together could be dangerous. The social conventions of welcoming family or friends into our homes enable the COVID-19 virus to spread easily and cause serious illness. We are obliged to forego traditional times of celebration—birthdays, weddings, and religious holidays. This is necessary to protect everyone from the coronavirus, but it has strained our mental, emotional, and spiritual wellbeing. Hospitality can be essential to the health of individuals and the health of a society.

In a story from the book of Genesis, Abraham and his household are camped in the desert when three strangers appear. Abraham offers them shelter, food, and rest. During the meal, the strangers predict that he and his wife Sarah will have a great blessing. Sarah will bear a son even though she is well past child-bearing age. It becomes clear that they are no ordinary visitors, perhaps three

angels or God in Three Persons, the Trinity. This story of hospitality has been an inspiration to many artists over the centuries. Visual interpretations exist in works of art from Byzantine iconography to Rembrandt to modern artists of the 20th century.

Biblical hospitality existed within the cultural norms of ancient society. Hospitality was considered an obligation because travel was dangerous. Few inns or places of shelter existed to offer safety, food, or water. Local people were obliged to welcome strangers and it would be dishonourable not to do so. However, strangers could be a threat to the community, so there was a ritual of questioning before they were accepted as guests. Acceptance was signified by a kiss of peace, the best meal available, and protection for at least one night.

The life of Jesus as an itinerant preacher was a chronicle of hospitality. He was welcomed into the home of Zacchaeus and the home of Mary and Martha. He sent his disciples into villages without provisions and dependent on hospitality. The Hebrew people understood hospitality as a mandate from God to care for others: neigh-

bours, including those who lived in poverty, strangers, and foreigners. Hospitality was one way in which they fulfilled their covenant as God's people.

In our culture today, hospitality usually means a warm welcome, food, friendship, and enjoyment together. During this pandemic, we have missed the blessings of social hospitality, but a different form of hospitality has been essential in these days of disease and death. Hospitals as places of refuge for the sick and the destitute began as early as the 4th century and continued through the Middle Ages funded by benefactors and religious societies. An example of the long history of hospitals is St. Bartholomew's Hospital in London, England, which was founded in 1123 and now is the largest cardiac care hospital in Europe.

Today, hospitals all over the world have been a refuge for people seeking care to overcome the coronavirus. In this extraordinary time, hospital workers truly have become angels of mercy to millions of people. They have provided expert medical care and long hours of watchful support to alleviate mental and emotional anxiety of the patient and the patient's



Three angels hosted by Abraham, Ludovico Carracci (c. 1610-1612), Bologna, Pinacoteca Nazionale

loved ones. Their self-sacrifice has exceeded the ancient obligation of hospitality for the wellbeing of others.

Hospitality is an important part of our relationship with others and with God's presence in our world. One of the ways in which we obey God's commandment to love our neighbours is through the blessings of hospitality.

When the restrictions of the pandemic are behind us and we can feel safe to welcome and embrace each other again, we may remember Abraham's three visitors. As Christians, we are reminded to be hospitable, for 'some have entertained angels unawares.'

New ISARC Book Released

A virtual book launch was held for the latest Interfaith Social Assistance Reform Coalition (ISARC) publication, *Overcoming Ontario's Poverty Pandemic*.

Here's the book's abstract: *Another pandemic was already disrupting for nearly two million Ontarians before COVID-19 struck: poverty. What did it mean for day-to-day life? What impact has the pandemic had? Low-income people spoke about their challenges at community hearings across*

*Ontario, organized by the ISARC interfaith anti-poverty coalition. Their powerful first-hand accounts and proposals for action to improve their lives, make *Overcoming Ontario's Poverty Pandemic* a vital resource for educa-*

tion and advocacy.

Written and edited by Murray MacAdam, the book serves as a report on ISARC's *Voices from the Margins* project. Bishop Susan Bell was one of the "deep listeners" for the project when it heard from participants in Hamilton two years ago.

The book is available for \$12 per copy, postage paid, or as a free download, at www.isarc.ca/bookstore/






ENJOY LIFE, YOUR WAY

A Community for Independent Seniors

Experience Heritage Place with a lifestyle that revolves around you, and a customized package of services as individual as you are.

Call us to arrange a personal tour and complementary lunch.
905-315-2580

Heritage Place Retirement Residence | 4151 Kilmer Drive, Burlington, ON
www.heritage-place.ca



Bishop Susan Bell renewed the vows of nearly 100 clergy and licensed lay workers during an online service on Holy Tuesday streamed live from Christ's Church Cathedral in Hamilton.

Photo: Bill Mous

Public Event

Evolving Faith: Cultivating Hope in the Wilderness

The Bishop has announced that Sarah Bessey will be the featured speaker for this year's clergy and licensed lay workers virtual conference in June. Sarah Bessey is the author of the best-selling and critically acclaimed books "Jesus Feminist" and "Out of Sorts: Making Peace with an Evolving Faith," with her most recent book being "A Rhythm of Prayer." She is a sought-after speaker at churches, conferences, and universities around the world.



After the conference, a virtual public event will take place on June 9 at 7 p.m. and all people in the diocese and the wider community are invited to attend! Sarah Bessey will take participants on a journey to Emmaus to discover hope that takes suffering and grief and injustice, our liberation and our joy and our wholeness seriously. To purchase your ticket visit the diocesan webpage.

FIERCELY LOVED: YOU BELONG!

An online worship experience
celebrating Pride and the
2SLGBTQIA+ community

4pm, Sunday, June 13th

facebook.com/niagaraanglican
youtube.com/niagaraanglican

ALL ARE WELCOME!



THE DIOCESE OF NIAGARA
CALLED TO LIFE
COMPELLED TO LOVE
WWW.NIAGARAANGLICAN.CA

In the name of God,

✝

Creator, Redeemer and Sanctifier.

I give thanks to the Divine, that on this day, May 2, in 1971, the Feast of St. Athanasius, I was ordered Deacon in the Church of God by the Right Reverend Walter E. Bagnall, Bishop of Niagara, in the Church of St. John the Evangelist, in Hamilton, Ontario.

*They had these stand before the apostles,
who prayed and laid their hands on them. Acts 7:6*

Thanks to the many family and friends who supported and shared this Ministry with me, over these 50 years, in the Dioceses of Niagara, Edmonton, and Huron. A special thanks to my children, Geoffrey and Margaret (& Deep). Thanks also to the Townshend family, to Dolores Shackelton, and to my daughter Laura and her wife Lynsie.

- Brian Edward Shoesmith

**CONSIDER A MOVE TO CANADA'S
FURTHEST SOUTHERN POINT!**

STRETCH Your dollars & relocate to the beautiful shores of Lake Erie & Lake St. Clair in affordable Windsor-Essex County. For a free search of New & Resale properties:

FUTURE HOMES & REAL ESTATE LTD.
Brokerage
1.800.677.5810
robert@future-homes.com
www.future-homes.com



Robert Tatimir,
Broker of Record

**WHEN EXPERIENCE MATTERS!
SERVING WINDSOR-ESSEX COUNTY FOR OVER 35 YEARS!**

Niagara Anglican Deadlines and Submission Guidelines

<p>Deadlines:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> June – May 3 September – July 30 October – August 30 <p>Submissions:</p> <p>News, Letters, Reviews <i>(books, films, music, theatre)</i> – 400 words or less</p> <p>Articles – 600 words or less</p>	<p>Original cartoons or art – Contact the Editor.</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>All submissions must include writer's full name and contact information. We reserve the right to edit or refuse submissions.</p> <p>Questions or information: Contact the Editor at editor@niagaraanglican.ca</p>
--	--	--

SUNRISE

• STAINED GLASS •

SINCE 1979



MEMORIAL WINDOWS	PROTECTIVE GLAZING	REPAIRS & MILLWORK
97 Wharndcliffe Rd. S. London, Ont. N6J 2K2 Toll Free 877-575-2321		
www.sunrisestainedglass.com		

Ending a Plastic Pandemic Starts in Your Parish

BY IRENE PANG

As we begin to see flickers of light at the end of the COVID-19 tunnel, our society is still very much in the dark of another scourge, the plastic pollution pandemic.

However, in the Diocese of Niagara, we see some light being shed on this too, as almost 40 parishes have embarked on the mission to break free from plastics after passing vestry motions to ban single-use plastics by 2022.

The key to ending the plastic pandemic seems simple - stop mindlessly making and using plastics. I would suggest we all need to start with a 'climate mindset', committed to finding creative solutions to serve, without causing harm to God's creation.

In the context of ditching single-use plastics, it means we must break free from the belief that it is necessary to use plastic, even during the pandemic. According to Environmental Defense, a panel of global experts have concluded single-use plastic is not inherently safer than properly cleaned reusables and it causes public health concerns once being discarded.

We must also break free from the lure of convenience of plastic use. The relentless adoption of plastics is a rather recent industry-made phenomenon. Most of us have lived in days of using much less or very little plastic. It is a challenge but absolutely doable. It takes exploration of creative solutions and, unfortunately, it does take paying a little extra.

Let's take those parish events or outreach programs involving food, as an example, and look at the single-use plastics commonly utilized.

• **Styrofoam trays, clear plastic bags, plastic containers**

Parishes can source paper trays, bags and containers online. More local eateries have switched to paper containers so they could make suggestions of such suppliers. One thing we can learn from upmarket bakeries - they never pack their goodies in plastic bags. No one likes to eat from a plastic bag or sip hot soup from Styrofoam containers.



• **Plastic cutlery**

According to the federal government, plastic cutlery will be banned by the end of this year. It is expected we will see more non-plastic alternatives available in the market for outreach ministry. However, in a church setting, properly cleaned reusable cutlery is good enough.

• **Plastic wrap**

If the purpose is to cover food, a clean hand towel or plate will do the job. If the purpose is more to display food, such as in a bake sale, we can instead display a picture of the items or write it on a chalkboard. Most people can immediately visualise a mouth-watering picture when they see the words "the world's best chocolate chip cookies."

• **Plastic tablecloths**

A clean tablecloth is as safe as a flimsy plastic sheet and is way more aesthetically pleasing. It is especially helpful in creating a cozy feeling in any fundraising

event.

We cannot dismiss the fact that some of the plastic alternatives would cost slightly more.

Adjust your prices to reflect the cost of the containers, and post a sign explaining that the containers are better for

the environment. We can seize the opportunity to show our churches' commitment to care for earth. Even better, we can include eco-friendly items in fundraising events, such as home-made laundry soap, cloth bowl cover, reusable bags from repurpose fabric etc.

To conclude, I would like to share these rules of thumb, questions to ask as you plan your ministry event or outreach, or purchase for your family, to be sure you have a 'climate mindset.'

1. Is it absolutely necessary to be packaged?
2. What will I do with the package when it comes to the end of life?
3. Are we caring for people and the Earth at the same time?
4. Are we upholding climate justice to God's people, now and the future?

As a community of Christ's followers, it is our sacred call to be on the forefront to safeguard God's creation. This call is truer and more urgent than ever. As we learn from this pandemic, a healthy planet is the baseline of humanity. We cannot take care of people if we are not taking of the earth.

Irene is a member of the diocesan Climate Justice Niagara committee. Learn more at: <https://niagaraanglican.ca/climatejustice>

AS WE CELEBRATE PENTECOST, IGNITED BY THE IRRESISTIBLE LOVE OF JESUS AND RENEWED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT, BISHOP SUSAN BELL INVITES YOU TO PRAY THE PRAYER OF OUR DIOCESAN MISSION ACTION PLAN:

Beloved God, we are your people called to walk a renewed path with Jesus. Be with us, your whole church, as we seek to rekindle and enliven our faith. Keep us firm in our commitment to reshape our culture and structures for mission and invigorate our social justice engagement, most especially the nurture and protection of your creation. Let the whole world see us living and lifting up the fullness of your love. Make new those things that have grown old; and bring wholeness to that which cries out for restoration. All this we ask through the Spirit of the Living God and in the name of the Christ who came among us, is among us and will come among us. Amen.