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An essential ministry of presence and support.

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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



APRIL 2023

# I Believe in Jesus Like I Believe in the Sun



Photo: Unsplash/Pablo Heimplatz

## An Easter Message from Bishop Susan Bell

**THE RIGHT REVEREND SUSAN BELL**

**"I BELIEVE IN CHRIST, LIKE I BELIEVE IN THE SUN—NOT BECAUSE I CAN SEE IT, BUT BY IT I CAN SEE EVERYTHING ELSE." —C.S. LEWIS**

**Christ is Risen! The Lord is Risen indeed! Alleluia!**

I have often wondered—as believers all must have, I guess—about the immediate effect of the Resurrection on Jesus' disciples and followers. Of course, reading the scriptures some 2000 years distanced from the events they describe, we have the advantage over the early Church in that we know how it turns out. But I have wondered if they were so sure in the hours and days and months after the crucifixion if it looked like there was a plan, if there was any orderliness, if

there was any certainty? The disciples on the road to Emmaus didn't seem to see the organic order in the events of the days prior. It wasn't until they walked and talked with a stranger who unfolded the scriptures for them that they understood the internal symmetry of all the events leading up to the crucifixion and resurrection.

Speaking from our own context today, we sure could use some symmetry, an orderly, certain plan for the Church and for our world. The existential angst caused by things thought once unthinkable—like pandemic and a barely containable war,

both of which have contributed to the economic roller coaster and rising cost of everything—is putting us all on edge. So, what can the Resurrection say to all that? What does the living Christ say to all that?

Well, let me take a run at this—keeping in mind C.S. Lewis' beautiful quote that headed this reflection: "I believe in Christ like I believe in the sun—not because I can see it, but by it, I can see everything else."

This quote is about the hope inherent in the Good News of Jesus' resurrection to life. Here Lewis is pointing to the fact that Jesus, fully human and at the same time, fully divine, has been revealed to be the Christ—the

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**make peace with creation**

*Climate Justice Sunday*

**April 23, 2023**

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# Easter Message From Bishop Susan Bell

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Messiah. All the events of his life point to this—his healing and preaching and teaching.

What Lewis grasps so beautifully though, is that the Resurrection changes everything. It becomes the lens through which we see everything. This is why Christians rather awkwardly, at least for our secular society, insist on a bodily death and resurrection. For, as theologian Benjamin Myers says, "If Christ is not raised in bodily form, then he would remain foreign to embodied human experience, to all those awkward joys and sorrows of social life.

It is bodily resurrection that secures Christ's relevance to our lives here and now."

In Jesus' resurrection, heaven and earth are united and something new is created. In other words, the Resurrection secures a 'do-over' for humanity. The Church is that new creation. She is in herself a sign of resurrection life—a changed community whose mandate is to "Go, tell." She works from transformation for transformation. She is God's plan A to work for the good of the whole world—in truth, there is no plan B!

To return to the earlier

question of whether the Resurrection can give us certainty, and a plan, and some meaning and symmetry to our lives, I'd say a profound "yes!" Because of Jesus' resurrection, there is in fact certainty that God in Christ has transformed human structures, redeemed them from all that is not of God.

I can say with certainty in my heart that because of the Resurrection, all that does not seek the common good is offside. I can say with certainty in my heart that my faith, the faith of the Church then, is not a private affair—that my faith and the faith of the Church is the motivation to seek justice in this world wherever we find that which militates against the love of God. This is our touchstone, our foundation, and our creed.

For all of us I pray that the transforming love of Christ continues to reveal to us the certainty of God's plan of redemption for our lives, for our churches, and for this world that God loves so much. And may we see by it what our role in our own beloved communities is to be for coming alongside God's mission of love. Happy Easter everyone. Christ is risen indeed.



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## Climate Justice Niagara

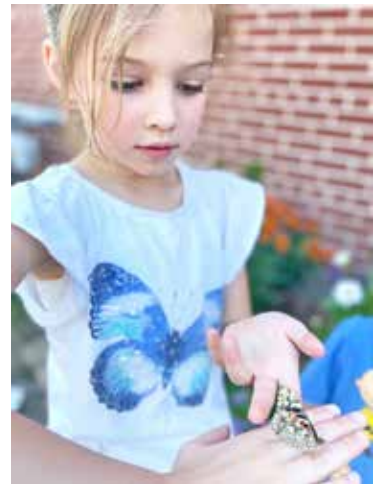
# St. David's Butterfly Garden

ALISON STEELE

Once a month St. David's hosts a Family Friday program for our young families. It is a time of fellowship and fun. Our goal during the 2018-2019 school year was to connect young children with other members of our church community in meaningful ways. In order to do so, we invited a different person or group each month to share their hobby or interest with our young families to show the children all the wonderful talents that are hidden within our church.

We learned about highland dance, families who participate in re-enactments of historical events, our church choir, woodworking, and more! Our final event of the year was with our church Garden group in which we built and planted a Butterfly/Pollinator Garden. We are very fortunate at St. David's to have a passionate group of volunteers who keep our gardens looking beautiful, and they were more than excited to share their love of plants with us. The Garden group helped us to select an area for the garden and purchased plants which would attract and sustain the butterflies.

During COVID one of our families decided to raise caterpillars as a family project. They received 10 painted lady caterpillars through the mail and were able to watch them form into chrysalises and then emerge as butterflies. We then did a special Children's Focus video where we released the butterflies into the garden we built years earlier. It was the perfect example of change after so many changes



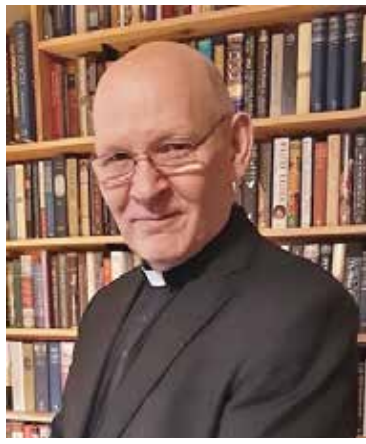
due to COVID. God has created butterflies who start off as a creatures with many tiny feet, which are only able to walk and they go through an amazing metamorphosis which gives them the ability to fly. We took time to remember that Jesus wants us keep working and changing on our insides, too—on our thoughts and actions. Butterflies show us that nothing is impossible with God and we are so fortunate to have a space at St. David's dedicated to helping these beauties survive.

*Climate Justice Niagara, an initiative of the Diocese of Niagara, has initiated a Garden Certificate program for churches in the Diocese. Certificates are being presented to churches that have created gardens which strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and enhance sustainability. Certificates are awarded in four categories: pollinator gardens, food gardens, rain gardens, and children's gardens. If your church is interested in arranging for the presentation of a certificate, please contact Irene Pang, Chair of Climate Justice Niagara, at [irenepang@proton.me](mailto:irenepang@proton.me).*

Photos: Contributed by Irene Pang



# Change and Nostalgia: Putting First Things First



**THE REVEREND MICHAEL COREN**

It was, according to the roaring headline on journalist Melanie McDonagh's column in *The Times of London*, "an assault on Christianity." Good Lord, could it be the horrific massacre of Christians in Nigeria, or the banning of church worship in some cruel atheist dictatorship? No, thank goodness not.

It was the London School of Economics renaming the Lent term "Winter", the Easter break "Spring", and so on. Seriously? I mean, seriously? Yes indeed.

As the great G.K. Chesterton once said, "Journalism largely consists in saying 'Lord Jones is dead' to people who never knew Lord Jones was alive."

Actually, we're allowed to say pretty much whatever we want on this subject and most others, and the faith given to the world by a first-century Jewish messiah based on a permanent revolution of love, justice, and inclusion is unlikely to be smashed by an innocuous evolution of language at an esteemed British university.

In fact, it's somewhat irrelevant. Perhaps slightly gratuitous but entirely understandable in a nation, and a university, that is increasingly post-Christ-

tian. Oxford and Cambridge maintain their Christian nomenclature, but then the colleges were often founded as monastic institutions, and one of them is a cathedral! If you doubt me, I went back there for morning Mass just a few months ago.

This over-reaction came the same week that some in the Church of England commemorated, as they do each January 30th, the 1649 execution of King Charles I. He is revered by these High Church stalwarts as a "saint and martyr" when in fact he was one of the least competent and most reckless monarchs in British history. Offered a stunningly generous peace offer by his Puritan opponents, Charles instead forced a second civil war that led to thousands of deaths. Neither as wise as his father nor as tolerant as his son, Charles was more sinner than

sinned against. Yet still the cult continues with those who like their Christianity wrapped in patriotism and pomp, and sealed with a nice bow of nostalgia.

And nostalgia is what McDonagh's objections are largely about. England, though not Britain, may have an established church, but it hasn't been a Christian nation in some time. The latest Office for National Statistics (ONS) findings show that more people in England and Wales under the age of 40 describe themselves as having "no religion", rather than being Christian, the first time that's ever happened. Those numbers are likely to increase in years to come, and the situation is very similar in Canada.

Appearances, of course, can be deceptive. Cathedrals and splendid churches pepper the British landscape, archbishops

are often featured on the news and are in the House of Lords, and respected institutions use, or did use, medieval Christian terminology to divide their years. Churches, however, often struggle to keep their doors open, and cathedrals are more popular with tourists than worshippers. It's tragic, but true.

Christianity is in essence a personality cult, the personality in question being an itinerant preacher who, I believe, was also the Son of God. His appeal is not in what he wanted to preserve, but in what he insisted on changing. To "assault" him would be to ignore his startlingly refreshing teaching, and that has nothing at all to do with how terms are named. Or, for that matter, with 17th-century monarchs who really should have known better.

## Welcoming the Stranger

**THE REVEREND CANON LESLIE GERLOFS**

Jesus calls us to welcome the stranger, including those living on the margins. Sometimes this is called radical hospitality. One can only imagine how Jesus would include countless marginalized people today. Perhaps this imagining is what we are called to do, given that Jesus himself was a refugee. One population living in desperate circumstances today are the people of Syria. The Syrian refugee migration has been compared to the migration after the Second World War. To make an unbearable situation worse, displaced people living in desperate circumstances most recently experienced earthquakes in Syria and Turkey. The unfathomable got worse.

Many churches have responded to the ongoing crisis in Syria

by sponsoring refugees and by donating to earthquake relief efforts. St. James Church in Dundas is praying about how we can best respond to the current crisis of which we have some experience.

The Jean Archbell Refugee Fund was created at St. James Anglican Church in 2016 in memory of the late Reverend Canon Jean Archbell, past Rector at St. James. Jean was passionate in her wish to sponsor and support refugees starting with the sponsorship of a family of 14 from Syria. The parish has steadfastly continued with this work.

At the end of February, a family from Syria was welcomed and another sponsored family of five from Iraq will be arriving in two months' time. Since the earthquake in Turkey and Syria, there have been many phone calls from family and friends of

the newcomers now settled in Hamilton, pleading for help to bring family members affected by the earthquake to Canada. Their homes are gone and they are living in deplorable conditions. What can we do? How can we respond?

On April 30th, at 2:00 and 4:00 p.m., *Peace by Chocolate* will be on the big screen at The Westdale Theatre in Hamilton. The acclaimed film is based on the true story of a family from Syria who moved to Canada as refugees, settled in Nova Scotia, and established the Peace By Chocolate artisanal chocolate shop. All proceeds will benefit the Jean Archbell Refugee Fund and Turkish and Syrian Earthquake Relief.

Peace by Chocolate products will be sold during the film screening and baklava baked and donated by Hamilton's Arabic Community will be avail-

able for purchase. Tickets are only \$15 as a minimum donation. Tickets may be purchased

online at [stjamesdundas.ca](http://stjamesdundas.ca) or at the St. James Church office at 905-627-1424.

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**Film Screening with All Proceeds to Benefit**  
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Peace by Chocolate products will be available for purchase as well as Baklava generously donated by the local Arabic Community.



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# Migrant Farmworkers Project Celebrates a Decade of Service



Workers are welcomed to the Hub at St. Alban's Beamsville.

Photos: Contributed by Antonio Illas

## THE REVEREND ANTONIO ILLAS

This year we celebrate a decade of service to migrant farmworkers in the Niagara region. From the first service in the fall of 2013 at St. Alban's Beamsville to this year, we have been a ministry of presence and support to our migrant farmworker neighbours from Mexico and Central America. We have learned to welcome, acknowledge, and appreciate their hard work in our agricultural fields, vineyards, orchards, and greenhouses.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Migrant Farmworkers Project experienced changes due to the pandemic restrictions, which included the closure of diocesan buildings used by the ministry. The ministry moved from church buildings to the agricultural fields. Volunteers have been resilient in spite of the adversities of the pandemic.

The ministry has emerged stronger from the two-year COVID-19 pandemic.

In April 2022 the St. Alban's Hub Beamsville, a new ministry approach to welcome and practise hospitality, was launched. The Hub volunteers intentionally engage our seasonal migrant workers by sharing stories and making friendship connections. This ministry is one of hospitality and solidarity with the migrant farmworkers we serve.

Solidarity is not just charity! Solidarity is loving your neighbour and making community, especially with the vulnerable and marginalized in our neighbourhood.

Migrant Farmworkers Project is a ministry that incarnates our baptismal covenant as we seek and serve Christ in all persons, including our migrant farm-

worker neighbours, and strive for justice and respect their dignity.

The St. Alban's Hub Beamsville also incarnates hospitality and respects the autonomy and dignity of every migrant farmworker who enters through the doors to seek services. It offers the migrant farmworkers a forum or community of faith to connect with them and facilitate their experience or a sense of belonging to our society while they are in Canada during their work season. Our volunteers are eager to connect, share stories, and serve them.

In April 2022, the St. Alban's Hub Beamsville started weekly social justice services and outreach. Under one roof the seasonal workers can benefit from six different programs: Bikes for Farmworkers, Quest Healthcare Centre (partnership



Some of the items available at the food pantry at the Hub at St. Alban's Beamsville.

medical clinic), "Tiendita" (Thrift Shop), "Abarrotes" (Food Pantry), Pastoral Care and Sacraments, and the Migrant Workers Café & Welcome Lounge. The café room was Fr. Dan's idea, as rector of St. Alban's Beamsville he dreamed of a way for the parishioners and volunteers to practice hospitality. In the café room and welcome lounge migrant farmworkers live and experience hospitality

The Migrant Workers Café & Welcome Lounge was an immediate success with the seasonal workers. As the migrant workers enter the St. Alban's Hub it is the first room area they encounter. In the café and lounge the migrant worker can relax, connect to the internet, socialize with other seasonal workers from different farms and meet the volunteers, as well as enjoy a nutritious and

delicious soup, cookies, drinks, etc. As the 2022 season came to a close it was realized that the café room needed to be remodeled to improve and facilitate a better service and to make the room cozier. St. John's Winona provided the first donation to renovate the café room and lounge. Additional grant funding to upgrade the café room is pending.

Finally, Migrant Farmworkers Project provides the opportunity to local parishioners in the Diocese of Niagara to do mission work right here in Niagara. Parishioners don't have to fly to Mexico or Central America; all they need to do is drive to St. Alban's Beamsville to do missions work with a very grateful Spanish-speaking community.

More photos Page 5



The lounge space has become a favourite gathering place.

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\*Song of the Grand is a moving experience, wonderful story, beautiful music & singing. It is a great new way to raise funds for your church.\* - Gillian Wood, St. Andrew's Grimsby.

# Migrant Farmworkers Project

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5



A kitchen space is available to workers.



Workers look through clothing items.



The pantry provides traditional culinary staples for workers.



The Reverend Daniel Tataric and visitor Dianne Henderson pose for a photo.



Workers often gather together over food and beverages at the Hub at St. Alban's Beamsville.



The Migrant Farmworkers Hub at St. Alban's Beamsville gets a big thumbs up!

# I am Certain of Nothing

## Discipleship & the Way of Life-Long Learning

**THE REVEREND CANON  
MARTHA TATARNIC**

I was listening to a podcast on the habits needed to be a life-long runner. More than getting faster, or hitting certain mileage goals, this is what interests me. I want to keep running. I was anxious to get all of the magic bullet secrets that the experts have compiled to keep us on our feet.

I expected to hear nutrition tips and to be lightly shamed into stretching more. But instead, the number one thing needed in order to be a life-long runner is to be a life-long learner. You need to be able to draw on the collective wisdom of the running community and the ever-evolving science of how the human body moves. You need to treat your body as the living document it is; we only ever run in aging bodies, and those aging bodies forever have new things to teach us. You need to come through injury, and the only way of doing so is for pain to be your teacher.

I talk about running a lot. I do so not because I assume that everybody wants to run. I have a healthy respect for anyone who thinks that aside from the terrors of grade school gym class, they would only run if something was chasing them. That was me, too. Running was



Photo: Unsplash/Sincerely Media

something to which I came accidentally and that I count as one of the most mysterious graces of my life. Rather, I talk about running a lot because running provides any number of important life lessons. More especially, running provides many cross-over lessons for the journey of faith.

When Jesus launches his public ministry with the words, “Turn around, the Kingdom of God is at hand,” his first order of business is to call disciples. The word disciple simply means “student”, and throughout the accounts of Jesus’ life, his followers consistently recognize him as “Rabbi” or “Teacher”.

Jesus, often depicted in gentle and pastoral imagery, shows a sharper edge when it comes to those who think of themselves as finished products. His affinity is not with the pious, the smug, the figured-it-all-out experts, but rather with those who recognize that they need and don’t know. Jesus’ disciples are the ones who are willing and able to pivot, to ask forgiveness, to touch and be changed, to have unseen gifts called out of themselves, to be invited to try a new thing. Jesus models this invited stance of awe and wonder with a surprisingly responsive ministry for one who would be recognized as God’s incarnation—acting not merely according to some master plan, but also routinely attentive to the things he sees and hears from those around him. Jesus is willing to be changed in response to what others have to offer.

I remember endless hours spent in school classrooms, fidgeting and doodling on the corner of my lined binder paper, watching the minutes inch by gratingly. It felt like I was going to be stuck in some of those classrooms for the rest of my life. One of the great things about growing up is coming to realize that being stuck in the classroom—either metaphorically, or even literally—is a goal to

which we should always aspire. Most of life’s greatest joys are found in never being done learning. It’s just like that podcast said, if you want to run all your life, you have to keep a beginner’s mind. You have to learn how to navigate injury, how to get broken and bruised and to come through it not the same, but changed. You have to learn how not to be alone, how good and important it is not to know everything so that others can teach you. If you’re lucky, you get to learn how to get old, how to live and love in bodies that get shabby and wrinkled and fall apart and have an expiration date on them.

I was listening to another podcast, this one specifically about Christian leadership. At the end, the interviewee, Ryan Burge, was asked to name someone to whom they look up as a person of faith. Their selection was surprising. The interviewee chose Anthony Bourdain and quoted the famous words he tattooed on his body: “I am certain of nothing.” This, he argued, is the stance to which we as Christians are called. We can hope. We can believe. But we should always remain unfinished, ready to be challenged, open to hearing, seeing, experiencing and learning something new.

## AFC’s 3rd Annual Say Yes! to Kids Campaign Launches April 11

The Anglican Foundation of Canada (AFC) is gearing up for the 3rd annual Say Yes! to Kids (SYTK) campaign. “Last year’s campaign was a great success,” says Michelle Hauser, AFC’s development and communications officer, “with 21 fundraising teams in 13 dioceses having raised \$150,000. This year we are hoping for even bigger and better results as more parishes decide to be part of this youth-focused movement.”

Hauser says the 2022 fundraising teams held a variety of fun, community-building events. “They walked, danced, sang, cheered, bowled, had board game marathons, and more.” More than half of the SYTK teams achieved or surpassed their goals, and the rest came very close to their targets. “Some

of our teams had stretch goals for more ambitious projects,” says Hauser, explaining that individual fundraising goals ranged from \$2,000 to \$25,000 and covered a variety of impact zones, including outdoor recreation, Indigenous ministries, faith formation, alleviating poverty, education enrichment, and arts and music.

Hauser says SYTK 2023 will look very much like the 2022 campaign. “We will launch on Tuesday, April 11, and close on June 30. Parishes can choose the fundraising activity that suits them best, but our team will help with fundraising ideas. And we are absolutely working to identify donors who will support the matching gift program, which has been very successful in boosting campaign revenue.”



The most noteworthy change to the 2023 campaign is the rev-venue-sharing formula. “This year local teams will retain 80 per cent of their campaign revenue, including any matching gifts. The remaining 20 per cent will be retained by AFC to increase the Kids Helping Kids Fund, which will enable even more youth-focused grants across Canada.” Hauser says AFC will cover the costs of running the campaign

from the Foundation’s share.

“The Board and staff are excited about SYTK 2023,” says Dr. Scott Brubacher, AFC’s executive director. “We see the potential for this campaign to nurture green shoots ministries across Canada. And this partnership appeal is yet another innovation of AFC that we believe can strengthen parishes for 21st-century fundraising, while also becoming a source of

sustainable funding for youth-focused ministry and outreach across the Canadian church.”

*To learn more about the SYTK 2023 campaign you can reach out to Michelle Hauser at [mhauser@anglicanfoundation.org](mailto:mhauser@anglicanfoundation.org). To see some of the good work of past SYTK partners visit AFC’s SYTK hub at: [www.anglicanfoundation.org/sytk](http://www.anglicanfoundation.org/sytk).*



# Divine Anarchy

THE VENERABLE MAX WOOLAVER

Jesus came among us preaching a kind of divine anarchy. In the Gospel of John, we hear Jesus say: "The truth shall set you free." (Ch. 8:32) In other words, he came to cause some trouble—"good trouble", as John Lewis, the courageous American Christian and civil rights activist used to say. While Jesus didn't talk too much about political institutions and religious hierarchies, he was, in his own words, "as wise as a serpent and as innocent as a dove" in relation to both.

Jesus knew very well that this "good trouble" can trouble the forces of evil. Along with John Lewis, we could also think of Dan Berrigan, and his brother Philip, both Jesuit priests, active in the era of Vietnam protests. So direct and so public were their actions that Fr. Dan ended up on the FBI's "most wanted" list—the first and only priest ever to be on that list. Once you do a little reading about the life of Thomas Merton, who became an equally stalwart public voice against the Vietnam war, you learn that his sudden and shocking death, at age 53, in Thailand, could have come at the hands of the CIA. The CIA have also been implicated in the shocking and infamous murders of six Jesuit priests, their housekeeper, and her 16-year-old daughter in El Salvador in 1989. The Jesuits

were a source of hope for the poor of El Salvador. The Gospel of Jesus still frightens the powers that be.

We might also mention the Christian peace activist, Jim Forest, who died peacefully, age 80, January 13th, 2022. Former Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams wrote of him: "Jim Forest's record of exceptional witness and discipleship is a unique record of both activism and deep spiritual discovery. It is a precious testament to a whole age of generous and risky Christian radicalism—and as such it is water in our contemporary wilderness."

The public execution of Jesus can be properly understood as the result of "good trouble". The proclamation of the inherent dignity of all humankind in the preaching and healing action of Jesus eventually brought about the collusion between church and state. When I say, "church", I mean the hierarchy of the faith community to which he belonged. The hierarchy saw, in his espousal of a divine anarchy, a threat to the established order. Rome, the imperial power of the day, occupying Israel at that time, likewise saw Jesus as a threat to the established order.

The divine anarchy of Jesus is rooted in Holy Scripture. The Scriptures of Jesus were

the Hebrew Scriptures. These Scriptures, which formed and nurtured what St. Paul came to call "the mind of Christ", are most often termed by Christians, the "Old Testament". However, there is nothing "Old" about them!

In the very first verses of our Bible we hear our God, pictured as if in divine assembly: "Let us make humankind in our own image." It must have been a powerful moment for the young Jesus when he first read, or most likely heard, these words for the first time. Likewise, the Hebrew Scripture: "The Spirit has anointed me to bring good news to poor, to proclaim liberty to the captives, recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free ... to proclaim the year of our Lord's favour." This is a direct quotation from the prophet Isaiah. Jesus found his footing in his culture and his life's purpose in his Scriptures.

What Jesus found in his Scriptures, St. Paul later amplified in his understanding of the impact and full meaning of the Life, Death, and Resurrection of Jesus: "Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you?" (1 Cor. 3:16)

We are to be understood not only as bearers of God's Image but also of God's very Spirit! This

is the root of what we might call a "divine anarchy". Each human being on the planet is imbued with a divine dignity. Each human being on the planet is born of, and bears, God's Holy Spirit. As Jesus intimated to Nicodemus, the puzzled and spiritually hungry Pharisee: "The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit."

As we come into faith in the witness of Jesus to the sanctity of all life, we are born into the free-flowing independence of God's gracious life. It is for the sake of the inherent dignity of our divine origin, image, and purpose, that our radical defend-

ers of the faith witnessed, and often to the point of martyrdom, to our freedom. As Jesus once said: "The Sabbath was made for humankind, not humankind for the Sabbath." (Mark 2:27) In other words, our dignity, purpose and destiny do not lie in the institutions to which we belong; if our institutions bear any dignity, purpose or sense of destiny at all, it is surely original in the persons these institutions have been called to serve. The charisms of Spirit have brought into being a joyous and divine anarchy—ultimately without political institutions or hierarchy. Would we call that the new heaven and the new earth?



## A Souper Gift

St. John's Ancaster parishioners recently presented to the staff at St. Matthew's House 818 pounds of soup, plus a generous check from parishioners for this important work. The soup and money was collected as part of their annual SouperBowl Sunday campaign.

Photo: Contributed

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# “My Soul in Silence Waits”

**THE REVEREND DEACON  
SHEILA PLANT**

I'm sure that many of us at some point have stood outside in the late evening of a winter snowfall and marvelled at the sound of silence. All the noises of the outside world are muffled.

There are varying degrees of silence—the hushed silence of the library, the silence surrounding a northern lake, and the prayerful silence of a church. Then there is absolute silence—the kind that we might experience at the audiologist's. It's certainly not a painful experience, but not a fun one either! Sitting in a soundproof room wearing headphones and straining to hear the first faint sound that is part of the hearing test. We listen so intently, uncertain of what that sound would be, or try so hard to hear the sound that we might miss the enjoyment of that silence. We concentrate on trying to break that silence and fill it in as quickly as possible.

Julian of Norwich, in her account of a remarkable series of visions called “Showings”, talks of putting God on like a garment. It is an appealing picture of comfort and safety. It's like a baggy sweater or old, soft bathrobe. Who wouldn't want to be wrapped in God, held securely and safely? It comes with a degree of silence and quiet.

But, in our recreational use of noise—fireworks, a marching band, children playing, or cheers at the hockey rink, we



wrap this noise around us like a blanket—we surround ourselves with sound. We are insulating ourselves.

Sometimes we can be victims of sound, with elevator music, music in the malls, or the constant chatter of colleagues. Even when we seek a quiet place away from all this noise, we are still surrounded by sound. Nature is noisy, so we do not gain complete silence.

We often choose noise over silence. Too much quiet makes us uneasy and leaves us open and undefended. I once read that silence falls naturally over a social gathering every seven minutes. Every host knows this when an animated dinner party conversation comes to an abrupt halt and he or she feels the need to fill the silence. Good friends experience this silence too, but it is markedly different. They are content to sit in “companionable” silence and savour it.

Perhaps being with God is not so different from being with our best friend. In Psalm 62, the psalmist urges silence. There is no need for nervous chatter, for this is no ordinary silence: “For God alone I wait silently; my deliverance comes from him.” (Psalm 62:1)

So the silence of God is not the audiologist's booth. It is living, active and filled with the Holy Spirit. The silence of God demands our surrender—stop talking and listen. When we let ourselves wait upon God in God's silence we become receptive and open. The God upon whom we wait in silence is the God to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid. We need to pay attention. Let us take the time to wait for God in silence and let Him wrap His arms around us. Let us listen to the sounds of silence.

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## In Other Words

# Was Jesus liberal or conservative?

## Moving beyond old-fashioned binaries



**JOHN BOWEN**

At the end of the *Chronicles of Narnia*, C.S. Lewis says, “You have no idea how good an old joke sounds when you take it out again after a rest of five or six hundred years.” Well, it probably hasn’t been quite that long, but I still like the one that says, “the world divides into two kinds of people: those who divide The world into two kinds of people, and those who don’t.”

Right now, the Christian world generally divides itself into two groups. If you doubt me, try explaining the various controversies that have roiled the Church in recent years without using the terms “left” and “right” or “conservative” and “liberal”. It’s difficult, isn’t it? Part of the reason we get stuck is that we insist on using this divisive kind of language. Do we really need it?

The terms “left” and “right” in this sense originated in the French parliament in 1791, after the French Revolution, when those in the National Assembly who supported the King sat on the right side of the king, and those who supported the revolution sat on the left. It was that simple. Two hundred years is not a long time for Christians who celebrate events from more than two millennia ago. For Christians, this is relatively new terminology. It is worth noting that the language comes from a secular source—not that there is necessarily anything wrong with that—but we might well be cautious before adopting language into Christian vocabulary that might distort our spiritual vision.

### Both/and, not either/or

So here’s my thesis: in a sense, Christians ought to be both conservative and liberal. Does that sound strange? But think about it. To be conservative is to conserve what is good from the past. Every Sunday, Christians around the world express their profound conservatism by enacting an ancient rite—the Eucharist. This is one of those times when we agree that saying “we’ve always done it this way” is a good thing. Equally, though, all Christians are liberal, since liberal at its heart means free, generous, fully alive. The apostle Paul—who some see as deeply conservative—says, “For freedom Christ has set us free: stand firm then, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.” Them’s fighting words!

Of course, there are distinctively Christian constraints on both our conservatism and our liberalism. They are not blanket approvals for any kind of behaviour or belief. We are not conservative to the extent that we want to reintroduce temple sacrifices. Neither are we liberal to the extent that we think anything is permissible. There are things worth conserving, and limits worth observing.

As Christians, we take our cues on both fronts from Jesus. So, we must ask, was he conservative or liberal? As you may have noticed, Jesus often has an annoying habit of not giving a direct answer to a direct question. If we insist on applying our simplistic categories, we would have to say he was a peculiar mixture of the two.

On the one hand, his life was guided by the Jewish scriptures: “the Son of Man must go as it is written;” “this scripture must be fulfilled in me;” and so on. In other words, he understood himself and his mission to be shaped by his scriptures. And he lambasted the Sadducees, the liberals of his day. (They didn’t believe in the resurrection, remember.) Isn’t that pretty much what we would call fundamentalism? So he’s conservative, right?

On the other, he interpreted Jewish law radically—to the horror of the religious leaders: “The Sabbath was made for

humankind, and not humankind for the Sabbath.” He had little tolerance for the traditions of the Pharisees, the conservatives of his day, who majored on the minors of religion: “You tithe the mint, dill, and cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith.” So he must be liberal, surely?

We might conclude from such references that Jesus was both “liberal” and “conservative”, but that’s too simple. In fact, it just goes to show how unhelpful these terms are. In Jesus, those two things which we like to separate are so closely woven together that we miss the point if we try to pull them apart. You have probably heard the ways we do this: “Of course, in some ways Jesus was a man of his time, which is unfortunate but inevitable—but in the ways that really matter he was our contemporary.” What is confusing is that his radicalism on social issues grew directly out of his conservative view of the scriptures! He really doesn’t fit those tired old left-right categories, and why should he? What

God has joined together, let no-one put asunder.

### Bigger fish to fry

So can we categorize him? It’s a dangerous thing to try, but I think we can safely say that Jesus marched to a different drummer he called “the kingdom of heaven”. Significantly enough, it’s an idea which harks back to creation and the Creator’s desire for a healthy world, and forward to the end when that same Creator makes all things new. I suppose we could summarize that as looking back (like a conservative) and looking forward (like a liberal). But there I go again, falling into the old trap of separating things that really shouldn’t be separated. Jesus stubbornly demands to be considered on his own terms, not ours.

There are legitimate distinctions to be made within Christian faith, and Jesus clearly made some. But he tends to call them by more challenging names than left and right. He invites us, for example, to faith rather than mistrust, obedience rather than disobedience, fidel-

ity rather than independence. In trying to follow him, our choices may sometimes seem to the outsider to be conservative and at other time liberal. If that’s confusing for people, so be it.

So should I be a conservative liberal, or a liberal conservative? A liberative or a conserberal? But maybe that’s not the point. These days, I come across younger church leaders who describe themselves as “post-liberal” and “post-conservative”. Apparently, young people have figured out that the old language doesn’t help us very much, particularly if we want to be faithful followers of Jesus. The rest of us could learn something from them.

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# Sharing the Good News Through Food Security

## THE VENERABLE TERRY HOLUB

What is the role of churches amidst rising food prices and housing costs, inflation, and overall increases in cost of living? This question emerged during our Mission Action Plan meetings at St. David's in Welland. Everyone is affected by inflation and the rising costs of living, but in particular those already disadvantaged are most adversely affected. Our parishioners noticed that food banks

were increasingly being relied on to make ends meet, and that our part of Welland lacked food banks and food security programs. We determined that this was an urgent need St. David's could help meet. Our food security ministry immediately has become an important way to connect with our neighbours in authentic ways.

Since 2018, St. David's has operated a gently-used clothing store offering both slightly-used and new clothing. While operating this store honest and open dia-

logue has taken place, and with rising food prices, inflation, rents, and cost of living an urgent need for food security emerged.

In September of 2022, eight members of the parish gathered to create a food pantry, with the intent of opening once a week for four hours. Subsequently, a plan to get the word out and a construction plan for shelving and storage were created, and a cadre of volunteers came forward to assist. Closets were built, non-perishable food items were donated, and financial sup-

port was provided by a number of faith-based organizations including Faith Rebekah Lodge and the St. David's Anglican Church Women group.

With a modest amount of money and a stockpile of donations, a "soft" opening for the pantry was scheduled for October 24, 2022. Since then, the Food Pantry has operated every Monday afternoon. Originally a small double closet in the church, approximately five feet by 10 feet, was dedicated to storing non-perishable items; however, as the overwhelming need for food security grew so did our need for additional space. Since then, we have created additional closet space and have approached the Diocese of Niagara for a W.O.W. grant in order to purchase a 40' outdoor shipping container which we plan to retrofit to help with storage.

Word of the new food pantry has spread since we opened, resulting in an increase in the number of neighbours using the pantry. Initially we handed out 35 bags of food in November, but in February we handed out around 80 bags of groceries within our community.

St. David's is located within walking distance of Niagara

College, which means that many of the people whom we serve are international students who have specific dietary requirements and we are committed to accommodating their specific dietary needs, making the St. David's Food Pantry one of a kind in this respect.

Over the past few months, connections and partnerships with food security organizations and advocates in Welland have been established including: Open Arms Mission, Dreams to Beams, Nabisco, Beyond the Streets, and Small-Scale Farms. All of whom have come forward to assist us in our quest to address food security in our community. Our hope is that like the affordable clothing store, the Food Pantry can become another example of Christ's light and love in Welland, and that we as disciples by reaching out to others will provide a visible example of what it means to live out the kingdom of God in our community. Through our care for our neighbours, St. David's strives to be a place where the Good News of Jesus Christ can continue to grow and that we are able to bring others into relationship with our Lord and Saviour who is the source of our love and compassion.

Photo: Contributed by Terry Holub



# A Documentary of Courage

## Lessons for all of us in resisting hatred and bigotry today

### LINDA ROSIER

When our beautiful friend, Eva Haller—a Holocaust survivor—asked us to watch *Four Winters* at the Toronto Jewish International Film Festival last fall, we did.

We were deeply moved hearing the stories told by eight of the surviving Jewish partisans who fled to the forests of Eastern Europe during WWII to fight against Nazi hatred and bigotry.

Julia Mintz, the producer, has told us how deeply honoured she is to have been the vessel into which these courageous partisans have poured their haunting, personal, powerful stories, and that she is passionately committed to sharing them with the world.

The huge audience response to *Four Winters*—including 'Human Rights Award' at Hampton's Doc Fest—has shown us how important the partisans' stories are for this moment in our history, and has motivated us to help *Four*

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Fri, March 24 <sup>th</sup> – 2:45PM	Wed, March 29 <sup>th</sup> – 6:30PM
Sat, March 25 <sup>th</sup> – 3:00PM	Sat, April 1 <sup>st</sup> – 3:00PM
Sun, March 26 <sup>th</sup> – 11:00AM	Sun, April 2 <sup>nd</sup> – 11:00AM

TICKETS HERE: [hotdocs.ca/whate-on/films/four-winters](http://hotdocs.ca/whate-on/films/four-winters)  
[FOURWINTERSFILM.COM](http://FOURWINTERSFILM.COM)

*Winters* 'get out there' to inspire people of all faiths, backgrounds, and leanings to stand up for peace and social justice everywhere.

Through the partisans' stories we begin to understand how heinous war is and how, as one partisan expresses, it pushes us to the utmost limits of our humanity and can force us to break every ethical and moral code we were raised with just to survive—and it can show us how radically painful it is to have to lie, steal, and even kill for survival.

We learn about courage, resilience, and resourcefulness of ordinary people doing extraordinary things when pushed to the precipice of what is tolerable.

Along with Julia, our hope and prayer is that *Four Winters* is a call to activism, moving people everywhere to understand the complexity and fragility of our humanity and to find our voices to passionately protect it—for ourselves and for everyone.

"We are all so concerned about race issues, antisemitism and divisiveness. This film is healing many hearts, and gives such an important picture of young women and men who fought back against the Nazi brutality they faced. I love the perspective of 90+-year-old women who sound strong as they recollect when they were seventeen and in the woods," says Eva Haller, Holocaust survivor and human rights activist.

Please go to see *Four Winters* at Hot Docs Cinema in Toronto. March 24th to April 2nd.

Two of the screenings occur on Sundays at 11:00 a.m. Perhaps your congregation could attend as a 'special service' event. See the poster for times and details.

Linda Roasier is a member of All Saints Church, Erin.

# Not Your Average J.O.E.s

**DANIELLE BONOVENTO**

The Church of the Apostles has partnered with the Job Opportunities Enterprise (J.O.E.) program to provide employment opportunities for participants and to help the community on a weekly basis. The J.O.E. program was set up to provide teens and young adults with neurodivergent abilities the opportunity to be employed in the community. The J.O.E. program has five participants working at the church to prepare and deliver one hundred meals each Friday afternoon for The Helper Bees outreach program.

Judith Rosenberg began the J.O.E. program in 2013 with eight families who had teenagers with neurodivergent abilities. These families wanted their teens to have the opportunity for employment or to start their own businesses. Until the pandemic hit, the J.O.E. program was running coffee kiosks in the Guelph Public Library system and local medical buildings. The program switched to an online model with employment training during the pandemic. Judith Rosenberg tells us that “the J.O.E. program was itching to get back to work out in the community. With an emphasis on helping those in need and reaching out to their communities, a partnership with The Helper Bees was the perfect new opportunity for J.O.E. employees.”

Starting in September of 2022, participants from the J.O.E. program have been coming to The Church of the Apostles on Fridays to make sandwiches, soup, and salads to be distributed downtown through our community partner, Your Downtown Guelph Friends. As well, The Helper Bees have employed members of the J.O.E. program as baristas for their “Living Better on Less” program, a free series of classes in which community members gather to



J.O.E. Helper Bees team #1: chef Kristine Mathers of Community FEWD; Tanya Latchman, J.O.E. program facilitator; Connie Greenidge; Susie Scott; Ranju Arneja; and Pam Arneja, J.O.E. Helper Bees job coach.

Photo: Contributed by Danielle Bonovento

learn ways to reduce their environmental impact, live fully on a reduced or fixed income, and find out more about resources available to them in Guelph.

Helper Bees facilitator Kate Nixon said that “working with the J.O.E. program has been excellent as it allows for us to embrace the intersectionality in our community. We can work together to address various needs and foster a sense of community within the kitchen space and in our street outreach program. Ultimately this partnership has shown that we do need each other and that we owe each other kindness and care.”

The partnership isn’t only a win for the J.O.E. program, The Helper Bees are immensely grateful for their work done every Friday. Before the partnership began, The Helper

Bees were bringing in different volunteers every Friday to perform the work. Helper Bees coordinator John Dennis shares that “having the J.O.E. program performing this work lessens the administrative task of recruiting, screening, and training volunteers to work in our kitchen. We are also grateful that the J.O.E. program and the work they perform for us are fully supported by funding through the United Way Guelph Wellington Dufferin.”

Judith Rosenberg told us that when she and the other families started the J.O.E. program, they had the simple goal that the participants be employed in the community. J.O.E. offered a practical model to achieve this goal by teaching them how to become baristas. Since then, the program has grown to mean

so much more. She shared that working with The Helper Bees has allowed them to come to work with dignity, “As we are recognized as fully capable people, giving and sharing our gifts and talents, and meeting people on an equal plane, as we take our rightful place in

society.” She continues to say, that “The work they do in the kitchen has allowed them to gain socialization, employment, community-based experiences and adventures, and personal growth and development.”

## Niagara Anglican Deadlines and Submission Guidelines

### Upcoming Deadlines:

May – March 24  
June – April 28

### Submissions:

**News, Letters, Reviews**  
(books, films, music, theatre)  
– 400 words or less  
**Articles** – 600 words or less  
**Original cartoons or art** –

Contact the Editor.

**Photos** – very large, high resolution (300 ppi), action pictures (people doing something).  
Include name of photographer.  
Written permission of parent/guardian must be obtained if photo includes a child.  
All submissions must include

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

### Questions or information:

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# Silvercreek Community Market at All Saints Lutheran Anglican Church Guelph

**MICHELE ALTERMANN  
AND THE REVEREND NIGEL  
BUNCE**

Silvercreek Community Market is an outreach program of All Saints Lutheran Anglican Church, which is located in an area of Guelph with considerable needs. What makes our market different from other emergency food providers in the city is that our main focus is on providing fresh produce. These are more nutritious than canned items but also more expensive to purchase. Most other emergency food banks offer only canned and other dry goods. Also, our foods appeal to the cooking styles that many of our newcomer families enjoy. For example, kale, okra, and ginger are very popular! We also support some indigenous families and residents of an assisted living community.

Recognizing that food security is a concern for many people, All Saints began a free, choice-based, fresh food market in 2017 to help the community access healthy, nutritious fruits and vegetables year round. Anyone is welcome to attend, and there is no eligibility requirement although we try to "keep it to the neighbourhood".

We purchase fruits, vegetables, and eggs, in partnership with The SEED (a program of the Guelph Community Health Centre). They buy food at the Ontario Food Terminal and sell it to us at wholesale prices. We also receive donated frozen meat through The SEED and donations of bread through the generosity of COBS bakery.

We hold two markets every month, on the first and third Thursday afternoons. We do distribute some non-perishable items at each market. We collect these every week within the congregation. St. Joseph's RC Church holds food drives for us three to four times a year as well, which usually brings in about a thousand pounds of food each time. Local businesses and other groups have also held food drives, as well as giving us cash donations. We are very blessed to have this community support.

We keep our list of nonperishable items small so as to have enough for each family. That's at least 60 jars of peanut butter, or boxes of cereal, etc. We also rotate through these items because they can weigh a lot along with the fresh produce. Our "most wanted" items are: Breakfast cereal, peanut butter, pasta and pasta sauce, canned



Volunteers ready to assist clients with fresh vegetables. Fresh fruits and dry goods are hidden by the volunteers! Photo: Nigel Bunce

meat/fish, canned legumes (i.e., chickpeas, lentils, etc.) but not brown beans (not a part of the cuisine of our clientele), rice, whole red lentils, cooking oils. We deliver any left-over foods after each market to '238 Willow', a Guelph Assisted Living building. We also prepare eight hampers a month for local Indigenous families.

In 2022 we provided food for 4,878 individuals, of whom about 40% were children. Now that COVID restrictions are less onerous, Silvercreek Community Market has resumed in-person 'shopping'. About 60 families attend each market, with an average family size of five. Thus, we assist just over 600 individuals every month in securing

healthy fresh food. All Saints carries out this outreach activity because it is part of 'what we do' [Matthew 25: 35]. It is a pleasure to serve others in our community.



## CONNECT

Stay connected with the Anglican Diocese of Niagara by reading the *Niagara Anglican* online. [niagaraanglican.news](http://niagaraanglican.news)



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