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A section of the Anglican Journal



# NIAGARA ANGLICAN



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OCTOBER 2021

## *“Let us give THANKS and PRAISE!”*



In this month centred around the theme of thanksgiving, we pause to be grateful for the provision of the land on which we occupy and grow food. Pictured is some of the bounty of the Victory Garden at Church of the Resurrection, Hamilton. Despite pandemic restrictions and, at times, uncooperative weather, over 700 pounds of food have been harvested this year! The church entered into a partnership with Hamilton Victory Gardens in the spring of 2015. Thirteen raised beds were built and have since been planted, maintained, and harvested by Resurrection and community volunteers from April–September/October, growing fresh vegetables for local food banks (mainly Neighbour to Neighbour).

This land is the traditional territory of the Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe and covered by the Upper Canada Treaties.

Photo contributed by Diane Zimmerman.

## Providing Hope Through the Pandemic



Despite being an incredibly challenging year, as its programs pivoted to adapt to the pandemic, St. Matthew's House (SMH) has fully embraced their theme of "gratitude" in this year's Impact Report.

Renée Wetselaar, executive director, and David Savage, chair of the Board of Directors, express a deep sense of gratitude for the philanthropy shown by the surrounding community. Partners of St. Matthew's House resiliently contributed to the organization's role in offering services that support folks in critical phases of human experience, whether at the "beginning of learning and life" or during "the era



See ST. MATTHEW'S HOUSE Page 4



# Canterbury Hills Camp: A Light in the Darkness

**BY ZOE OLIVIERA AND THE CANTERBURY HILLS CAMP STAFF**

Ever since I was a kid, summer camp has been a beacon of pure and undeniable joy. There was always laughter to be found between the walls of beloved cabins and memories to be made in the rolling hills of the woods. New friends embraced you just by welcoming you to join in a game of crazy eights, and leaders became superheroes between the verses of their off-key campfire songs. Summer camp opens a world of possibility, if just for one week out of the entire year, and my understanding of this has only grown since becoming an honoured member of camp staff.

But this year was different. This past summer, more than ever, my fellow staff and I watched the change Canterbury Hills made in the lives of its campers, as well as their parents. Camp was not just childcare this summer. It was a much-needed break from almost two years of our digitalized and socially distanced world. It was a reintroduction to the socialization we've all long missed, and a reminder that our struggles through the dark will be matched and outshone by our triumphs in the light.

For many of our camper families, this summer was a matter of trying something new, even if Canterbury Hills Camp was a familiar household name.



Clockwise from top left: Staff commissioning; Campers on the high ropes; Cabin mates from Beech Cabin.

Photos: Contributed

It was new to everyone, being around people again, but most especially for kids. On any given week, our campers' ages range from five to fourteen years old. That means that for some of them, the only world they can remember with clarity is the one clouded by the pandemic.

This did not go unnoticed by parents, and for many, that made the decision to return to camp all the more obvious. Our staff could note the change even in themselves: "waking up and spending my day with all the fresh air and leaders [makes] me feel so much healthier and happier than I [have] been in a long time." Another, like many parents at our daily arrival

and departure, noted that camp helped them "reconnect and get back in touch with [their] social side." This was an especially important factor for many families, as the pandemic was a major roadblock in the ongoing development of their children's hands on soft skills like empathy, sharing, and communication. Such life skills cannot be transcribed as easily through a computer screen, a note that one parent touched

on in our camper family survey. They expressed how much they "love how they are outdoors all day [with] no computers," while another commented that "All three of [their] kids with ... completely different [sets] of interests had a great time!"

Despite the many struggles and challenges our camp community has been faced with these past few months, our summer camp program was able to deliver beyond expectations

and cater to a wide range of age ranges and activity interests. The pandemic changed much in regard to how we did this; masks were a must whenever social distancing wasn't possible, and every leader was regularly equipped with hand sanitizer and disinfectant wipes. Regardless of the outlying considerations, summer camp, and Canterbury Hills, delivered unfailingly.

I am proud to say that when I walked down the path at camp this summer, I could hear how the laughter fought against the confines of the cabin walls, and how the shouts of running games echoed up the hill from the woods. I watched friendships form over decks of cards and joined in on many off-key sing-a-longs. I watched every camper that walked through our gate open themselves up to a world of possibility, if only for one week out of the entire year, and I can say with certainty that it made all the difference.

## Correction

September's article "No Shipping, No Shopping" was actually written by Canon Judith Altree and submitted by the Reverend Deacon Diane Elliot. We apologize for this error.



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# Honouring Faithful Ministry to the Church

## A Selection of Profiles from 2021 Order of Niagara Awardees

Each year, parishes are invited to nominate a person for the Order of Niagara, someone who has faithfully given of themselves to their parish, diocese, and the wider Church. It is an important way of honouring the vital ministry of lay people in the diocese. Services to celebrate this year's recipients are being held virtually via Zoom on September 19 and November 7. We are pleased to highlight several of this year's recipients and give thanks to God for the ministry of all recipients!

### Mary Burnett

Mary Burnett has been involved in parish life at St. Paul's (Glanford), Mount Hope, for only three years—but in those years has contributed exceptionally to the life of the church upon arriving with her



partner, parish priest David Ponting. Mary has developed the parish's Church School, including recruiting a teaching team and arranging the curriculum, led the Messy Church program (pre-pandemic), and implemented the livestreaming of worship services during the pandemic. Since 2017, Mary has also served faithfully on the board of directors of St. Matthew's House, where she offers many hours of service to support the governance and operations of the agency as vice-chair.

### Brian Kerley

Dr. Brian Kerley has and continues to make significant contributions to the worship life of

Church of the Transfiguration, St. Catharines by singing, playing numerous instruments, and writing songs and reflections for



worship and over his 25 years of ministry has shared these gifts with the wider diocese too. Most recently, he has been instrumental in preparing the church for including and, during the pandemic, transitioning to online services by researching and installing new lighting, as well as audio and video equipment necessary to make livestreaming services a smooth experience. Brian also has served as a family doctor for many years and was also key in bringing quality hospice care to the Niagara area. He has remained a source of calm, reasoned informational updates for the parish during the pandemic. Brian also led fundraising efforts when Church of the Transfiguration recently sponsored a refugee family.

### Pam (Feng) Pan

Pam Pan very quickly became a fixture in Oakville when she and her family moved into the



area a few years ago, and is a well-known and passionate volunteer in the local Chinese communities. She has led many events at St. Cuthbert's, St.

Aidan's, St. Simon's, and at St. Luke's, Palermo, where she is a deputy churchwarden. Beyond successfully stewarding Chinese Anglican ministries and various seniors' groups, you can also find Pam serving wherever needed at community dinners and for the Food for Life program at St. Luke's.

### Peter Rughi

Peter Rughi has been a busy parishioner of St. Jude's, Oakville, for many years, but has been an active contributor to life in the diocese, too. While



undertaking numerous liturgical and administrative ministries at St. Jude's, including overseeing servers and chalice bearers, he has also served on the selection committee for the new Dean of Niagara and on the Advisory Committee on Postulants for Ordination. He continues to support St. Jude's mission by volunteering for the weekly Kerr Street Mission summer barbecues and monthly dinners, serving as Deputy Warden, and recruiting and training volunteers to assist with recording services and enabling future services to be livestreamed.

### Pat Salter

Grace Church, Arthur, has been Pat Salter's church home for many years—but her history of service reaches well beyond the walls of the building. Pat is just as enthusiastic serving on the altar guild, parish council, or as a warden as she is serving on the Grand River Conservation Authority, as a member of



the local Mapleton council, as a member of the Women's Institute, or volunteering for the Drayton Festival Theatre. She is an active philanthrope as well, whether as president of the Women of Grace group organizing silent auctions and providing lunches for community youth groups and summer camps, or while canvassing for local charities and serving on the board of Groves Hospital, Fergus, and serving as county representative for the Guelph hospital board.

### Alison Steele

Alison Steele has been an integral component of the success of the Diocesan Children, Youth, and Family Ministry network of

leaders—especially during the last year and a half, when the pandemic has made in-person ministry extremely difficult! Alison has led the way with



the smooth utilization of the Anglican Family Hub Facebook page, shared ministry initiatives, and volunteered generously to facilitate virtual programs. She also managed to find time to attend countless trainings, conferences, and committee and planning meetings in support of the mission of the diocese, in addition to coordinating creative and engaging children, youth, and family programming at her parish of St. David's, Welland.



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COMPELLED TO LOVE**



# St. Matthew's House Providing Hope

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

where we have wisdom.”  
 Over 900 donors gave gifts ranging from \$20 to \$2,000 directly to SMH, and this does not include the many who donated through their parish. As John Watts, chair of the Fund Development Committee, reflects, “every contribution is considered significant when it comes to providing hope and a lifeline to the many lives we impact.”

The SMH childcare program boasted an attendance rate of 83% during the pandemic. The leadership team is grateful that families have continued to trust the organization to do their utmost to maintain a healthy and safe environment, and that partners at Affiliated Services for Children and Youth, the City of Hamilton, Community Living Hamilton, the Ron Joyce Children's Health Centre, and Hamilton Public Health Services continue to support these flourishing programs.

The SMH Seniors Support



Services Team has continued to persevere throughout the past year, working tirelessly to improve the lives of vulnerable seniors in Hamilton. The Seniors in Kitchens (SinKs) program, in partnership with Food For Life and City Housing Hamilton, provided an astounding 25,708

meals in 2020, and the eviction prevention team, HOPES, has advocated for senior participants who need assistance. SMH's Adopt a Family Holiday Program was another success this past year. More than 700 households were given the opportunity to celebrate the holiday season with gifts and a holiday meal during a time when many participants doubted whether they would be able to celebrate. Supporters of SMH made sure the holidays were bright!  
 Launched by a tree-planting celebration, last year St. Matthew's House also inaugurated their participation in the #GreenMyCity project, an initiative of the Green Cities Foundation. Partnering with the



St. Matthew's House executive director Renée Westelaar Photos: Contributed



St. Matthew's House chair David Savage

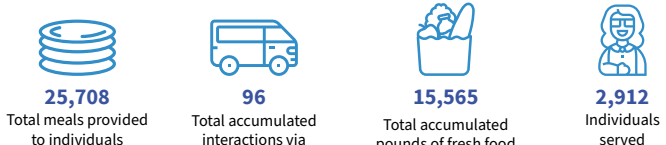
Diocese and the City of Hamilton alongside corporate sponsors and other local organizations, the Foundation hopes to create a greener space within the dense urban environment which surrounds St. Matthew's House. The project includes planting native and hardy plants at the busy Barton East corner to create a buffer zone that helps manage air pollution and contributes to energy savings.  
 Of course, St. Matthew's House knows that even with their immense gratitude for these triumphs during an extremely

difficult year, there's no time to rest. “Each day we are back at working our mission. In this moment of time, we savour the beauty of our spirits and the ability to stand together on behalf of those who struggle. It is in these moments,” Wetselaar and Savage reflect, “that our gratitude fills us up and allows us to continue to fight another day.”  
 To view the 2021 Impact Report, visit the St. Matthew's House website at <https://stmatthewshouse.ca/2020-2021-annual-report/>

Adopt A Family Holiday Program Highlights



Seniors Highlights



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# Synod Convenes Virtually, Once Again

**BY THE VENERABLE BILL MOUS**

The 147th synod of the Diocese of Niagara will convene by Zoom videoconference again this fall, as a fourth wave of the pandemic, fueled by the more contagious Delta variant, causes a surge in local COVID-19 cases.

“Facing Forward: Called to Life, Compelled to Love” is the theme chosen by Bishop Susan Bell for synod as we look forward to the future with hope-filled expectation. Inspired by Philippians 4:4-9, the theme invites members of synod to carry on the work of ministry with patient endurance, one foot in front of the other, trusting in God and the things that God loves. At

the same time, the theme also points to our diocesan Mission Action Plan (MAP) and invites us to consider new, emerging, and uncharted opportunities for missional ministry.

Synods are a key structure in the governance of our diocese, but they are so much more than that too. They seek to build up the whole Church through prayer, story-sharing, relationship-building, discernment, and decision-making. The Synod Agenda Committee, building on the format of last year’s pioneering synod, is working to create the virtual space for all these things to happen as they finalize the plans for our annual meeting on October 30.

At the outset of the half-day

synod, Bishop Susan Bell will share her charge to members, reflecting on its theme and drawing our attention to the ways the Spirit working in and through us in Niagara. Several inspiring presentations about our shared ministry as a diocese over the last year are also planned, including a report from the Anti-Racism Working Group. Members of synod will also hear how, through our Mission Action Plan, we are enlivening our faith, reshaping our culture and structures for mission, and fostering God’s justice, especially as it relates to the climate crisis.

The business parts of the synod will, of course, include receiving the 2020 auditor’s report, consideration of the 2022 diocesan budget,

**FACING FORWARD:  
CALLED TO LIFE  
COMPELLED TO LOVE**

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**The Synod of the  
Diocese of Niagara  
October 30, 2021**

as well as a few housekeeping changes to the canons.

The election of General Synod delegates—which is set to meet next summer in Calgary—and regional representatives to Synod Council will happen using an online voting platform. This is a crucial part of our synod, as the Church needs talented, creative, and faithful

disciples to help guide its course in the coming months and years.

To learn more about our upcoming synod, the convening circular, complete with all synod reports and resolutions, will be posted on our synod webpage ([niagaraanglican.ca/synod/2021](http://niagaraanglican.ca/synod/2021)). You can also follow the activities of synod as they happen through our diocesan Facebook and Twitter feeds.

In the coming weeks, please also hold the members of synod in your prayers as they discern how best to help our diocese—and all its parishes—face forward through the decisions made at synod.

# Food For Life’s Green Innovation is on a Winning Track

**BY BLAIR RICHARDSON**

Food For Life (FFL) is a registered charity serving Hamilton and Halton Region that “rescues” surplus edible food destined for landfills, and distributes it to those in need through community partnerships. These include fifty volunteer neighbourhood outreach programs and fifty food programs which deliver fresh food to food banks and other social service agencies. Since 1995, FFL has rescued over 26 million pounds of surplus perishable food (fruit, vegetables, dairy, meat, and prepared foods). Last year, by diverting over 4 million pounds of food from landfills, FFL reduced greenhouse gas emissions by 5.7 million kg.

St. Jude’s Church in Oakville is one of about 35 churches and mosques that are community partners. Each week, church volunteers deliver fresh food to about 40 families living in a local Community Housing Corporation complex. St. Jude’s also provides an annual grant in support of FFL operating costs.

In 2019, Community Living Burlington and Food for Life held a large food sorting event. Afterwards, about seven skids of inedible carrots had to be taken to a landfill. This problem gave Graham Hill, FFL executive director, an idea, so he phoned the Peter Gilgan Foundation.



Food For Life employee Kevin Kim shovels wood chips into the composter. There is a skill in managing the balance between wood chips and food waste, to avoid odours.

Photo: Contributed

The Foundation provided a \$120,000 grant to purchase and install a Brome industrial rotating composter beside the warehouse in Burlington. It heats organic matter above 55 degrees

Celsius for three days. After a curing period, the composted material is stirred automatically in the rotating drum. It

*Continued Page 6*

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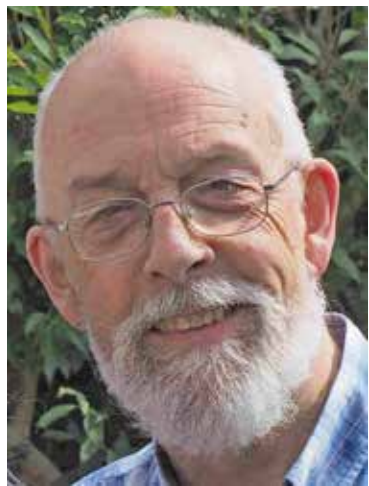
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**In other words:**

# Faith, part 2: Faith and The Faith

**BY JOHN BOWEN**

Until then, we had done no more than exchange pleasantries on a Sunday morning. But one day Catherine asked if she could talk to me. No sooner were we sitting down with our coffee than she launched straight in: “So ... why do you believe in God?”

I smiled. What a lovely question! Not the weather, not yesterday’s sermon, not politics (church or otherwise). I gave a one-sentence summary that we then spent an hour unpacking: “It seems to me that faith in God makes the best sense of the world we live in.”

In our world, there are a lot of misunderstandings of that little word “faith”—not least faith in

God as Christians understand God. Here are some of them:

“Surely having faith is the important thing, not what we believe”

Well, no, “faith” by itself is not enough. You have to have faith in something. In that, faith is like its sisters hope and love. Hope is always hope about something or for something. Love doesn’t exist as an abstract, free-floating quality. It only exists if it’s love for someone or something. So the important question is not whether we have faith—all human beings have faith in something—but exactly what we put our faith in. It’s possible to put our faith in the wrong thing. In fact, I suspect we’ve all done it from time to time.

So what is distinctive about the faith of a Christian? Put it this way: Christianity invites us to put faith in the Faith. By “the Faith,” I mean that web of ideas about God, the world, human nature, Jesus, and the future which are summarised in the creeds.

The Faith is what the church has been working out over the centuries as an explanation of the world and how we should live in it. Personally, as I said to Catherine, I find it makes really

good sense of the world we live in.

“I do have faith in God—in Jesus, even—but I have a problem with the creeds”

The trouble is, you can’t really have faith in someone unless you know something about them. Before the recent federal election, each party published its platform—the policies it intended to pursue if elected. Voters could then weigh up those ideas, plus the character of the parties and their leaders, and decide which party they would trust—and vote for. We were given information in order to inspire our faith.

So when we say we have faith in God or Jesus, it assumes we know—or at least believe—some things about what God is like. “God” cannot just be an empty word. One way to think of the creeds is that they are a summary of what Christians think God is like, and what God has done. They give us reasons for having faith in God.

“But my faith and my reason have nothing to do with each other”

Last month, I suggested that faith and reason are actually partners, not enemies. Healthy faith says, “It seems to me reasonable to believe that X is

the case” (that’s the reason part) “so I will trust that it is true and act accordingly” (that’s the faith part).

If faith is unrelated to reason, I could believe the most unmitigated nonsense, and nobody could criticize. I could believe the moon is made of cheese, and nothing you could say would convince me otherwise. Well, you see the problem.

I actually agree with those in church history who have called faith without reason a heresy. It’s called “fideism.” Fideism fails to give due honour to the grey matter the good Lord has seen fit to put between our ears.

“If Christian faith makes sense of the world, what about things like mosquitoes, viruses, and tsunamis?”

I can’t explain them. Well, many have tried, and some answers are more satisfying than others. (Every Christian should read at least one book on this topic. I recommend Peter Kreeft’s *Making Sense out of Suffering* as a good place to start.) But no argument is 100% watertight, so that looks like evidence against Christianity—right?

Right. But every view of the world—every faith—is chal-

lenged by things that don’t fit. There is no complete explanation of the world available to us, however smart we may be. In spite of the difficulties, the Christian story still offers a satisfying faith to live by.

Why are we discussing this? Simply because, if we are to be a more missional church—involved with the de-churched and the non-churched—questions like Catherine’s will come up, and we had better have some answers at the ready. We will need to heed the apostle Peter’s advice, written to a church on mission: “Always be ready to make your defence to anyone who demands from you an account of the hope that is in you” (1 Peter 3:15). Or, as The Message puts it, “Be ready to speak up and tell anyone who asks why you’re living the way you are, and always with the utmost courtesy.” Holy wisdom, holy word.

John’s most recent book, *The Unfolding Gospel: How the Good News Makes Sense of Discipleship, Church, Mission, and Everything Else* (Fortress 2021), is the basis of the Niagara School of Missional Leadership course, *Reimagining Church*.

## Food for Life's Green Innovation

**CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5**

is capable of processing 5,000 pounds of food waste per week. The original idea was to give the compost to local farmers, but at a compost facilitator conference in 2019, Graham met Jocelyn Molyneux, owner of Wastenot Farms near Orangeville. Jocelyn needed compost to feed her red wiggler worms to produce worm manure, which is ideal for fueling microscopic soil biodiversity and is a key component of regenerative agriculture.

Meanwhile, plans were underway for a national “Food Waste Reduction Challenge,” an initiative under the food policy for Canada to accelerate sustainable, scalable solutions to food loss and food waste. Streams A and B focus on business model solutions that can prevent (A) or divert (B) food waste at any point from farm to plate. Globally, food waste accounts



Food for Life executive director Graham Hill and his daughter Olivia give the composter the thumbs up.

Photo: Contributed

for 8% of the world’s greenhouse gas emissions, largely from edible food decomposing in landfills. More than half of

Canada’s food production is wasted annually and nearly \$50 billion of food wastage is considered avoidable. This competition

was launched by the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food in November 2020. Graham and Jocelyn agreed to submit an application to the challenge; 342 other organizations did likewise.

In May 2021, 24 semi-finalists were announced, each to receive \$100,000. Food for Life and Wastenot Farms were included. Their proposal was a scalable community food waste solution to rescue and divert surplus edible food to food insecure households, while providing a viable, replicable low-cost food waste diversion model. Food waste and cardboard packaging are composted, then undergo vermicomposting that transforms output into biologically active soil nourishment as “worm manure.” This is an elegant solution for retailers and restaurants that are too small for service by large waste

management companies.

Now the Food Waste Reduction Challenge is in stage 2, the market demonstration phase. Semi-finalists will pilot their solutions through eight months of rigorous testing, evaluation, and reporting on effectiveness. Up to 12 finalists whose business solutions have shown the best results for A and B streams will be selected for stage 3. Each will receive an additional \$400,000. Finalists will have one year to scale up the commercialization of their solution. In 2023, one winner per stream will receive a grand prize of up to \$1.5 million.

To learn more about this project, where to purchase “Jocelyn’s Soil Booster,” and how your church might partner with FFL, please visit [foodforlife.ca](http://foodforlife.ca).



# The Missionality of Summer Prayer Walks

BY THE REVEREND FRAN WALLACE

"I have not done a prayer walk before, but this experience has given me the opportunity to interact more deeply with our group. We shared our love for walking, and admired the beauty of God's creation. Isn't it amazing? We prayed, and gave thanks for being there. Blessed be God forever!"

These are the words of Catherine, a parishioner at St. Aidan's who started with our prayer walking group from the first walk. When I was on vacation recently, this person graciously took on the organizing and leading of prayer walks, continuing our new engagement with the community surrounding the church building. I hadn't asked that anyone do this. Catherine thought of it and proceeded to build this ministry, and we're grateful.

Being missionally-minded is a growing movement among us, and the prayer walks seemed



like a natural way to go about being more missional, especially during the pandemic. We wear masks and maintain a two-metre distance while we pray and walk. When we talk about mission today, if we consider the surrounding community of the parish of St. Aidan's to be God's mission field, I don't think we are going to go out and approach individuals and knock on doors and preach repentance. That's not the plan, anyway.

And that may afford some relief to many. But by learning from Jesus to persevere, have faith, be faithful, and speak the truth boldly, we can live into his words: "do not fear, only believe." And by our words and actions, others may be awakened to something they are searching for. They might do more than just dismiss us.

On our first prayer walk in the neighbourhood, five of us walked from St. Aidan's to the

local nearby park, where we took rest in the sanctuary of trees and flowers in bloom and prayed. We prayed before setting out, and along the way stopped to pray at the homes where we knew parishioners lived, as well as others. We were a group of persons walking and talking together, physically distanced; I wore the collar.

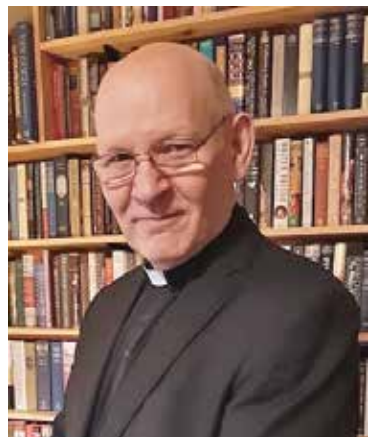
We encountered many people, and many waved and smiled; friendliness abounded. Not everyone, though—some were maybe focused on their own thoughts, some may have been dismissive or disinterested, some gave a bit of a look, possibly sceptical. I sure noticed, though, and I found myself watching each approaching person and noting their engagement, or lack thereof.

These prayer walks, often bathed in sunshine as we pass by beautiful gardens, talking with God quietly on occasion as we stop to say our gratitude or pray for persons (no one passing by would realize we are in prayer, we're Anglican after all!), the

comfort of accompanying one another, being with God intentionally, and speaking personally—this a special time for me. I believe and hope it is for the other persons who participate. When it's safe to do so, we'll end the time of walking with some refreshment in a local café or some other place of beverage, depending on the time of day.

Is this missional? Yes. We walk with awareness of God's presence, we pray for the community, we give thanks to God for Creation, and we represent the church visible, out and about in the neighborhood. As we greet people, perhaps it lets them know that we care to say "hi," to acknowledge and connect with them. We appreciate their greeting us, and sometimes conversation happens. We're connecting. It's all helping us get to know the community a little more. And maybe these walks will impact the community getting to know St. Aidan's more. Prayer walks are missional and they are good; thanks be to God.

## Obscuring the Face of Christ



BY THE REVEREND MICHAEL COREN

The devil, it's said, has all the best tunes. Not sure if that's necessarily true, but Beelzebub certainly has an exemplary public relations department. How else can we explain how appalling the Christian world often appears at times of crisis? That's seldom been as biting obvious as during the COVID-19 pandemic, with resistance to vaccinations often led by conservative Christians.

The vast majority of churchgoers aren't reactionary, and they've fully embraced lockdowns, social distancing, and vaccinations—including the

Anglican Church internationally. But that can't obscure the reality of the situation. Read right-wing Christian media platforms and websites, listen to their radio broadcasts, look at who is protesting, and the paranoia and anger is palpable.

A poll earlier this year by the US Public Religion Research Institute found that around half of white evangelicals said they'd refuse the vaccine, and the indications are that this number has remained fairly static. In Canada the percentages seem to be lower, but the problem remains. Last December, for example, MP Derek Sloan, a vocal Christian and social conservative, sponsored a petition before the House of Commons claiming, "Bypassing proper safety protocols means COVID-19 vaccination is effectively human experimentation." It received more than 41,000 signatures.

The opposition to vaccines is multifaceted. The most ideologically plausible, if still bizarre, objection comes from those convinced that embryonic stem cells have been used in the development and manufacture,

and in some cases that may be true. Yet even the Vatican has said it's "morally acceptable" to receive a vaccination that has used cell lines derived from aborted fetuses, due to the "grave danger" of the pandemic. But Pope Francis is not popular with Catholic conservatives, and they look to alternative leaders in their church, many of whom have the most bizarre ideas.

Other forms of Christian anti-vaccine hysteria are drenched in "hidden agenda" fantasies, conspiracy theories about the state and secularism, and eschatological mania. There is a global battle, it is said, between the remnant of authentic Christians, be they Catholic or evangelical, and the Godless forces of government, media, and business. COVID, and the vaccine response to it, are all part of the plan to control and dominate. There are myriad references to Masonic plots and the Illuminati, and sometimes—predictably—this dark lunacy bleeds over into anti-Semitism.

Not always though. One of the loudest resisters to vaccinations is a nun called Mother

Miriam, a Jewish convert to Roman Catholicism, with a popular daily phone-in show in which she presents her "mission to bring hope to a world that has lost its way." Part of that mission, apparently, is to argue that vaccines are "not only unethical and immoral, but have been proven to be very dangerous."

COVID, runs the anti-vaccine narrative, is either a hoax or, if real, is nothing more than a mild flu. If the latter, it has been exploited by plotting governments and elites to close churches, remove freedom of religion, and impose vaccines. Donald Trump, always eager to echo fundamentalist rhetoric, said while still president that some states had closed places of worship while allowing "liquor stores and abortion clinics" to stay open.

The obsession with conspiracies isn't confined to Christian conservatives, of course, and is typical of any sub-group that sees its place under threat by a world it can't accept or understand. The consequences, as we know only too well, can be fatal. In the Christian context,

it's tied in with polemics about Armageddon, the end times, and the notion that vaccines contain the "mark of the beast." This nonsense is supposedly from the Book of Revelation, where the Antichrist is said to tempt Christians to mark their bodies. That's a callow misreading of the deeply complex final book of the New Testament, as much poetry as allegory, and demanding a non-literal approach. Problem is, literalism is at the broken heart of the anti-vaccine theocrats.

Mingled together, it's a toxic and antisocial mess, with the "true believers" more determined than ever. I'd like to think that this will change, and that all who claim to follow Christ will embrace the well-being of the community, the science that our God-given minds can use to make the world a better place, and a balanced and informed approach to challenge and crisis. Yes, I'd like to think that, but I've been around too long to be so trusting. "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing." But that's from the Gospel of Luke, and not to be trusted—he was a doctor.



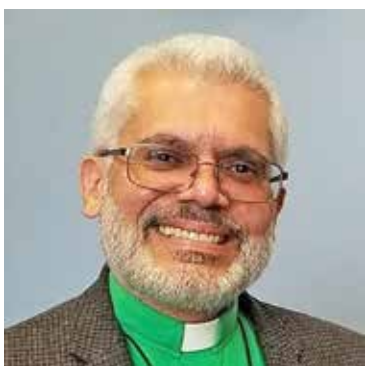
# ANTI-RACISM: *A Journey Towards Healing and Wholeness*

A Special Series



## October: Latin American Heritage Month

This is the fifth installment of this series.



### BY THE REVEREND ANTONIO ILLAS

I am humbled and honoured to serve in the diocesan Anti-racism Working Group and to be a proud member of the Latin American community in Canada, specifically a Latino.

The creation of this working group is a serious attempt by Bishop Susan to place anti-racism, an important issue, in the list of priorities of the diocese.

As a Church and people of faith committed to the Good News of God in Christ and being faithful to our baptismal covenant vows, we are called to love our neighbours, strive for justice and peace among all people, and to respect the dignity of every human being. As a Christian I cannot remain silent to a racist and white supremacy discourse that excludes, oppresses, and marginalizes Black, Indigenous/First Nations peoples, People of Colour, and others.

In an attempt to be inclusive

and to recognize a particular ethnic community in Canada, the federal government in 2018 established October as Latin American Heritage Month. All Canadians are invited to celebrate this month. It's a time when all in Canada are reminded about the significant contributions the Latin American community has made to the social, economic, and political fabric of this nation. It's also a month to have "fiestas," and to promote culture, food, music, and Latin traditions with all Canadians.

I encourage you to reach out to a member of the Latin American community in your parish or neighbourhood and share your stories. From your contact experience you will more than likely learn that the majority of Latin American Canadians are mostly immigrants who arrived in the late-twentieth century, and continue to arrive, from Mexico, Chile, El Salvador, Peru, Colombia, with smaller communities from Cuba, Honduras, Venezuela, Costa Rica, Puerto Rico, and elsewhere, with nearly all Latin American countries being represented.

The reasons for immigrating include Canada's better economic and education opportunities, as well as political and social stability. Also, some have immigrated because of authori-

tarian regimes, political repression, crime, violence, and civil war in their native countries.

I am a firm believer that immigration and multiculturalism enrich Canadian society. All peoples—despite our cultural and language differences—work to make a better country for future generations. All our contributions forge a diverse and strong nation.

Recently, as an assignment for my formation in the Sewanee Ministry Collaborative, I read *Decolonizing Christianity: Becoming Badass Believers* by Miguel A. De La Torre. The author asserts that "racism is an institutionalized ideology that creates and justifies unearned power, privilege, and profit for one group of people due to their race or ethnicity at the expense of others while systematically protecting, maintaining, and advancing said power, privilege and profit." Racism has no space in our Church and society. If we honour our baptismal covenant, we all must prophetically denounce the injustice and oppression of racism in all its forms.

De La Torre writes, "Racism is not a belief but complicity with an ideology." We cannot be complacent and must do what we can to educate about the evils of racism.

In 2019 I accepted a call to be

the missionary to the migrant farmworkers' community in the diocese. Most of the migrant farmworkers I serve are our neighbours for eight months of the year. I have been blessed to serve these workers from Mexico and Central America, also a part of the Latin American community in Canada. Every year under the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program (SAWP), thousands arrive to work in the Canadian agricultural fields, vineyards, orchards, and greenhouses. The work migrant farmworkers do is exhausting and back-breaking labour that most Canadians do not want to do.

The SAWP was created in 1966 to counter the chronic shortage of domestic seasonal farmworkers. This program provides the Canadian agricultural sector and the fruit and vegetable growers a vital source of supplementary labour and ensures that fresh, local foods are available on the tables of Canadian families.

As De La Torre writes, "Bringing an end to racism requires dismantling the social structures that enforce the racism of nice, politically correct white people." An injustice of the SAWP is that it does not provide a path toward permanent resident status for the migrant farmworkers that want such status. Not being able to

become a permanent resident forces the migrant farmworkers to return to their home country to collect their Canadian earned pension, and prevents migrant farmworkers from receiving the Canadian health care services to which they have contributed by working and paying taxes in Canada.

In June 2020, Bishop Susan wrote to Prime Minister Trudeau: "Canada must provide status for all and landed status now. This means that everyone in the country without permanent resident status must be regularized and given permanent resident status immediately, including migrant workers, study permit holders, and refugee claimants." I believe in permanent resident status for all.

As we celebrate Latin American Heritage Month, we all have an opportunity to enhance the dignity of all peoples by doing what we can to educate ourselves about the evils of racism and to denounce it when we see it.

Antonio is the diocesan Migrant Farmworkers Missioner & Priest-in-Charge at St. John the Evangelist, Winona. For more information, visit [www.migrant-farmworkers.ca](http://www.migrant-farmworkers.ca).



Pre-pandemic, community meals were offered for farmworkers, mostly Latinos, as part of the Migrant Farmworkers Project.

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Honor the LORD with your wealth and with the firstfruits of all your produce —Proverbs 3:9





## Below the Surface of the Wilderness

BY THE VENERABLE MAX WOOLLAVER

In the nighttime when you are searching for answers, Yahweh comes to you. When you stretch out your arms and offer up broken phrases of liturgy and Scripture, Yahweh comes to you. When your heart is ensnared in anxieties, Yahweh comes to you. When you offer up the cries of your heart, soul, mind and body in words you would never dare to speak to anyone or when there is no one else to whom to speak them, God comes to you.

When an entire people in the wilderness longed to be back home where the devil they knew was better than the devil they did not know, Yahweh came to them. When an entire people stretched out their arms in prayer and complaint, when they offered broken phrases of liturgy or Scripture, Yahweh came to them. When an entire wilderness people pleaded in words only known to people who have trials in common, Yahweh spoke to them.

We too are journeying through a wilderness of shared trials.

Yahweh spoke to the people of Israel and Yahweh is speaking to us.

Our Anglican Community of Faith, journeying through COVID-19, is walking across the surface of a wilderness. We have read that after a long and troubled, restless, anxious night, “when the layer of dew had lifted, there on the surface of the wilderness was a fine, flaky substance, as fine as the frost on the ground.” This is the manna

which fed the Israelites in the wilderness.

There is also manna for us on the surface of this coronavirus wilderness.

It feels providential to have been reading Thomas Merton’s journals these past months. Thomas Merton was an American monk, and is an essential soul to come to know. As long as people seek the face of God, Thomas Merton will be read.

It also feels providential to read Thomas Merton quoting Karl Barth: “Everyone who has to contend with unbelief should be advised that he ought not to take his own unbelief too seriously. Only faith is to be taken seriously, and if we have faith as a grain of mustard seed, that suffices for the devil to have lost his game.” Merton himself goes on to write: “the devil and our nature try to persuade us that before we can begin to believe we must be perfect in everything. Faith is not important as it is ‘in us.’ Our faith is ‘in God,’ and with even a very little of it, God is in us.”

This tells me that the manna we seek is within us. The manna you seek is within you. The manna you seek is the Living Christ—the one who named himself “The Bread of Life.” The Christ is Living Manna.

We no longer need to restlessly scan the surface of the wilderness. We are called instead to enter into the depths of our own being to the place of God’s indwelling ... through Christ, with Christ, and in Christ.



## The Return

BY NANCY COOMBS

“‘RETURN TO ME,’ DECLARES THE LORD OF HOSTS, ‘THAT I MAY RETURN TO YOU’...”

ZECHARIAH 1:3

**This pew, she says, feels not the same.  
Which one was mine? Then shrugs in shame.  
The air smells musty, cloistered, stale --  
I try, she gulps, but can't inhale.  
The organ's shrieks, they pain my ears!  
Time's tender silence numbed her fears.  
No blood of Christ to soothe her soul,  
His garment's hem can pay the toll.  
Her emptied palm, no hand to shake,  
The railing grasps, in sorrow's wake.  
She waited for this day so long  
Yet jilted dream, it all seems wrong.  
The Spirit knows, He's right there too:  
My love, I have awaited you.  
The peace she feels for all and One  
Gains comfort from God's only Son.  
Forgive me, Lord, and let me be  
Nearer you here, my friends to see.**

## Why I Joined Climate Justice Niagara

BY EMILY PFAU

When I joined in on a Zoom meeting last fall for Niagara in Action, I had no idea how much it would impact me. I had been involved in Niagara Anglican Youth Ministry through my parish, St. Michael’s in Hamilton, and through that I learned of this other opportunity.

The presenters that day were both speaking about “Purging Plastic,” one from a personal viewpoint and one from a national perspective. The first was Canon Dawn Davis and her daughter, Yohanna, who taught us how they tried to use less plastic in their home and in their lives. They talked about “shopping naked,” meaning you would only use reusable bags, limit the number of products you buy that have plastic packaging, and so on. Some tips included baking or making things at home, like making hamburger buns and freezing them or even making ice cream at home. When buying meat, bring your own steel contain-



ers. Yohanna even stopped eating one her favourite foods, yogurt, because of the plastic containers.

The second presentation was by Ashley Wallis, from an organization called Environmental Defence. They have been doing work in Canada for over 30 years. Ashley shared many facts most people are not aware of about plastics. For example, almost half the plastic waste in Canada is single use, and 86% of all Canadian plastic waste is sent to a landfill.

One area we need more awareness about is microplastics. Ashley wasn’t trying to scare us, but it is important to know that plastic isn’t just in the

landfills, but it is everywhere, and the tiniest pieces of plastic when broken down are called microplastics. They can make their way into our food and our water and into us. Imagine we are eating plastic in our food!

It was a very informative morning and opened my eyes to new things. I knew I wanted to learn more and get involved so I joined Climate Justice Niagara.

Then on March 10 of this year, Climate Justice Niagara put on an event called, “A Coffee House About Water.” This came to life because I had an idea about putting on an event to get the message out to people. Deirdre Pike helped me plan this as well as the rest of the committee members. I presented on what had inspired me. It was a wonderful night and I would love to have something like it again.

I am honoured to be on the Climate Justice Niagara committee and encourage other youth to join me in get involved in fighting the climate crisis.





## God Bless You

**BY THE REVEREND  
DEACON ANN VANDER  
BERG**

I am sitting on the deacon's bench pondering. As I write, it is a beautiful, sunny, breezy Sunday morning in mid-August. I am wearing my best linen. The heat has been scorching and it offers some reprieve. This bench provides me with some shelter, too, as it is nestled within a cluster of tall, strong, vibrant, living trees. Today was Canon Mike Deed's last service as rector of St. James, Dundas. It was also the first Sunday since the pandemic began that I could serve in church as a deacon. I was glad my gown fit.

In March 2020, on the last Sunday before the pandemic

was declared, I offered a homily. It was based on the Scripture passage where Jesus walked on water and Peter came out of the boat and walked toward Jesus. That Sunday, I decided to get out of the boat around the lectern and spoke from the centre aisle; nervous, yet determined. I have been outside of the boat ever since. Not always walking on water, trusting in Jesus.

This month, October, marks my second anniversary as vocational deacon at St. James parish. Just before I was ordained, Mike said to me, "God bless you." Words that broke into my heart. After I was ordained by Bishop Susan, I burst into tears.

Five months after my ordination, with the announcement of a global pandemic, I was cata-

pulted into isolation and into the vortex of spiritual care in a healthcare setting; something I slowly started to emerge from earlier this summer. During that time, I was prayed for directly or indirectly by members of my parish, diocese, and community, along with people around the world, perhaps more than any other time in my life. Like many, I find it difficult to talk about the past eighteen months. They were a season of prayer and work, prayer and work, prayer and work—often entering a mystery and eventually a trust, beyond my understanding and even beyond my desire to understand. In my leisure time, one of the things I learned how to do was sew clothing, something I would not have dreamed possible in a thousand years.

Every morning for the past thirty years or so I have lit a candle, written in a private journal, and prayed. Sometimes, I write a grocery list. As I came out of isolation, my soul was being restored. I had the strength to experience God weeping for me, for you, and for creation. I had the strength to feel the pain of oppression as a universal

human experience connecting me with the oppressed throughout the world. It felt good and I felt both solace and joy, because if I was really paying attention, how much more is God paying attention?

I had the strength to experience God's response to a single prayer. And in the dwelling place of love I recommitted my life to God.

Today I pause on the deacon's bench before I continue my travels and reach a fork in the road. At the end of August, Mike would no longer be rector at St. James. As one way of saying goodbye, he invited members of the parish to meet with him for fifteen-minute segments to pray together. I met with Mike. We prayed.

I am amazed how my season of praying with Mike in liturgy—and in quiet—helped me to find words for my experience of prayer and of work, in both my personal and professional life. I have been blessed.

Mike, "God bless you."

*Deacon Ann serves at St. James Anglican Church in Dundas*



Ann Vander Berg at her ordination in 2019. Photo: Bill Mous



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\*Living in a VIVA Retirement Community. Photo taken prior to pandemic. Masks are currently required in all common areas.



# PWRDF Refugee Network Moves Heaven and Earth

BY SUZANNE RUMSEY

**REFUGEE** (noun): a person who has been forced to leave their country in order to escape war, persecution, or natural disaster (Oxford English Dictionary); someone who is unable or unwilling to return to their country of origin owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion (1951 UN Refugee Convention)

Where and what is your heaven on earth? Likely, it would involve a place you call home, a place of family and community, work and leisure, a place made up of the things that define who you are. Imagine for a moment that you have become a refugee, defined by loss of place, of home, community, and possibly even family. You have been forced to flee and are now faced with the daunting task of moving heaven and earth to find safety, shelter, a new place to call home.

In its 2020 report, the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) indicated that “[d]espite COVID-related movement restrictions and pleas from the international community for a [global] ceasefire that would facilitate the COVID-19 response, displacement continued to occur—and to grow. As a result, above one per cent of the world’s population—or 1 in 95 people—is now forcibly displaced. This compares with 1 in 159 in 2010.”

Despite the growing numbers of those seeking asylum, the UNCHR also reported that “only 34,400 refugees were resettled to third countries in 2020.... This compares to 107,800 the year before and marks a dramatic 60 per cent decline—at a time when 1.4 million refugees are estimated to be in need of resettlement.”

In mid-August, 640 Afghans crowded onto a U.S. Air Force CF-18 in a desperate attempt to find safety in another country. It was five times the plane’s passenger capacity. The image

flooding news broadcasts and social media feeds was a searing definition of moving heaven and earth.

Here in Canada, there is a small group of Anglicans who, in less dramatic but no less committed ways, go about the work of moving heaven and earth to bring to Canada those who have lost their heaven on earth. They are the refugee sponsorship coordinators for the 15 dioceses that hold agreements with Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada. Some of them are lay people, others ordained, some are paid, others are volunteers. The Primate’s

World Relief & Development Fund (PWRDF) provides modest networking and advocacy support to this group known as the PWRDF Refugee Network. Since COVID-19 hit, the group has gathered regularly on Zoom to check in, offer mutual support and mentoring and to strategize.

When representatives of the Refugee Network gathered in July to discuss what key messages they would like to share with Anglicans in Canada, they talked about the enormous global need for refugee sponsorship; a need they are confronted with on a daily basis in the form of appeals for asylum.

The coordinators also spoke about the complexity of the needs of those seeking asylum. No two cases are alike. This is compounded by a labyrinthine and painfully slow sponsorship process. “What is discouraging is the three-year wait that can be soul-destroying for family members and individuals overseas,” said Tony Davis, Diocese of B.C.

Refugee Coordinator.

Yet this moving heaven and earth, of welcoming the stranger, can be transformative for refugees and sponsors alike. “It is an opportunity to encounter ‘the other,’” explained Scott McLeod, Niagara’s coordinator. The professional, cultural and other gifts that refugees bring to Canada, the group noted, are beyond measure. “Resilience,” said Jane Townshend of the Diocese of Huron, “is a key word when it comes to refugees.”

At the same time, they are keenly aware that some refugees arrive in Canada deeply traumatized and in need of large measures of compassion and practical support. This can make for some very challenging sponsorships, said McLeod. “But that does not negate the legitimacy of the refugee sponsorship program which is legitimate in and of itself.”

Indeed, long before the United Nations defined who is a refugee, Jesus’ judgement of

the nations spelled out clearly what our response needs to be to those who have moved heaven and earth to begin anew in Canada:

“Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me... Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.” (Matthew 25: 34b-36, 40)

*Suzanne Rumsey is the Public Engagement Program Coordinator for the PWRDF. To learn more about refugee sponsorship, please contact [refugees@niagaraanglican.ca](mailto:refugees@niagaraanglican.ca)*



Photo: PWRDF/Arindam Banerjee

## Niagara Anglican Deadlines and Submission Guidelines

### Deadlines:

November – September 27  
December – October 29  
January – November 29

### Submissions:

#### News, Letters, Reviews

(books, films, music, theatre)

– 400 words or less

**Articles** – 600 words or less

#### Original cartoons or art –

Contact the Editor.

**Photos** – very large, high resolution (300 ppi), action pictures (people doing something).

Include name of photographer. Written permission of parent/guardian must be obtained if photo includes a child.

All submissions must include writer’s full name and contact information. We reserve the right to edit or refuse submissions.

#### Questions or information:

Contact the Editor at [editor@niagaraanglican.ca](mailto:editor@niagaraanglican.ca)

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# Ruth: A Story of Unwavering Love

BY THE VENERABLE DR. JOHN COURSE

Those familiar with the book of Ruth likely recognize the lyrical vow of unwavering, loyal love Ruth makes to her mother-in-law after she urges Ruth to go back to her own people: “Do not press me to leave you or to return from following you! Where you go, I will go; where you lodge, I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your God my God. Where you die, I will die—there I will be buried.”

The story opens with a famine causing a young family seeking food security to emigrate from Bethlehem to the neighbouring country of Moab. The father dies a short time later, and the two sons marry Moabite women, Ruth and Orpah. Both sons then die, leaving their mother, Naomi, bereft. After hearing the famine in Israel has ended, Naomi returns to her hometown. Her two daughters-in-law begin the trek with her, but she insists they go back to their own families. Orpah does so, but Ruth refuses to abandon Naomi and utters the well-known vow quoted above.



Ruth and Boaz, by Julius Schnorr von Carolsfeld

Source: Wikimedia Commons

When they arrive in Bethlehem, Naomi asks to be called by a different name because, as she says, “The Almighty has dealt bitterly with me. I went away full, but the LORD has brought me back empty.”

Naomi’s outlook reflects a common understanding of an earlier era that, sadly, some still ascribe to today: that God is the source of trouble as well as blessing. Further, she is so overcome with grief that she does not yet see the blessing Ruth is to her.

Naomi means ‘pleasant’, but after the heartbreaks she endures in Moab, the name she wants to be known as is Mara, or ‘bitterness.’ The meaning of the rest of the cast of names in this story is also significant, as names often are in the Hebrew Bible. Ruth, for instance, means ‘friend’ or ‘companion’, and she certainly proves to be that and more to Naomi. Similarly, Boaz, the man Ruth ends up marrying, means ‘in him is strength’, and Boaz proves to be strong and trustworthy in character.

There are many references to

God in this story, though God remains in the background and is understood as blessing the actions of the principal characters who treat each other in a respectful, loving manner, mirroring the quality of blessed love—the gracious and loyal love God has for humankind.

Three times this Hebrew word blessed is used in this short story. First, at its outset when Naomi urges her two daughters-in-law to return to their homes, she asks God to look upon them with the same blessed love they have shown her. Next, about halfway in, Naomi blesses Boaz for exhibiting blessed love for Ruth by ensuring these two women receive food. Then, shortly thereafter, when Ruth startles Boaz late in the night, he expresses his admiration for her as an exemplar of blessed love.

The story ends on a happy note with the newly married couple soon conceiving a child who brings the once-bitter Naomi joy and satisfaction.

A brief genealogy completes the book of Ruth, identifying this child as the grandfather of King David. Although it traces David’s ancestry through the males, as is typical in a patriar-

chal society, Ruth the Moabite is clearly understood to be David’s great-grandmother.

Throughout Israel’s history those attempting to preserve its religious heritage frowned on intermarriage partly out of concern that foreign spouses would taint Israel’s covenant relationship with God by introducing the worship of false gods. For any that might question the ‘purity’ of David’s bloodline, the story of Ruth presents his great-grandmother as a loyal heroine devoted to Israel’s God.

Moreover, it offers an opposing viewpoint to the extreme policy introduced during the era of Ezra and Nehemiah when, following the Babylonian exile, an attempt was made by those who had returned to Israel to preserve Jewish bloodlines by banning marriage with non-Jews and dissolving any such pre-existing marriages.

Overall, the book of Ruth presents the timely, inclusive message that ‘foreigners’ or ‘outsiders’ should be embraced as valued members of society who enrich the lives of others as Ruth did for Naomi and Boaz and those around her.



On September 1, The Reverend Jody Balint had the honour and privilege of blessing Port Colborne’s new rainbow crosswalk, a symbol of diversity and inclusiveness for the area. The painting of the crosswalk was an initiative of the Downtown Port Colborne Business Improvement Association and supported by several partners, including St. James and St. Brendan’s Anglican Church.

Photos contributed by Rev. Jody Balint

## There are Angels Here Among Us

BY BEV GROOMBRIDGE

You send angels here to guide us on our journey home to You,  
Unrecognized and yet still present as we walk our whole life through.  
They lift us when we’re weary, they encourage us to speak,  
They share life’s twisted pathway; they uphold us when we’re weak.

They are present in the moments when the world has gone insane,  
They whisper peace and healing and gently call His name.  
We catch a fleeting glimpse of them in a newborn baby’s eyes,  
Freshly sent here by the Father, tiny angels in disguise.

There are others here among us sent to encourage and to guide  
They are sent here by the Father to teach and walk beside,  
They help expand our thinking pointing to the Lord of love,  
A priceless gift from heaven, sent straight from God above.

There are angels here among us, they are present every day,  
We hear their voices singing when we begin to pray.  
They’re with us in our sorrow, they’re present in our joy  
We just need to stop and see them, and their presence we’ll enjoy.

Sometimes our world gets busy, there’s just so much to be done,  
That we fail to claim the blessings that are sent here by the Son.  
We must set aside a time each day so we become aware,  
Of the angels God has sent to us for they are everywhere.

