

Emphasizing the Action

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A section of the Anglican Journal



NIAGARA ANGLICAN



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

SEPTEMBER 2022

Parish Mission Action Plans Blooming Across Diocese

BY CANON CHRISTYNN PERKONS

Parishes across the Diocese have been gathering to generate unique Mission Action Plans, setting a course for action and reflection, and for renewal and mission. Congregations of all sizes and stages are launching initiatives that will deepen adult faith formation, reshape parish culture to enhance mission, and promote the fullness of life in their neighbourhoods.

A Mission Action Plan is a tool to help parishes identify God's unique call to mission for each parish, focusing on each parish's strengths, gifts, and passions.

What are some of the initiatives emerging from this prayerful discernment?

- Demystify language and rituals so people have a deeper understanding of what they say and do.
- Create small discussion groups to build relationships around shared interests with

faith woven throughout.

- Create space outside parish walls where it is safe to encounter God and the Holy Spirit.
- Plan events that connect each parish to its area's historians, poets, musicians, and artisans.
- Develop a community music program
- Partner with local schools around climate action.
- Develop a multilingual welcoming process to reflect our

See *MISSION* Page 4



Niagara School for Missional Leadership Fall 2022 Course Registration Available



Photo: Christin Hume/Unsplash

Registration is now open for seven Niagara School for Missional Leadership (NSML) courses beginning in September and October as the school heads

into its second year. Laypeople, clergy, and groups who are excited about joining in God's mission in the world are encouraged to register.

Courses cover a range of subjects that speak to opportunities and challenges being faced in the parishes and communities of this diocese—and beyond! They are led by experienced, effective missional practitioners who aim to inspire and equip participants to lead vibrant communities of faith.

Several courses return this fall as part of a core slate that will be offered regularly. These include the first of two Christian Foundations courses taught by Patrick Paulsen that seek to explore the connected narrative of the Old and New Testaments; Bishop Susan Bell's course on allowing church,

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Bishop Bell at Lambeth



Anglican bishops from around the world—including Bishop Susan Bell, pictured here with Bishop David of the Episcopal Church of South Sudan—gathered in England this summer for the Lambeth Conference. The once-in-a-decade gathering plays a vital role in the life of the Anglican Communion, providing time and space for bishops to meet, converse, share fellowship, and pray. The theme of the conference was *God's Church for God's World*.

Photo contributed by Bishop Bell

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

A Special Series



Emphasizing the Action in the TRC's 94 Calls to Action

BY DEIRDRE PIKE

As Pope Francis' visit to Turtle Island demonstrated time and again, words of truth and reconciliation, no matter how apologetic, will not have the fullest possible outcome without accompanying action.

September 30 will be the second time Canada marks National Truth and Reconciliation Day. We've taken our photos in orange shirts. We've watched the Doctrine of Discovery. Perhaps you've done the Blanket Exercise.

We are learning to be consistent in our practice of acknowledging the gift of the land on which we peaceably lead our lives in and beyond this diocese. We are learning the history of residential schools and finding out we are not who we thought

we were as Settlers in this place.

What actions can we take as individuals to mark our commitment to these words we use so easily now: truth and reconciliation?

The First Nations Child and Family Caring Society has created the "Seven Free Ways to Make a Difference" campaign for First Nations children and their families. The Caring Society is led by a brilliant and compassionate social worker, Cindy Blackstock. Blackstock is a Canadian Gitksan activist for child welfare and a professor for the School of Social Work at McGill University.

There are various campaigns to learn about and sign onto, advocating for change. For example, the "I Am a Witness" campaign invites people to learn about the case on First Nations

child welfare and Jordan's Principle, and to decide for themselves whether or not they think there is discrimination against First Nations children and youth.

Jordan's Principle is another of the seven ways to act. Learn and then advocate for change. Jordan's Principle ensures First Nations children can access the supports they need, when they need them. Payment disputes within and between federal and provincial or territorial governments over services and supports for First Nations children are common. First Nations children are frequently left waiting for supports they desperately need, or are denied supports that are available to other children.

What action can we take as a diocese to make a difference this

year?

Two events are being hosted by the Diocese of Niagara for the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. On the evening of Wednesday, September 28, 6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m., we will hold a "Listening to Indigenous Voices" session online, including a virtual tour of Woodland Cultural Centre.

On September 30, which is also Orange Shirt Day, a second gathering will take place from 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon. This will be a hybrid event with people invited to attend in person (location to be announced) or from home. This will build on Wednesday's event, but it is not necessary to attend the first to be at the second. To register for either or both dates, please email deirdre.pike@niagaraanglican.ca or call 905-527-1316, ext. 470.

To learn more about the Seven Free Ways to Make a Difference, please visit fncaringsociety.com/7-free-ways-make-difference.



Deirdre Pike is the justice and outreach program consultant for the Diocese of Niagara and a member of the diocesan Anti-Racism Working Group.

New Communications Coordinator Hired



Bishop Susan Bell is pleased to announce the hiring of Connor Jay to serve as the diocesan communications coordinator, on a full-time, permanent basis. Connor will support our diocesan communications, including the *Niagara Anglican* newspaper, by coordinating, curating, and creating missionally oriented content for publication across our many media platforms. This work will help

animate the diocesan Mission Action Plan, support episcopal priorities, and facilitate the sharing of stories of personal discipleship and transformation, innovative leadership, ministry renewal, and new missional enterprises.

Connor holds a Master of Divinity and a Master of Arts in Theology from Martin Luther University College in Waterloo, Ontario, as well as a Bachelor of Arts in Journalism from St. Thomas University in Fredericton, New Brunswick. Connor has served in a variety of church and non-profit organizations in digital marketing roles. Skilled in both digital communications and the printed word, Connor has played an important role in the redesign and development of digital infrastructure within several organizations.

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Assistant Bishop Appointed to Serve Diocese of Niagara

Archbishop Colin Johnson has been appointed by Bishop Susan Bell to serve as an assistant bishop of the diocese, effective September 1, 2022.

"I am absolutely delighted that the archbishop has agreed to assist me in the exercise of my episcopal responsibilities," said Bishop Bell. "Archbishop Colin has a heart for Jesus, a keen instinct for ministry, and a depth of experience that is unrivalled in the Canadian Church."

The responsibilities of an assistant bishop are determined in consultation with the diocesan bishop. Bishop Bell has identified the following three areas of focus: occasional assistance with the exercise of episcopal ministry, including leading worship, providing pastoral care, and making visitations; offering deployment and mentoring support for emerging clergy leaders; and providing

expert consultant support in the analysis of structures, systems, and future ministry needs.

Recently, the archbishop has been doing some discrete pieces of work for the diocese, including an assessment of Cathedral Place structures, teaching with the Niagara School for Missional Leadership, and as transitional consultant at the parish of St. George's, Guelph during their interim period.

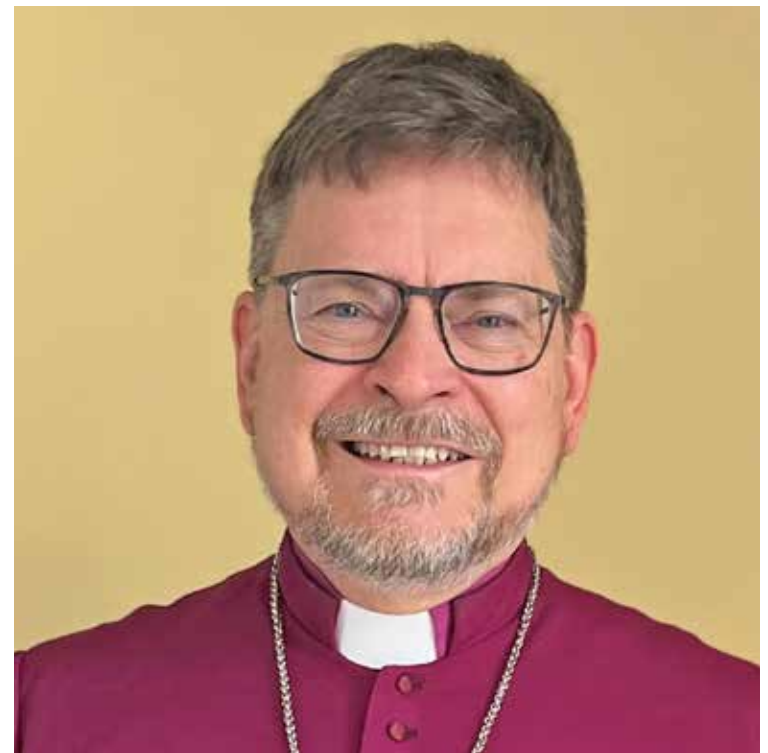
Archbishop Johnson is no stranger to Niagara, having been raised in Mount Forest. Bishop Bell noted that she has known and worked with Archbishop Johnson for all her vocation, and that they have a good and trusting relationship. "I have every confidence in Archbishop Johnson's skills, wisdom, and expertise, which he will bring to bear more formally in the role of assistant bishop," says Bishop Bell.

In accordance with the canons, Synod Council approved the appointment at its June meeting and Archbishop Anne Germond, metropolitan of the Ecclesiastical Province of Ontario, has also offered her endorsement.

"This appointment expands the capacity of the episcopal office to serve our parishes," says Bishop Bell. The role, undertaken at the direction of the diocesan bishop, is expected to involve a bit less than a day's work, spread out over the course of a week.

Before retiring in 2018, Archbishop Johnson served as bishop of Toronto from 2004, metropolitan of the Ecclesiastical Province of Ontario from 2009, and concurrently as bishop of Moosonee from 2014. He was ordained deacon in 1977, priest in 1978, and bishop in 2003.

Assistant bishops are required



to be already in episcopal orders at the time of their appointment and are typically retired from active ministry. Niagara has a history of a having bishops, with

the most recent being Bishop Ann Tottenham, who served during the episcopacy of Bishop Ralph Spence.

Sea Glass Hunting: It is There Whether We Look or Not

BY THE REVEREND CANON MARTHA TATARNIC

Our family took our first post-pandemic trip this summer, returning to P.E.I., one of our favourite places. I grew up steeped in the writing of L. M. Montgomery and nothing informed the imagination of my youth more than the Island. Despite the beautiful scenery of the Island, for large chunks of time my family could be found hunched over, squinting at our feet. We are sea glass hunters.

Sea glass comes in various colours and sizes, but most are miniscule and seemingly inconsequential. If you are not paying attention, it blends perfectly with the colourful stones and shells on the beach. It is glass that has been transformed by the ocean's waves carrying it from where it started,

as someone's broken garbage, to where it ends up, as glinting treasures, smooth to the touch and fascinating to the eye.

Cecilia has the best eye for sea glass. Gordon and I get better the more we search. Dan found the crown jewel of the week—a large chunk of rare sapphire. We consider sea glass hunting to be a team effort, so we all celebrate when one of us finds a particularly interesting piece. The hours often slip away from us as we sift through the piles of beach stones. We wonder where the glass may have come from, imagining what it may have looked like when it was shiny, new, and whole.

I write a lot about the Church.



My recently published book, *Why Gather?*, looks at why the Church might matter in a world that seems resolute about moving on from organized religion. It was born out of three interrelated threads: serving in a Church that has been in decline as long as I have been alive; struggling with burnout; and the disruption (and clarity) of the COVID-19 pandemic. Over the years I have watched friends

and colleagues choose paths other than Church leadership as the emotional toll of trying to save the Church catches up with them. These opt-outs seem to be snowballing in the wake of the pandemic. It is easy for congregations and leaders to become consumed with the question of the Church's survival; but the more important question is why bother at all? Does the Church have anything of meaning and relevance to offer our fraught and chaotic world?

I believe the answer looks something like sea glass hunting. I find hope—not in imagining what the Church could be—but in seeing instead what the Church is. We are a collection of multi-coloured pebbles washed up on the beach, and the glinting and glimmering

presence of God is present in us, through us, and around us. We do not have to make this happen—it is there whether we are looking or not. What we can do is get better at attending to the stories of where we have been, where we have been brought, and how God has done something beautiful in us. These stories are our richest treasure.

It is a treasure that needs to be shared and must be at the heart of why we keep showing up for one another, and why we believe God calls us together. These holy stories, of sea glass among the pebbles, are not limited to the Church—they are everywhere. I am convinced we can offer no better thing to the world than language, permission, a commitment to look again (and again) at the beach and see the beautiful things God is bringing in with the tide.

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Mission Action Plans

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

- community.
- Participate in community cleanup efforts as a church
- Help parishioners and community members engage with spiritual practices.
- Review and share ministry descriptions to expand participation.
- Highlight a phrase of the week that people can reflect on in relation to their daily lives, and discuss at social hour.
- Hold a monthly labyrinth walk with different facilitators open to whole community.
- Monitor our back door; follow up with those who've left, for feedback and closure.
- Find new ways to welcome and integrate seekers and newcomers.
- Carry out an "environmental scan" of our building to assess how we can better reflect our values to people passing by or coming through our space, including signs, symbols,

- artwork & other media.
 - Engage with the Invite Welcome Connect program to enhance how we interact with each other and with newcomers.
- Letters have gone out to qualifying parishes confirming their DMM rebates for missional ministry but the fund is still flush. Make sure that your parish finishes the four session MAP process and submits all the documentation to Canon Christyn Perkons at christyn.perkons@niagaraanglican.ca before December 1st (rebates dispersed on a first-come basis).

The Parish Mission Action Plan Guide, the MAP template, and the rebate requirements can be found at niagaraanglican.ca/mission

Questions and concerns can be addressed to Christyn Perkons at the email address above.

Discovering the Joys of Godly Play

BY ALISON STEELE

The past few years have been a wonderful time to reimagine how we as a church are offering programs. Those of us leading Children, Youth, and Family Ministries have never been more creative, but we have also been very mindful to centre everything around God's word.

During the pandemic, I found myself becoming increasingly interested in the Godly Play program for teaching Sunday School. The concept is simple: tell God's stories—the stories of the Bible—and let the children explore through wonder and play.

Godly Play was created by Jerome Berryman and has been used for years by churches all over the world. Based on the Montessori teaching method, children are welcomed into a classroom where they are surrounded by materials telling the stories of the Bible. Each week, a storyteller chooses a story to share with the children and leads a time of "wondering questions" to reflect on the story. Participants are invited to take some time to explore, play, or create with the stories or art materials. The class ends with a small feast shared together.

The pandemic was the perfect time for me to train to become a storyteller. The more I learned, the more I fell in love. Although I did not have all the materials or space to run the program in full at our parish, I decided to integrate certain aspects for our children when we reopened before Easter.

At St. David's in Welland, we have a variety of ages represented on Sunday mornings. Before the pandemic, three groups were active—post-pandemic, we decided to run one class with everyone together.



The first time I shared a story with the children, I had a group of about 13 children aged 3–12. They were so excited to be back together again!

I picked a long story to tell. I was prepared for it to be a disaster. For 20 minutes I told the story of Jesus's life (using only a few simple pictures) to a room full of complete silence. When we reflected on the story together, they had beautiful answers! We finished by giving them paper and colouring tools and letting them draw anything they wanted. The kids drew pictures of the River Jordan, the devil holding bread to tempt Jesus, symbols of communion hidden in a picture of spring—this was the moment I knew we were on to something.

Over the next few months, the kids kept asking for more stories. Since we are not set up with all the pieces to tell all the stories, we built them as we went. Parishioners were making wooden figures and helping me sew pieces to keep up with the

children's excitement. I heard kids using names and telling parts of stories from previous weeks as they connected them to the current week. Parents told stories of kids coming home thinking about our "wondering questions" and questioning other people's answers. They were listening and thinking!

I have not been able to tell a story every week with the children—the materials needed for some stories can be difficult to make or find—but you can see their eyes light up when they realize there is a new story to share. My job as the storyteller is to hold a sacred space for the children to hear God's word and allow them room to be spiritual, just like adults in church. For me, the beauty of Godly Play is the simplicity: God's stories are so good that they are all you need.

Alison Steele is CYFM Coordinator at St. David's, Welland

Why Believe?

Confirmation Prep Registration Open for Fall Sessions

Why Believe? It is not your typical confirmation course for youth, but rather an invitation for youth who are curious or interested in exploring Christianity, the Anglican Church, sacraments, and confirmation. Registration is now open for fall virtual sessions.

Visit our website for more information at <https://niagaraanglican.ca/cyfm> or e-mail sarah.bird@niagaraanglican.ca.

Registration deadline: Monday, September 12, 2022.

Dates include: Wednesday, September 21; Thursday, September 22; Wednesday,

September 28; and Thursday, September 29. All sessions will be held virtually on Zoom from 6:30 p.m.—8:30 p.m.

Reminder: The next confirmation date is Sunday, October 16, 2022 at 4:00 p.m. held at Christ's Church Cathedral, Hamilton.

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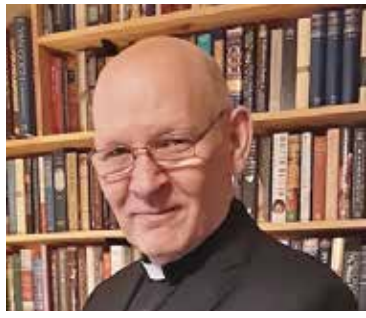
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What Baptisms and Funerals Teach Us About Life



BY THE REVEREND MICHAEL COREN

I've been ordained for three years now, and a priest for almost one year. In that time, I've conducted numerous ceremonies, but never before have I presided over a baptism in the morning and a funeral in the afternoon. That changed mid-July. Such a meeting of emotions, a pairing of beginning and conclusion, stirred in me a realization about the human condition, and what it says about all of us.

If we're honest, humanity isn't in a very good place right now. Wars, conflicts, Western societies as polarized as they've ever been for more than half-a-

century, and a social media and political culture that despises moderation and forgiveness, and celebrates extremes and denunciations.

What, we may ask, has this got to with the Church? The answer is deeper and sharper than you might think: the hopes and aspirations of loving parents; the pain and loneliness of grieving children and partners; the living, breathing narrative of our existence, in all of its fragility and beauty.

The precious borders of our lives should open us up, revealing intimacy and vulnerability, leading us to question our actions and filter our emotions and feelings through a prism of goodness and kindness. The experience of such significant events, be it a baptism, a wedding, or a funeral, becomes a catalyst for our self-awareness.

People of faith have prayer at the centre of our lives, and in that act of prayer we should let go, allow, and accept. In a way, it's a profound acquiescence, perhaps a reluctant acceptance

that we may not know what is best and that there is one who is above and beyond us. The superb paradox for those of us who are Christian is that in defeat is victory, and in death there is life. So biting contrary to a world that increasingly celebrates wealth, power, and prestige, no matter what the cost.

For me, baptisms and funerals sing tunes of selflessness, the abandonment of the ego, and the gorgeous acknowledgement that we're all—religious or not—part of a physical and a spiritual collective. The philosopher and theologian Søren Kierkegaard said that we can "creep into God." Not bad, that. Creep into God. Especially now, when the deity, or at least many of his followers, often have such a poor reputation. Take it slowly, take in gradually.

None of this is completely transparent or even obvious, but then God seldom does the transparent or the obvious. What the almighty does do is to remind us that we can be better and do better, and that in our

smiles of welcome and tears of farewell we can help to make the world the place it could and ought to be.

What should form us isn't the stock market but the market of generosity and care, not the speeches of politicians but the sacrifices of ordinary people, not the empty narcissism of reality television and show business flamboyance but the full and gritty grace of those who perform the thousand small miracles that keep optimism alive.

We have merely a few decades on earth to make a difference, and it doesn't have to be one that is recorded in history books or make the news. I've met too many genuine saints, largely

unknown beyond their family and community, to believe otherwise.

I was baptized as an adult, in my mid-20s, and in one of those strange turns of fate my grandfather died just two days later. He'd been ill for some time and I was with him in his final moments. This tough, hardened man who'd seen war, hardship, and poverty gave me a smile shortly before he closed his eyes for the last time. As he did so, he said through deep and strained breaths, "Mike, some things matter, some things always matter."

He was right. Some things really do. Welcome to that precious baby, good night to the beloved deceased. You matter, and you always will. Thank God.

Fall Courses Accepting Registrations

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

culture, and mission transform one's preaching style; Archbishop Colin Johnson's course on being responsive in leadership to the needs of the changing world around you; and John Bowen's course on challenging contemporary perspectives on Christian faith.

The NSML welcomes three new teacher-practitioners ready to guide learners this term. Cid Latty, Congregational Development Associate for the Canadian Baptists of Ontario and Quebec, is excited to lead a course on How to Start a Cafechurch, of which Latty has planted over a hundred across the United Kingdom and Canada. Tim Wray is a bi-vocational minister in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada living in Airdrie, Alberta, and will be sharing his experience of ministering in rural areas through the lens of relationship-forming. Finally, Chris Pullenayegem, Director of the Congregational Vitality through Community Engagement initiative at the

Vancouver School of Theology, will work with participants on forming partnerships between parishes and community organizations, supporting the diocese to be active and present in neighbourhoods as part of the Parish Mission Action Planning process.

The steering committee of the NSML is passionate about ensuring that these courses are not solely directed at ordained clergy, or people interested in pursuing ordination. While some courses emphasize growth for pastoral leadership, many courses are best experienced by teams of people from parishes that include both ordained and laypeople, and most are open for all regardless of their status.

"It's worth saying that the NSML exists for all people who desire to join God's mission in whatever their own specific context may be. Everyone is called to be a missional leader, not just those who hold formal leadership roles," says Carrie McFarland, the school's new coordinator. "If you are inter-

ested in learning more about how to practically live and serve in missional ways in your own life and in the life of the church, then I encourage you to sign up for a course."

The NSML's rapid growth during its first year has been bolstered by opportunities to partner with other dioceses across the Anglican Church of Canada. In the winter, a working relationship was formalized with the former Moosonee School for Ministry, now renamed after its founder, the late Bishop Tom Corston. This fall, the NSML will welcome participants from several other dioceses across Canada, including Toronto, Montreal, and Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island.

Applications for enrolment are currently being accepted for the fall 2022 term. To learn more about the Niagara School for Missional Leadership's current course offerings and teacher-practitioners, and to apply for enrolment in a course for fall 2022, visit nsml.ca or email hello@nsml.ca.



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The Life of Christ Church: God's Church on McNab and Lakeshore

BY DAVID SERVOS

"THE CYCLE OF LIFE IS COMING TO A CLOSE AT CHRIST CHURCH. WE HAVE SEEN THE SIGNS COMING FOR A DECADE. WITH VERY HELPFUL PARISHIONERS, WE WERE ABLE TO CONTINUE LONGER THAN WE INITIALLY EXPECTED BUT NOW, WE CAN NO LONGER AVOID THE FACTS. THIS CHURCH COMMUNITY HAS HAD A BEAUTIFUL RUN AND A PROFOUND IMPACT ON THE SURROUNDING COMMUNITY, AND WE CELEBRATE THAT. BUT IT ALSO GRIEVES OUR HEARTS THAT WE WILL HAVE TO SAY 'SO LONG FOR NOW'. WE KNOW THAT ST. PAUL'S CHURCHES IN ASIA MINOR, NOW TURKEY, NO LONGER EXIST BUT THEIR STORY OF EARLY DAYS, GROWTH PAINS AND STRONG MINISTRY REMAIN IN PAUL'S LETTERS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT. OUT OF DEATH COMES NEW LIFE. WE ARE A RESURRECTION PEOPLE. GOD ALWAYS CREATES NEW PLACES WHEN THE TIME IS RIGHT."

—THE REV. DOROTHY HEWLETT,
RECTOR OF CHRIST CHURCH
MCNAB

Nestled among the oaks, maples, and pines, perched on top of the forest-covered cliff that descends to the creek below, stands a monument. Christ Church McNab in Niagara-on-



the-Lake—a living testimony to our Creator, our faith, and our world. Standing outside, one marvels at the details shown in the Creator's work. There is peace as one admires the trees rustling in the lake breeze. If one stands with eyes closed and listens, it is not hard to imagine the Anishinaabe and

Haudenosaunee peoples who cared for this land before us. All this while deer, wolves, and raccoons roam the landscape ... indeed, the work of God the Creator!

Fast forward three centuries. It is Sunday morning and people gather to celebrate, praise, and give thanks to God

the Creator as they partake of Holy Communion. Looking around, one sees the beautiful stained-glass windows animating scripture. On the altar sit the elements reminding us of the Last Supper. To the side stands another altar honouring parishioners who gave their lives for peace. Through the vestibule, hampers of food are gathered as people share their abundance with those in need in the gracious living out of Jesus's command to "love thy neighbor as thyself." Outside, the cross atop the steeple glimmers in the sun.

For 169 years, people of faith have been restored and refreshed by these views. The missionary parish was formed in 1847 and met in a one-room schoolhouse a few hundred yards south of the current building. The church cornerstone was laid in 1853, and the first service was held on Christmas Day of that same year.

The building cost \$4,000, made possible by two farmers who mortgaged their farms and were later repaid through the sale of cemetery lots in 1860. The original Bible, Prayer Book, and Altar Book for Communion of the parish remain in the church today. Many of the early parish-

ioners were direct descendants of United Empire Loyalists, Americans who supported the British during the American Revolution. Seven generations later, descendants of those families continue to worship here. On October 22, 1860, Bishop Strachan consecrated Christ Church McNab.

Many changes have been made since then. In 1913, the parish hall was built at the northeast corner of the property. In 1934, the horse and buggy shed was demolished and the parish hall moved, taking the place of the carriage barn. This sparked much controversy, but as history would prove, it was a blessing. In a 1946 storm, the church spire crashed down on the original location of the parish hall.

During its lifetime, thousands of people have worshipped in the church and served the surrounding community in many capacities. Most recently, parishioners have been supporting and building relationships with Latino migrant farm workers who staff the farms and vineyards in the region. Shared communal meals and Spanish communion services under the umbrella of the Diocese of Niagara's mission to Migrant Farmworkers have been impactful for parishioners and migrant farm workers alike.

As the community at Christ Church continues to change, what will happen to Christ Church McNab? We cannot know the future, but we put our faith in God knowing that God has a mission, and that mission has a church. Something will become of this space that has nurtured so many.

Whatever happens next, we can trust that as one walks the property, the spirit of generations past and present will remind everyone of the power of God in Jesus Christ to transform lives through loving relationships. This consecrated space will ensure a constant reminder of our Creator and Redeemer.

David Servos is a parishioner at Christ Church McNab.

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The Season of Creation Across the Diocese of Niagara

BY BRUCE MACKENZIE

Gardens feed the hungry—all God’s creatures, including humans—and are places of beauty. By creating and caring for gardens, we provide a place of justice and hope, a place of peace to glorify our Creator.

Pollinator gardens are planted to aid the diminishing populations of our native birds, bats, and insects—bees, wasps, flies, butterflies, moths, and beetles. Pollinators provide food in the form of nectar (energy), pollen (protein), and are host plants for food for the larvae of butterflies and moths. Nuts, seeds, and berries are a source of nutrition for birds. A pollinator garden requires a diversity of plants, with an emphasis on native plants, which provide blooms or fruit from spring to the end of fall. Native plants are four times more likely to attract native bees and other native insects than non-natives, and they tend to be hardier, to be more drought-tolerant, and to have less disease.

Rain gardens are designed to divert rainwater from running into municipal stormwater systems where it may cause pollution of streams, rivers, and lakes. Water from eaves may be diverted to holding tanks or rain barrels, or allowed to soak into the garden. The gardens may be modified with trenches to avoid water-logged soil. Water that has passed through gardens is cleaned by the process, ensuring pollutants do not contaminate aquifers.



Church of the Incarnation, Oakville

The gardens of Incarnation have been designed and installed over the past four years by Mary Purves, assisted by Samer Alhadeed and many volunteers. Trees have been planted, and concrete has been removed and replaced by a garden of native pollinators and a welcoming area planted at the entry to the church.

The vegetable gardens were created by Cherry Collins and Samer Alhadeed. They are tended by many great volunteers, including students who receive volunteer hours for their work. The produce is donated to the two Oakville foodbanks.

St. Alban the Martyr Church, Acton

Pam Sheldon was inspired to apply for a grant to transform the grass around the church to a rain-and-pollinator garden. Starting in 2020, native plants were planted by parish and local volunteers, assisted and guided by local landscapers Ben Rowley and Noah Varju. In 2021, a design team from Milton added a rain garden to divert rainwater away from the church basement into two stone-filled channels. The gardens are also blessed with a seed library and a gorgeous bench carved from a tree by a local craftsman. Following the blessing of the gardens this year, all attendees were given a native plant for their own gardens.



Grace Church, Waterdown

Grace Church has a fence which adjoins the local elementary school. Classes planted and watered the gardens of vegetables in May and June. They used growbags to grow additional vegetables.

The front area lawn has been converted into a mixture of a pollinator garden and a vegetable garden. Along the sidewalk, a pollinator garden promotes awareness of caring for creation; chairs give a place of rest, and a library is also provided.

Canterbury Hills Camp, Hamilton

This tiny garden is planted with *Sempervivum* (common name: hens and chicks) and thyme, representing the resilience of Indigenous Peoples throughout their mistreatment by Canadian settlers, and the time required for proper reconciliation and healing. Last year, campers painted stones and placed them around the garden.



St. David's Church, Welland

The pollinator garden was planted by St. David's Children and Youth Family Ministries Group and is cared for by the parish garden group.



St. Christopher's Church, Burlington

St. Christopher's has a large vegetable garden which was designed by Daire Kavanagh. Together with Alicja and a multitude of parish and community volunteers grow a huge variety of vegetables and herbs, and provide fresh food for their free market. A pollinator flower garden adjacent to the fence of the vegetable garden ensures that there are many insects to pollinate the vegetables.

St. Michael's Church, Hamilton



The flower gardens at St. Michael's are lovingly planted and maintained by Al Olsen. Climate Justice Niagara member Anne Young grows the heritage tomatoes, peppers, marigolds, and basil, and shares the produce with the neighbourhood. Anne also plants vegetables grown from seed every year in the gardens. Parishioners and neighbours buy seedlings for 25 cents during the annual spring geranium sale.

Church of St. John the Evangelist, Hamilton

This rain garden was a community project of Green Venture Hamilton, which hired a landscape designer and landscape firm and also managed the project. Church volunteers and members of the Kirkendall Garden Club agreed to maintain the gardens. The garden redirects rainwater from the church eaves into a storage tank which has an automated watering system for the garden. Any overflow is directed into a rock swale which holds the water until it seeps into the groundwater. The garden is full of native plants which support pollinators and cool the area, providing a place of peace and refreshment for those in the area.



St. James Church, Fergus

These garden beds provide a peaceful resting place for all. The church property also contains a community garden with ten plots which are used to grow vegetables and flowers.

Giving Thanks for Bobby's Place

BY LESLIE GREENE

Grace Anglican Church in Waterdown has much to be thankful for! Bobby's Place, a new community gathering space, is about to open officially on October 1, 2022. Bobby's Place is a bright, inclusionary public gathering space centred around a café staffed with persons with disabilities, that is open and accessible to all. It is a place where all can feel welcome and meet for coffee and conversation. It will be available for community gatherings, meetings, classes, and more. Our vision is to build and strengthen community.

Bobby's Place is named in honour of Bobby Smiley, a vibrant ten-year-old member of the Grace Church congregation who died suddenly from influenza shortly after Grace Church began their fundraising campaign. Bobby's parents, Rob and Sabrina, and sister Makayla, graciously allowed Grace Church to name the centre after

Bobby in honour of his memory and his free and loving spirit.

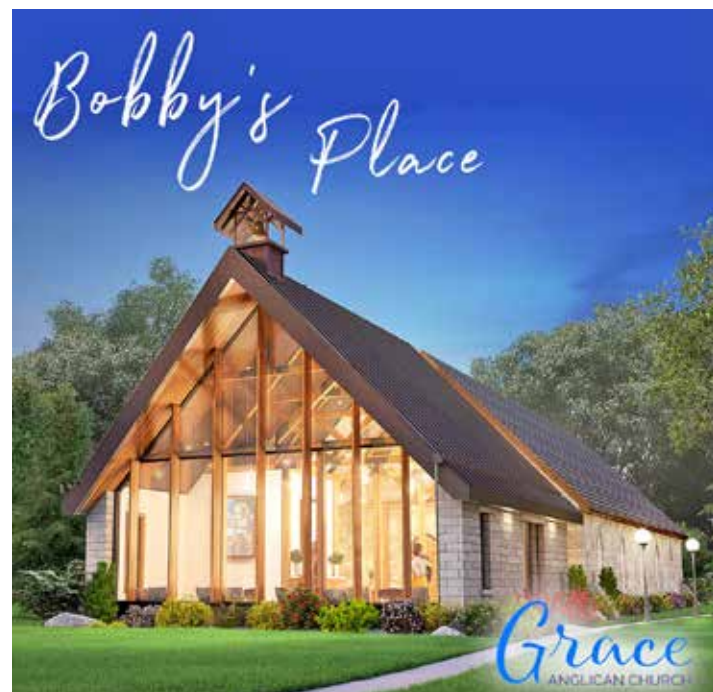
The opening of Bobby's Place builds on parish efforts to establish Grace Church as a Resilience Hub for the local community. Grace Church will provide a safe space to meet for warmth, cooling, and other assistance in the event of an extended power failure caused by a serious weather event or other disaster. New solar panels will provide clean energy while reducing the carbon footprint of the parish. It will also be a place with access to extra food courtesy of our Food with Grace Waterdown Food Bank that Grace Church operates every Tuesday from 2:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

In conjunction with the opening of Bobby's Place, Grace Church has hired a community project liaison, Paulene Jodry, to meet with community members wishing to set up programs, services, events, and meetings, using this new space.

This project has been a labour of love for the last five years,

and has been made possible through generous donations from parishioners and people of the Waterdown community, as well as grants from the Diocese of Niagara, the Anglican Foundation of Canada, and the Government of Canada's Enabling Accessibility Fund. Our goal was \$1 million and Grace Church is only \$26,000 shy of that goal.

Another reason Grace Church has to be thankful is for the reinstatement of the church bell in the new bell tower. The Thomas Flintoft Memorial Bell was first erected at Grace Church in 1918. It was commissioned in memory of Lance Corporal Thomas Flintoft, a member of the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry, who died on the battlefield in WWI. He died at the age of 33 and his family commissioned the bell in his honour. It was Grace Church's honour to reinstate the bell in the new tower, named after Flintoft's regiment, and hear it joyously ring again for the first time in years



on Easter Sunday morning!

Please join Grace Church in Celebration on Saturday, October 1 from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. for this free event. Grace Church will be celebrating with live music, food, games, speeches, tours of Bobby's Place, and a grand opening ribbon-cutting ceremony. Grace Church will be offering bricks for sale to memorialize your family, friends, and special occasions in the new walkway.

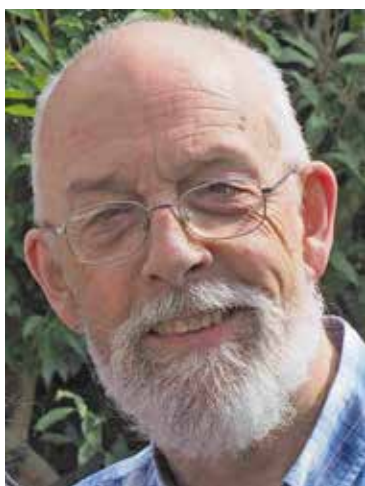
Grace Anglican Church, 157 Mill St. N., Waterdown, is the

place to be on October 1, 2022. We look forward to seeing you and sharing with you the many blessings for which we are thankful.

If you would like to make a donation to Bobby's Place, please contact the church at 905-689-6715 or go to graceanglicanwaterdown.org. Pauline Jodry can be contacted at community@graceanglicanwaterdown.org.

In Other Words

Why Start a New Church? Community Existing for Community



BY JOHN BOWEN

Starting new churches has been a normal part of church life for 2,000 years. In the New Testament alone, 30 towns are mentioned where a new Christian community had been planted.

Of course, for us, "church" doesn't just mean a Christian community. If we say, "I'm going to church," it generally means I'm going to the church building for a service. If we say, "I'm going to the church," it means I'm going to the church building for some other purpose,

perhaps a committee or a Bible study or a working group. We very naturally equate "church" with "church building," however much we might dislike that reality (and I do).

Buildings complicate things. If you have been in church any length of time, you know that all too well. But buildings are not at the heart of church, and so neither are they at the heart of church planting. When St. Paul started a new church, it would normally meet in someone's home. At the end of Paul's Letter to the Romans, he sends greetings to "Prisca and Aquila" and "the church in their house," and that was apparently nothing remarkable. In fact, there is no record of a special church building till 200 years after Jesus!

What is a church for?

So if church is not the building, what is it? There are lots of good answers, of course: the church is the Body of Christ, it is the people of God gathering for worship, it is a sacrament of the presence of God in the world, and so on. But here's

another answer, and it sheds light on why church planting is important: Church is a hub for the Good News of Jesus, a place where the Good News is talked about, understood, enjoyed, celebrated, lived out, and shared.

And what is that Good News? That through Jesus Christ the Creator of all is at work in the world to put right all that we have made wrong! This is Gospel—good news about the mission of mercy our God is on. As one young church planter explained it to me, "God is changing everything—and you can be a part of it!"

Of course, God putting things right takes many forms: on one level, it means such things as social justice, reconciliation, work for the homeless, and care for the environment. On another level, the Gospel is expressed in bringing diverse people together in a supportive community, working to forgive one another, learning to be more generous than feels comfortable, affirming people's gifts, going the second mile, and so on. The curriculum in the mis-

sional school of Jesus is very far-reaching!

We often speak of "our church" or even "my church." But the church is not really "ours." As Archbishop William Temple said, "The church is the only society in the world that exists for the benefit of its non-members." The church is for the world: Christ is for the world, so it makes sense that Christ's Body is for the world. So planting new churches is also for the sake of the world.

Where should you plant a church?

A local Reformed church in Hamilton planted a daughter church a few years back. Why? You might think it was because there were lots of church members living in the new area who didn't want to commute to church. You might think they were worried that there were only Baptist and Anglican churches in the neighborhood, and they felt there should be a Reformed church there, to claim its market share. But the motivation was none of the above.

The pastor showed me a

map of the city the church had drawn up, with all the churches of every denomination marked on it. And he explained that they looked for an area where there were almost no churches—and that's where they planted the new congregation. In other words, they chose a neighbourhood that was not yet being served by a Gospel community. They didn't plant the church for their own benefit, but for love of their neighbours. They planted a new church in order to be part of the mission of God to make all things new. They planted in order to be a blessing, to bring life and joy to a neighbourhood where those things were in short supply.

I haven't checked recently, but if all is going well, folks in that neighbourhood are saying, "Thank God that church moved into the neighbourhood when they did. They have made this such a better place to live. Where would we be without them?" Come to think of it, that's a good thing for any neighbourhood to say about their local church—whether new or old.

St. John's Winona Food Security Team: Sharing Time, Talent, Treasure

BY BETTY SLEEP

In March of 2020 not only did the doors of St. John's Winona church close, but the back door used by parishioners and community customers every Tuesday was also closed. For a while St. John's Winona Food Security Team was able to do pre-ordered curbside pickup, but once freezers were empty, they were unable to be replenished.

The clientele is mainly seniors living in the area. They have come to depend on homemade dinner items by the St. John's Winona Food Security Team, such as beef and chicken pies, cabbage rolls, shepherd's pie and quiche. Desserts like sticky toffee pudding, or pies are also included. They know they are getting well-made dinners that help them be self-sufficient. Busy families that require a ready-made dinner for the night when their children have practice for sports, music or some other outside activity also use the service. The Food Security Team regularly contributes donated food or funds to local food banks.

It was with prayer, happy hearts, and gratitude that the Food Security Team was authorized to open the kitchen again in July of 2021. Under the COVID-19 guidelines, teams were limited to five people working at one time. From a team that could number as many as 12-14 each week, there were now only five doing the work. But "what a team"! Everybody seems to have something they excel at, whether it is making pastry, crimping perogies, peeling potatoes, or doing dishes and preparing coffee. It took time to return to routine, but the response was immediate. Every Tuesday clients came to the door pleased to have the Food Security Team back in the community.

A story that team members

found touching was a woman whose husband was terminally ill with cancer and going through medical treatment. Her first order was for a dozen meat and chicken pies, but when team members noticed she was ordering a dozen chicken pies every other week they asked why. Her answer was probably one of the best compliments and blessings team members could have received.

Because of the radiation treatments her husband had difficulty eating anything and the chicken pies were the only thing that did not irritate his mouth or stomach. What had started as a way to make her life easier by having food on hand after hours spent at the hospital, then as home caregiver, and finally at the hospice, the pies became a staple in their lives.

A second fun story from Lynne, a parishioner at St. John's Winona, is about her 95-year-old bachelor uncle, a huge fan of the food products prepared by the Food Security Team. Her uncle has always been an amazing cook and every year the yummiest preserves and baking roll out of his kitchen. Because of his advancing age, he has slowed down in the kitchen and Lynne began bringing him some of the offerings from St. John's kitchen. He has tasted everything that the Food Security ministry has to offer and the reaction is always the same: "Can you please get me more?" Needless to say, he loves the food that the Food Security Team so lovingly prepare and his comments speak to the great quality turned out each and every week. In Lynne's words, "Keep on feeding my precious Uncle!"

The mission of the Food Security Team is to provide the community with well-made food at reasonable prices. The food ministry is not meant to be for profit. Presently, any extra

funds that come from the sales are shared with the Migrant Farmworkers Project. It is only because of the volunteers that give generously of their time,

talents, and donations of food and supplies that the ministry breaks even on costs.

God asks us to share our time, talent, and treasures that he has

given us, and here at St. John's Winona we can wholeheartedly attest that is exactly what our Food Security Team ministry does.



Preparing meat and chicken pies.

Photo: Contributed by the Rev. Antonio Illas



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Children at Play: Crafting Memories

BY THE REVEREND DEACON
NANCY MCBRIDE

At a recent clergy conference, we were asked to think about times when we had experienced Joy in our various ministries. I remembered several times when I had delighted in watching children at play.

Teaching Sunday school, I often borrowed the 'Godly Play' concept, but I usually followed the Lectionary and selected the props to suit the story. Some were obtained from dollar stores, but others came from my imagination. For the Ten Commandments, I created a tabernacle from a tiny, hinged,

decorated wooden box, to which I attached dowels for carrying handles. Painted with metallic gold paint, it held two small grey tablets cut from a tongue depressor, on which the commandments were written. Using instructions from a "knit your own Bible" website, I created the characters for the story. Those simple people made a lot of guest appearances in other stories, as did the dollar store animals.

When Canon Lynne Thackeray saw what I was doing, she challenged me to knit the Last Supper from a pattern she had obtained. A friend of hers had knit the tableau, which was kept

in a display case at All Saints Church in Hagersville. I was going to be different. Using my imagination and the basics of the pattern, I created larger disciples, making cone-shaped bodies, stuffed with quilt batting and secured with a circle of plastic canvas as the base. The characters easily stood upright. Each body has a costume and a hat. There is a plate and a goblet for each of the disciples and Jesus, as well as platters of bread and jugs of wine. I was particularly pleased with the goblets. To ensure that they would stand, I knitted silver yarn covers for caps from my insulin pen nibs! The jugs are

stuffed with batting, secured in place with a circle of burgundy yarn to give the appearance of wine. Jesus and his disciples sit side-by-side along a table, made for the tableau by Frank Doyle, husband of Rev. Cheryl Barker, our rector.

While I was creating this montage, I took extra care to make sure that everything was child-proof. I joked that the children could toss the disciples from one to another without either the disciple or the children being injured! The day I told the story to the children, my great joy was in watching my godson, Luke Doyle, thoughtfully arrange the disciples around the table, mak-

ing sure that each had a plate with bread on it and a chalice.

A few years later, I decided that I needed to create a nativity scene for the children to play with over the Christmas season. Mary, Joseph, and Jesus in the manger are supported by sheep, a donkey, and a camel, shepherds, and the Magi. My sister contributed a stable from an old crèche, to complete the montage. We left the crèche on a table at the back of the church, where the children could play with it. I told my great niece, Anna, the Christmas story using that set—again a time of great joy.

There have been many other examples where a few simple crafting skills will create lasting and joyful memories for children and adults alike. Egg cozies for chocolate Easter eggs, little Christmas stockings with a candy cane inside, or a lace angel—mementos for children or table favours for seasonal seniors' dinners—it just needs your imagination and willing hands to bring a smile to someone's face.



The Last Supper, intended for children to play with, knitted by the author (above); the Nativity figures she made (right).



Photos: The Reverend Deacon Nancy McBride

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New Parish Development Missioner Joins Diocese

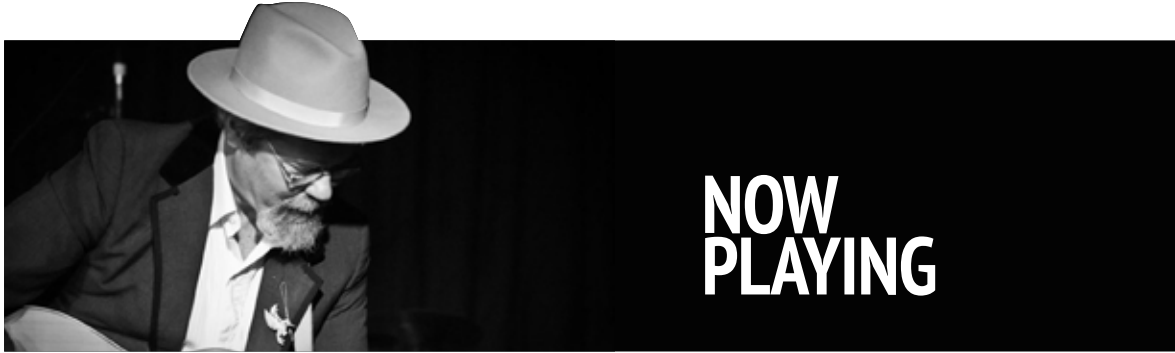
Bishop Susan Bell is delighted to appoint Dr. Emily Hill to serve as our parish development missioner, effective September 12.

Emily is an enthusiastic, collaborative, and action-oriented Christian leader who brings a wealth of ministry experience with her to this position, including her recent work with the Presbyterian Church in Canada and as an engaged parishioner at St. John the Evangelist, Hamilton.

This new role is focused on nurturing faithful, vital, and resilient missional faith communities through parish consultations, education, and resourcing. Emily will guide the development and implementation of programs and resources in support of the diocese's vision and mission-driven initiatives, as articulated in the diocesan Mission Action Plan. Working in



collaboration with the diocesan senior leadership team, she'll also engage with, nurture, and support parish leaders by providing consultative services in strategic planning, visioning, faith formation, and congregational development.



The Power of Extraordinary Love

BY THE VENERABLE MAX WOOLAVER

“WHAT EXTRAORDINARY LOVE CAN EMERGE FROM SO MUCH DEATH? AND YET, NOAH, AT THIS MOMENT, KNOWS, AS NO ONE HAS BEFORE HIM, THAT HE IS MADE IN THE DIVINE IMAGE. HEIR TO THE STUMBLING GENERATIONS, HE BECOMES CONSCIOUS OF A MYSTERY WITHIN HIMSELF. UNCANNILY, HE BECOMES CONSCIOUS OF BEING LOVED, AND COMMITS HIMSELF TO RELEASING THE SECRET MEANINGS OF HIS STATE.” (AVIVAH GOTTLIEB ZORNBERG, THE MURMURING DEEP)

Peter was born with cancer. At two years of age, he began suffering unexplained fevers. Testing began, only to reveal that invasive cancers were present in his young body. Nearly two years of intensive, high-risk cancer treatments began and, later on, at the apex of an optimistic moment, while praying and hoping for good news, his mom and dad heard instead the irrefutable evidence of the failure of chemo, radiation, and immunotherapy to defeat the cancers in Peter's body.

He came home. Treatment was never resumed. He was palliative as he began the fourth and final year of his life.

He died in his bed, snuggled up between his mom and dad. They told him that he didn't need to fight anymore; that it was okay to leave. As he quietly slipped away, the flame of his baptismal candle in his room fluttered out.

At the funeral his mom and dad spoke as I have never before heard parents speak. The dad

detailed the journey—how he had first feared the hospital and had found instead a loving, warm, courageous family of clinicians and other families in distress. The bond between them all became a wellspring of extraordinary love. As an atheist, he prayed Reinhold Niebuhr's prayer: “Grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and wisdom to know the difference.” It kept him going, even if he left out the word “God.”

On the last trip to the Lego shop, Peter's dad realized that it was Peter who was taking him to the shop—not the usual way around. Peter was giving his dad a breather, caring for him as only a young child could do.

Peter's mother, a passionate seeker after God, spoke through the fiery, prophetic whirlwind that lived in her grief, her undying love. The authors she loved seemed present in the small Anglican church that held us all together. Emily Dickinson, Tony Morrison, Isaiah, Jeremiah, St. John of the Cross, St. Francis, Julian of Norwich ... all speaking to us through the emotional crisis of praying goodbye, letting go, holding on—facing the wilderness, gasping for the ministrations of angels in the exhaustion of unconditional and limitless self-giving.



The parish priest censed the small, white coffin covered with the flowers and Peter's favourite books. The slow, walking liturgy three times around the coffin brought us all to stillness. The lights in the building flickered out as a scheduled “load shedding” of power for that part of Cape Town was carried out. We were in candlelight, held by the solemnity of this abyss of mercy.

“For we have died, and our life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is our life is revealed, then we also will be revealed with him in glory.” (Col. 3:3-4)

Only three days later, many of the same people, including Peter's dad, mom, and 6-year-old brother, gathered in another church for the baptism of our grandson. We had all been together for Peter's baptism four years earlier in St. George's Cathedral, Cape Town. In life and in death, we journey together—faithful to one another, as Christ, in life and death and Life, is faithful to us. All of us.

Another baptismal candle has been lit; another child has been baptised. The Light of Christ shines upon us all.

In these life-changing moments, we can know as we have never known before that we are made in the Divine Image.

“BELOVED IS THE HUMAN BEING, SINCE HE WAS CREATED IN GOD'S IMAGE. EXTRAORDINARY IS THIS LOVE WHEN IT WAS MADE KNOWN TO [NOAH] THAT HE WAS CREATED IN GOD'S IMAGE, AS IT IS SAID: ‘IN THE IMAGE OF GOD DID GOD MAKE HUMANKIND.’ (THE MURMURING DEEP)

Canterbury Hills Camp: The Tradition Continues in 2022



The Dean of Niagara, the Very Reverend Tim Dobbin, joined by the board of directors, commissioned the 2022 summer staff of Canterbury Hills Camp. Underneath the beautiful canopy of trees in the St. Clare outdoor chapel, the light of Christ was passed along through tapers, and the staff came forward individually to present their intention and mission statement to uphold a safe, fun, and Spirit-filled summer.

Photo contributed



The Maple Cabin had a blast with arts and crafts week two.

Photo contributed



John and Tyler Mous are second-generation campers at Canterbury Hills Camp. Their favourite activities included swimming, campfire, games, creek walk, and the slip and slide!

Photo contributed

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Niagara Anglican Deadlines and Submission Guidelines

Deadlines:

November – September 23
December – October 21

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.

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Contact the Editor at editor@niagaraanglican.ca

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The Vast Expanse of Interstellar Space: A Hidden Universe

BY THE REVEREND CANON
DR. SHARYN HALL

Will the James Webb Space Telescope unlock the mysteries of the universe as never before? By peering into the heavenly darkness, are we discovering a little more about the divine Creation?

"To see the world in a grain of sand." Lawrence M. Krauss, author and theoretical physicist, quotes William Blake from "Auguries of Innocence" (1803) in his extensive article on the images from the Webb telescope. The telescope reveals that a region of the sky smaller than a grain of sand held at arm's length holds billions of worlds.

"Each image represents a new window on an otherwise hidden universe—the very first time any human has been able to pierce the veiled darkness of the cosmos."

In the Bible, darkness is associated with being lost or choosing the path to iniquity. Light conquers darkness to reveal the path to righteousness and a closer relationship with God. If light is the symbol of God's presence, then is darkness, the absence of light, the symbol



The first image from the James Webb Space Telescope Photo: nasa.gov

of God's absence? These recent images demonstrate that God's Creation is still evolving.

Astronomers can now see where hot gas, dust, radiation, and magnetic fields dance and give birth to stars. The images are so full of colour and detail that the director of the project in Canada, René Doyon, describes them as "the beautiful bridge between science and art." Artists attempt to capture the wonders of the natural world, whether in great vistas of land-

scape or in delicate details of a single rose. These spectacular cosmic images are attempts to capture the unseen wonders of the heavens.

Astronomers who have been studying the heavens for years are marvelling at the clarity of the images, one calling them "a thousand words in a picture." The power of the Webb telescope reveals millions of stars and galaxies in regions where previously scientists could see only total darkness. The magnitude of

what was unknown inspires awe and amazement.

Two years ago, astronomers were ecstatic about the achievement of obtaining a picture of a black hole. For over a century, scientists believed that black holes existed in the universe, but they could not prove their existence visually. Black holes are not nothingness, not the absence of power and substance. They are the absence of light. They are so powerful that they draw everything near them into themselves. On seeing a black hole, one scientist commented, "this is the outer edge of our knowledge."

The recent images from the Webb telescope further encourage the search for what lies beyond our understanding. The outer edge of our knowledge has come a little closer.

When scientists talk about these amazing discoveries, they sound a little like theologians. In 1941, Albert Einstein said, "Science without religion is lame, religion without science is blind." Einstein was being prophetic, like the ancient prophets who warned the Hebrew people that there were limits to their understanding of Creation. The

task of science is to discover what already exists; that is why they are called discoveries. Science without religious faith may not have the humility to recognize that there is always more to discover.

Religion without science may fail to recognize God's continuing work of revelation. The images from the Webb telescope are the result of human ingenuity and human endeavour, but perhaps also some divine revelation. Religious faith is the eternal search for what lies beyond our understanding, or what a scientist may describe as beyond the outer edge of our knowledge.

The title of this article does not come from a description of the images from the Webb telescope. It is a line in one of the eucharistic prayers (#4) in the *Book of Alternative Services*. All eucharistic prayers are prayers of thanksgiving to God for the blessings of Creation and for God's steadfast love of humanity revealed in the life and death of God's Son. Eucharistic prayers also remind us that God's Spirit continues to work in our world teaching us more than we can ask or imagine.

Church of the Apostles Partners with Your Downtown Guelph Friends

BY ELIZABETH AGNEW

The Church of the Apostles Helper Bees Program has partnered with Your Downtown Guelph Friends to deliver innovative and much-needed outreach programs to Guelph. The partnership takes advantage of both groups' strengths to deliver 200 meals a week and run outreach programs for the community.

"The church was preparing food for emergency food providers throughout the pandemic, but wanted a way to be more impactful in the community," said Helper Bees Coordinator John Dennis. "Your Downtown Guelph Friends was a natural fit to partner with as they are working on the streets of Guelph and were looking to expand their programs. The church provided an inspected kitchen, professional accounting services, and experience with governance."

Your Downtown Guelph

Friends is a non-incorporated group that began when some friends from high school decided to make sandwiches and distribute them downtown. Led by Kate Nixon, the volunteer group has impacted some of Guelph's most vulnerable for the past three years. They set tables up on the corner of Wyndham and Woolwich Streets twice a week and distribute meals, clothing, and hygiene products. They often see more than 100 visitors per day. All are greeted with a smile, a kind word, and a nutritious meal. Volunteer Jamie Gibson added, "Your Downtown Guelph Friends is known throughout our community as a rock of stability whose members can be relied upon to provide for and treat those in need with dignity. My experience volunteering here has grounded me spiritually and cut through the alienation of contemporary life."

To formalize the partnership, a committee was formed with members from both the church

and Your Downtown Guelph Friends to set the direction of the program. Helper Bees Coordinator John Dennis relates: "The committee is a young, diverse group of volunteers made up of community members and the congregation. Together, we have great ideas about expanding the outreach programs and impacting our community."

The new partners have run a number of successful outreach programs since joining together. The partnership began with Your Downtown Guelph Friends distributing 100 blankets to guests on Fridays. In May, they ran a book sale for literacy programs in Provincial Correctional Centres that raised \$1,500, and donated 500 books to the programs. They are currently working with the Guelph Food Bank to distribute grocery bags to guests of Your Downtown Guelph Friends each week. They ran a free concert series in the church gardens with local musi-



cians this summer.

They are also in the planning stages of bringing back the popular Living Better on Less program in the fall. This free series of courses provides participants with information about how to reduce their environmental impact and live thoughtfully on a limited budget.

Kate Nixon tells us: "In the fight against poverty, inequity, marginalization and community hardship we are truly the strongest together. Your Downtown Guelph Friends and The Helper

Bees are working together to tackle this crisis on the very streets in Guelph. We cannot do it alone. We are community-based and we need the support of you, our neighbours, to help us. Every mouth fed, every person who receives support and a smile, every material distributed is a small victory."

Elizabeth Agnew is the Helper Bees Summer Student for Church of the Apostles, Guelph.