

Vacuum Cleaner Church

John Bowen reflects on the old model of church participation.

Page **3**



Embracing the Mixed Ecology Parish

The Church of Our Saviour The Redeemer's experience.

Page **6**



The Devil and Jazz Vespers

Archdeacon Jim Sandilands explore the liturgy of Jazz and the spiritual roots of the genre.

Page **7**



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 2024

“Early in the morning on the first day of the week...”

THESE WORDS BEGIN THE STORY OF LIFE.

They begin the story of Jesus' new resurrected life of course, but they also begin the first believer's stories too. And they begin ours—as the church. Because the Resurrection is not only an historical event but it's something that has present and future importance. Truly.

I'm not sure if we always live in that knowledge. It can seem like Easter is a celebration of something that has happened—not something that is happening.

Why does it matter? What does it mean to say that Jesus saved us from sin, and the death it brings? But bears thinking about because you have to see the dark to appreciate the light.

Sin in this world takes many forms. A shorthand would be that it is anything that we worship in the place of God; sin is that which pulls us from God and from God's people and community.

It's seductive and insidious—often dressed up in things or systems that promise so much but deliver so little. Sin is often cumulative and it becomes ever more corrosive until it owns your soul and you wake up one day and know that you are separated from the love of God and probably a bunch of other things or other people too.

By contrast, through the good news of the Gospel, Jesus showed us how to walk in God's ways. Walking with Jesus, the risen Christ, is quite simply the way to defeat the damage that sin does to us.

It's important to consider this because if we're going to grasp what the Resurrection is all about, we have to explore the things that take us away from God so that we can understand why Jesus needed to put us right again with God.

Jesus brings new order to the old chaos, new life to the old wastelands. To the ways in which we have laid waste to our own lives—relationships that have gone wrong, to the unfulfilled expectations or hopes that we drag around with us to the more corporate wastelands of war and violence in all those places that where humanity is suppressed and oppressed—to all the 'isms' with which we struggle—sexism, racism, dehumanizing capitalism and the rest.

Jesus is risen to re-order all that; to redeem and recultivate those wastelands and make them something beautiful and full of promise.

In fact, that re-ordering is what happened to the disciples. The Resurrection was an incredibly important event for the disciples but it wasn't a

once only event in the past. Its consequences are lived out here and now for all disciples of Christ.

As one scholar says, “the promise of the resurrection is not simply what God has done, but what God is still doing, still leading us forward into new life and possibility and forgiveness and love.”

And that matters because Jesus' Resurrection tells us that this world matters. You see the Resurrection is a break. It's a break with what was; it's the beginning to a new world. In truth it's actually the beginning of a revolution—a long revolution that we are still in the midst of that promises a new heaven and a new earth as Isaiah says and that powers and principalities will be set right.

And that's important. You see even if we are comfortable with the idea that Jesus came to put us right with God—personally, I'm not sure we realize that God's field of vision is much, much wider than that. Jesus came to put all the systems of which we are a part right with God too. Jesus came to redeem human systems. Not with might, but with profound right—God's right.

That's why a real, bodily Resurrection is so important—to me and to you and to the church. That's how we know the work of the cross has been accomplished. That Jesus has risen in his body—the body that walked among real people healing, and showing real people what God's love is really like—that body risen showing that this world, with its created order and disorder matters to God.

That heaven and the created order on earth are united in Jesus' Resurrection.

It's a lot to take in. But I just wanted this year, a year in which we see the suffering violence and war in Ukraine and the Land of the Holy One, to say that the Resurrection matters, not just as an historical event, but as something that has an importance that goes on affecting who we are as followers of Christ now today—it goes on affecting how we are as the church in this world. It's why we say, with joy in our hearts, but also knowing it's a mandate:

CHRIST IS RISEN! THE LORD IS RISEN INDEED. ALLELUIA!

+ Susan Niagara

Migrant Farmworkers Project



THE REVEREND ANTONIO ILLAS

The diocesan Migrant Farmworkers Project is a hospitality missional ministry that provides parishes with the experience of living and practicing their Baptismal Covenant and living out Gospel of Jesus of Nazareth, as congregants and volunteers are intentional in serving and nourishing their relationships with the persons they serve and accompany, temporary migrant farmworkers, during their journey in Canada. Congregations, volunteers, and seasonal migrant farmworker neighbours come together to make community and nurture their faith together.

Community is built as the local volunteers' welcome and show their gratitude to their migrant worker neighbours that year after year, since the 1960s, come to labor in the agricultural fields, orchards, vineyards, and greenhouses of Niagara. Agricultural work is demanding on the body, it is intense and hard back-breaking labor. Migrant Farmworkers Project uses an integrated approach as its staff and volunteers live their Baptismal Covenant to seek and serve Christ in all persons, to include migrant farmworkers, strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being. The volunteers are intentional in making connections with the migrant farmworkers

as they carry out their call to serve through the different operational programs of the Project.

In its decade of service to the seasonal migrant workers, specifically from Mexico and Central America, a local parish outreach ministry started at St. Alban's Anglican Church in Beamsville has developed from a seasonal six-month outreach initiative into a year-round diocesan ministry, today hosted at two parishes—St. Alban's, Beamsville and St. John's, Jordan, staffed by two Spanish-speaking missionaries, The Reverend Antonio and Cela Illas, and dozens of volunteers that on a weekly basis come together to facilitate six different programs for the temporary migrant farmworker neighbours.

Migrant Farmworkers Project (MFWP) run the following programs:

1. Spiritual, Sacramental, and Pastoral Care by the missionary(s)
2. Food Security Program / "Abarrotes"
3. Clothing "Tianguis" and "Tiendita" / Thrift Shop
4. Bikes for Farmworkers
5. Quest Community Health Centre / Medical Clinic at St. Alban's Hub Beamsville & visits to the agricultural fields in the Clinic Mobil Unit.
6. St. Alban's Hub Beamsville :
 - a. Café Room
 - b. "Abarrotes"
 - c. Tiendita"



Workers look through clothing items at the Migrant Farmworkers Project hub at St. Alban's, Beamsville.

Photos: Niagara Anglican Files

- d. Bikes for Farmworkers – Bike shop: sales & repairs
 - e. Quest Medical Clinic
 - f. Eucharist & coffee hour (Summer months)
- St. John's Jordan:
- a. Eucharist & Community Meal (Summer months)

The ministry is committed to changing the world of migrant farmworkers in Canada by transforming their life experience and work season in Niagara into one where the migrant farmworkers may feel appreciated for the demanding

work they do in the agricultural fields and develop roots, as well as a sense of belonging to the local community. The Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program is not conducive to or provides for a sense of belonging due to the systemic nature of the federal government program. It is intermittent, for up to eight months a year, the seasonal workers cannot bring their families during the work season, and there is no avenue for permanent resident status in Canada.

In 2024, thanks to a generous grant from Ecclesiastical Insurance, the St. Alban's Hub in Beamsville has been undergoing an infrastructure and facilities transformation to better provide hospitality and services to the migrant farmworkers the Hub volunteers serve. The grant funds have facilitated the creation of two new offices for the Quest Community Health Centre medical clinic at the Hub. The medical services provided by the Migrant Farmworkers

Project partner organization accommodate migrant farmworkers to an after-work hours schedule and Spanish-language services. Migrant farmworkers deserve good medical care in their language. The "Tiendita" (thrift shop) space will become a multipurpose room that will also be used as waiting space for the medical clinic patients, "Abarrotes" (food pantry), and the much-needed computer lab for the migrant farmworkers. The computer lab will facilitate the migrant workers' skills, a way to communicate with family members back home, and, yes, for their ESL classes provided by instructors of the Niagara Folk Arts Multicultural Centre.

If you are enthusiastic about empowering people and feel that God's Holy Spirit is calling you to serve, just come and see or learn more at migrantfarmworkers.ca! You will be blessed as you are a blessing to others.



The pantry provides traditional culinary staples for workers.

ReformedBookServices

PROMOTING GODLINESS, REVIVAL & REFORMATION

Store Hours: Mon.–Wed. 10–5 • Thurs. 10–9 • Fri. 10–5 • Sat. 10–3

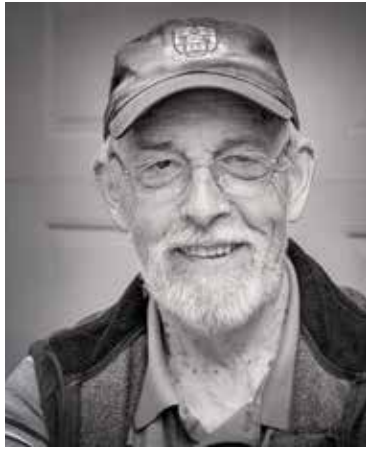
16 Roy Blvd. Brantford ON N3R 7K2
T: 519.304.4709 • E: sales@reformedbookservices.ca

a great selection of christian books at low prices

Niagara Depot
195 Victoria Ave., Fenwick, ON L0S 1C0 • T: 905.714.6257

In other words

Vacuum Cleaner Church

**JOHN BOWEN**

I'm sure you've experienced it as have I: "Oh, could you help out with this committee?" "Can you do a reading this Sunday?" "Why don't you join this small group?" "Isn't it your turn to make the coffee?" I remember a friend joking that there was only one night a week when she was at home, and her husband was worried that she'd give that one up in order to be "at the church" too. It wasn't a particularly funny joke. This is vacuum cleaner church.

The trouble is that it is all too easy to measure people's spiritual maturity by the amount of time they spend inside the four walls of the church building, or in church-related activities. They're the people we value most, the people we trust with yet more responsibilities, and the people we reward.

What is the church?

What is wrong with this picture? It assumes a very distorted understanding of "the church." What is church? Church is the community of those who have responded to God's call to "repent and believe" through faith and baptism. They are those who have committed themselves to learning from Jesus the ways of the kingdom. They make up what I like to call the trade school in which Jesus

trains his apprentices.

If this is the heart of church, then how does it work? I find it helpful to think of the church as operating in two modes, the "gathered mode" when we come together for worship and teaching, and the "scattered mode" the rest of the week, when we live our lives in the places God has called us—home, work, or leisure. The trade school of Jesus takes the form of a co-op program with a small classroom component—that's church—and a larger on-the-job component—called life.

The trouble is that churches usually value the gathered mode more than the scattered mode, the classroom more than the fieldwork.

The need for missional leadership

The decline of Christendom over the past fifty years has led to a fresh realization of what the church is meant to be. The church is not there just to meet people's "spiritual needs," or to provide a "spiritual dimension" to a materialistic life, or to provide "good values" to our children—though any or all of those may happen. We are primarily a community of Jesus's disciples in the transformation of the world—a "missional" community, to use current language.

But all too often we are still stuck in Christendom mode. Our instinct is still to suck people into innumerable activities—all of them worthwhile, of course—within the church community, and all too often inside the church building, instead of seeing church events as equipping Christians for their apprenticeship work in "the world."

Rather than honoring those of us who spend all our time "in church," perhaps we should



worry. How will we ever mature as apprentices of Jesus that way? How will we have time to fulfil our mission in the world? Of course, some people are required—and gifted—to maintain existing church structures. After all, we do need those structures to equip and sustain us for mission. But my hunch is not as many people, and not as often.

Maybe some of us who are in "gathered mode" too much of the time need to be pushed out of the nest so we can learn to fly—for our own good and the good of God's mission. The opposite is also worth considering. We sometimes worry about those who only show up on Sundays, and resist serving on church committees. We might even question their commitment: are they really serious about membership in this church? But

it may be that if we scratched the surface of those people's lives, we would find that they are too involved with loving their neighbours to serve on yet another church committee.

Sending out, not sucking in

Years ago, I had a friend in Ottawa who started literally dozens of Bible study groups in different government departments. Among other effects of their work, over the years they saw about a hundred people become Christians through their witness. My friend's church—it happened to be Baptist—said, "Look we would love to have you as one of our elders, but this work you are doing across the city is your mission, and putting you on a church committee would just be a waste of your gifts. So we will pray for you and support

you in any way we can." What a beautiful response! Then, after some years, my friend moved to a job on the other side of the country. The man who had acted as Vice-President of the movement was asked to take over the leadership. His response? "I would love to do that, but I'm much too busy in my church. Thanks, but no thanks." Not surprisingly, the ministry declined in size and effectiveness.

Jesus said we are the salt of the earth. But for the salt to do its work, it needs to be sprinkled liberally where it is most needed. We need to beware the piles of salt on the side of the plate. Or, to change the image, Christians are rather like manure: spread thinly, they do a great job. But gather too many of them together for too long, and they begin to smell pretty bad.



NIAGARA ANGLICAN

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

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

Publisher: Bishop Susan Bell
905-527-1316
bishop@niagaraanglican.ca
Editor: Connor Jay
editor@niagaraanglican.ca
Advertising: Angela Rush
905-630-0390
niagara.anglican.ads@gmail.com
Art Director: Craig Fairley
Imagine Creative Communications

Printed and mailed by:
Webnews Printing Inc., North York, ON
Available online at:
niagaraanglican.news (blog)
niagaraanglican.ca/newspaper (PDF)
Subscriptions: \$15/year.
Submissions:
Submission information and deadlines are printed elsewhere in the paper.

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

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



ANGLICAN
DIOCESE OF
NIAGARA

**CALLED TO LIFE
COMPELLED TO LOVE**

A True Story

Where Generosity Breeds Generosity

THE REVEREND CANON DR. DREW MACDONALD

It was an autumn day and, looking out over the Church cemetery, I saw him riding his bike through the historic graveyard with a tartan jacket. We called him, 'Tartan Tom'. He wasn't a day under 80.

He had booked an appointment with me and was right on time—as was his habit. I knew he wasn't going to be driving his car.

"Well, vicar [not everybody called me vicar, but he did] I've got to say I'm impressed with this congregation. I never really am sure what you are on about, but you must be cooking something. I've been a part of this congregation my whole life and I know something is different right now. I don't even particularly believe in God, but one thing is clear, the people who attend here do," he said. "I want to be honest with you. I've never really been that devout, but this Church has been good to me and my family. And the reason I am here is because I think it is about time that I make a more serious contribution to what is going on. I thought I should do something like put the church in my will."

Now 'Tartan Tom' was on a roll. There was no chance for me to get a word in. Time to listen some more.

"I've seen this church go up and down over the years, and it's clear to me that the church is always just one generation away from extinction. So, I want to help. I want to give back. I want to leave something that will help this community thrive well into the future. I'm prepared to make a planned gift and that has some real wisdom. But as wise as that is I want to see some of the return on investment myself. That is—before I pass away. To be honest I have got to tell you how impressed I was by that Mr. Bosman character. I want to do something similar."

Well, dear reader, you wouldn't know our Tartan Tom was referencing a Mr. Bosman in the congregation who had made a matching gift offer of \$50,000 over and above his regular offering. In less than six weeks the congregation found another \$50,000 to match his gift. Mr. Bosman had said he had been

so touched by God's grace by attending a congregationally led Alpha class in the local pub. It turned his life around. In due time he was a full member attending bible studies and serving on the parish council. Tartan Tom was inspired not just by Mr. Bosman but by the zeal and passion of the congregation.

"So, vicar I've got a proposal for you. I want to do what Mr. Bosman did. I want to do the same thing and offer my own matching gift."

Well of course you can imagine how pleased I was to hear such commitment and conviction. This man was filled with hope not just by the vision of the parish but by the sense of life and vitality he saw among the people of God. People like Mr. Bosman and his generous spirit inspired Tartan Tom. He could see the Spirit of God at work.

So, my next question was gently put. "What kind of figure are you thinking of?" Tartan Tom paused, "I've decided not to put any figure on the line. All matching gifts given by parishioners, over and above their present offerings, to the end of the fiscal year will be matched. Dollar for dollar. How does a December 31st deadline work for you, Vicar?"

I then cleared my left ear as I have had some hearing impairment and asked him to repeat what he just said. "Ya, no limit. I think the parish will respond well."

I immediately had to remind him of the adage, 'Caveat Emptor'—buyer beware. "Tom, you do understand this could cost you a great deal of money as this congregation has been growing and there are a lot of people?" Tartan Tom's response, "I know the markets have had quite a tumble of late and many are feeling the pinch, but if parishioners knew that every dollar they donated over and above their regular commitments would be doubled, I think they will rise to the challenge. It's not just good stewardship, it's good business! How often do people get a chance to double their money?"

I responded, "Well God bless you, but I sure hope you are certain about what you are proposing here."

"I am prepared to eat cat food at Christmas if I must. It's

important that the work of this Church continues. I'm really excited about it, and I want to see what we can all do together."

On January 1st Tartan Tom walked into my office once again. Few words were said as he slid a cheque across my desk for \$301,000. The smile on his face said it all. The parish realized a gift of \$602,000 over and above our operating budget. These funds went directly to the parish vision—partially to renovation, upgrading technology, but significantly to human resources—the hiring of new staff to enable and support new ministries. Interestingly, no one ever knew his name. He was just Tartan Tom.

What we found, and I feel this story gives credence to, is that generosity breeds generosity. Little did I know how deeply parishioners were prepared to see their dollars maximized and invested in the future. The truth of the matter is that planned gifts, matching gifts, pre-authorized monthly giving—all transform the life of a congregation. Parishioners get inspired by other parishioners. Kingdom work inspired by the Holy Spirit is infectious. I saw it with Mr. Bosman and Tartan Tom—their generosity inspired an entire congregation.

Proverbs 13:22 encapsulates the essence of planned giving: "A good person leaves an inheritance for their children's children." This biblical wisdom should encourage us all to think beyond our immediate concerns and consider the enduring influence our financial stewardship can have on future generations.

I encourage us all to live into our diocesan vision, "Called to Life, Compelled to Love" through our local and diocesan mission action plans and the ministries they support. When the people of God know their priorities and have clear goals and objectives experience tells us the resources necessary to bring them to fulfillment mysteriously appear—one dedicated, inspired, and generous believer at a time.

If you have questions about making a gift, please reach out to Drew MacDonald at drew.macdonald@niagaraanglican.ca and visit niagaraanglican.ca/stewardship.



M.A. Clark & Sons Funeral Home Ltd. Burial & Cremation Centre

Leslie Clark Dan Hierlihy Brad Mellor
John Martin Renee Mastromatteo

Ph: 905-383-3323
Fax: 905-383-2168

567 Upper Wellington Street,
Hamilton, ON L9A 3P8

Email: clarkandsonsfuneralhome@outlook.com



Make a Smart Investment, choose Pollard

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



Call **1.800.585.5561**
POLLARDWINDOWS.COM

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

SCOTT MCGILLIVRAY
HGTV HOST & REAL ESTATE EXPERT



Living Better on Less Program Expands

JOHN DENNIS

The Living Better on Less Program has expanded by offering two new programs to the community. The Living Better on Less for Seniors Program and Living Better for Less for Youth are offered by the Church of the Apostles and the Guelph Tool Library. These free series ran until the start of March.

The Living Better on Less Program began at the Church of the Apostles in 2008 as a response to the housing crisis. The six week program was developed to teach participants about having less of an environmental impact and ways to optimize living on a fixed budget. The two new offerings are expanding on this programming with a focus on youth and seniors who are in transition.

John Dennis, Living Better on Less Coordinator, stated that “the new offerings of the Living Better on Less Program are an opportunity for us to focus on the needs of specific groups in the community. We are delighted to partner with Wyndham House and the Guelph Wellington Seniors Association to serve these participants.”

The Living Better on Less for Youth Program is currently running weekly at the Wyndham House Hub until the end of February. The program is



Participants listen to the presentation on Living Better On Less

Photo: Contributed by John Dennis

supported by funding through the Federal Government's Community Service Recovery Fund and the Guelph Community Foundation.

Wyndham House has provided space for the program, assisted with recruiting participants, and organized keynote speakers. A youth advisory committee was recruited by Alyssa Vanderkooy, the facilitator of this program, to be peer mentors and to assist with program creation and facilitation. The programming focuses on the unique challenges faced by these participants including

employment skills, healthy eating, and shopping on a budget.

Alyssa Vanderkooy, noted that “we are really excited to be creating this program with input from the participants at Wyndham House. This is a unique opportunity to connect participants with relevant resources in the city and new skills to reduce their spending and environmental impact all at once”.

The Living Better on Less for Seniors Program was offered at the Evergreen Centre. The workshops focused on the topics relevant to seniors such as elder

abuse and fraud, dealing with grief and loss, and healthy aging. The goal of this program is to help participants feel more connected in the community, to allow them to share their experiences and to inform them of resources and opportunities available to them. The program is supported by the Federal Government's New Horizons for Seniors Program.

Kim Logue, the facilitator of this series for seniors, began volunteering in support of the program in November 2023, and has been working on the program curriculum since January

2024. She says, “The program recognizes that seniors have a great deal of experience and knowledge that can be shared with the larger group to enhance the learning experience. We created this new series shaped by input from past participants, as well as the Senior's Advisory Committee that included the program creator, Ann Chidwick.”

The two programs are at capacity but additional session will be offered in the Spring and Fall of 2024. Details will be shared on social media through the Guelph Tool Library and the Church of the Apostles.

Parishes Awarded \$40,000 through WOW Grants

Parishes across the diocese are furthering their Mission Action Plans (MAP) and responding God's mission in our communities in all kinds of unique and engaging ways. \$40,000 dollars has been awarded to parishes across the diocese to support their goals and initiatives borne out of their Mission Action Plans.

Walking on Water (WOW) grants support transformational, creative, innovative and missionally inspired initiatives through parishes and affiliated ministries.

“The MAP process has helped us revitalize our ministries, surfacing new ideas and vision, while also gifting us with a better understanding of why we're here as a Church and what we're supposed to be doing about that both now and in the

near future,” said Bishop Susan Bell. “Through our WOW Grants program, recipients are able to dream bigger and live out God's mission more boldly.”

WOW grants have supported God's call for innovation in liturgy, discipleship, storytelling, hospitality, invitation, affirmation, and inclusion. Through these grants, parishes and affiliated ministries have boldly followed God's invitation and furthered God's mission as we are called to life and compelled to love.

Building on the success of their MAP focused and WOW grant funded project from 2023, **All Saints, Dain City** will continue to grow their community garden through garden beds specifically set aside to support and mentor youth in growing

vegetables and caring for the land, as well as offering classes relating to gardening and food preparation, like canning and pickling.

St. Luke's, Smithville's “Unified West Lincoln Project” supports a growing mental health program that has been created in partnership with the Township of West Lincoln. The parish has used the Sanctuary Mental Health program, which is widely used within the Church of England to provide faith-based programming to support mental health and well-being.

Mission in Acts, a ministry of **St. Luke's, Palermo**, is providing bilingual bibles, Mandarin hymn books, and bilingual worship booklets to support newly established and growing

Sunday worship communities at **St. Cuthbert's** and **St. Luke's**. These materials will help clergy and lay leaders form Mandarin-speaking worshipping communities formed in the Anglican tradition.

Church of the Epiphany, Oakville is advancing their MAP goal of providing death and bereavement support through their “Journeying Together Through Grief and Loss” initiative, which will feature public showings of films designed to open up and further conversations about grief and loss.

St. Cuthbert's, Oakville received funding to support and grow a youth music program that began in 2022. Through this funding, The Youth Music and Event Players will have increased capacity and ability to

missionally take their performances to community hubs like nursing homes and other parishes.

St. Stephen's, Hamilton received funding to improve their family-friendly area to provide a more welcoming atmosphere for families.

St. David's, Welland, also received funding to missionally engage international students from Niagara College.

Over the past 10 years, the diocese has invested almost \$700,000 in more than 75 initiatives in all regions of the diocese.

If you have questions about advancing your parish Mission Action Plan, please contact Emily Hill, parish development missioner, at emily.hill@niagara-anglican.ca

Embracing the Mixed Ecology Parish

The Story of Our Saviour The Redeemer, Stoney Creek

THE REVEREND CANON DR IAN MOBSBY

Seeking to develop a mixed ecology parish church can feel daunting. Yet, in many ways, it is about being available and flexible to respond to interactions with local people living in or working in our parish neighbourhoods and the prompting of the Holy Spirit. A good example of an emerging mixed ecology parish is that of Our Saviour The Redeemer, Stoney Creek, (OSTR).

Like many parish clergy, The Reverend Canon Bahman Kalantary, rector of OSTR, makes a point of being present and available for interactions with local people in spontaneous moments as the Spirit leads. This means having an intentional visible presence outside of church buildings and not expecting people always to come to the church who don't relate to traditional or contemporary worship services. But instead, it means being open for all, being approachable to all, particularly those who are 'de-and-unchurched' who may be spiritual seekers, atheists, Nones or Dones, or those who are spiritually curious but who do not trust Church or Christians. From these many interactions and listening to God and context, Canon Bahman has formed a number of relational events to respond to the different spiritual needs of local 'un-or-de-churched' people. (see image below)

In addition to the growing Sunday morning congregation, a new missional community is emerging in support of spiritual seekers which include Circle of

Friends, Pub Night Socials, and adapted forms of Taizé services.

Circle of Friends gathers on the first Wednesday of each month, welcoming parishioners and neighbours alike. Each month features a new activity, accompanied by a light lunch and plenty of laughter. The circle is growing, reaching out to the neighbourhood and inviting everyone to experience the sense of belonging within a community of believers. This is just the beginning, and we hope the message of our openness of 'belonging before believing' will be heard by our neighbours.

Pub night socials originally started to support church property maintenance, but they quickly evolved into inclusive gatherings where people from diverse backgrounds could enjoy laughter and joy with the church community. Now, attendees are discovering the various ministries offered by the church and are beginning to feel a sense of belonging through their financial support and donations. This is just the beginning.

Taizé Worship in OSTR is developing into new style worship as we consider the needs of the de-and-unchurched. When it began, it was a service of Taizé songs and Biblical readings. During pandemic we realized that our people from the parish neighborhood preferred a more meditative style of event and for some, somewhat surprisingly, a form of the Holy Eucharist was important, and so was added to the event. Further to this, was a request for the inclusion of prayers for healing and anointing and soon became in high demand. Today's Taizé missional event has come to life and



now parishioners are mediating on the ways to introduce and involve more people from the neighbourhood. Now every Tuesday at 3:00pm OSTR offers what they call Taizé worship.

Alongside this emerging missional community for spiritual seekers, Canon Bahman has begun a regular study and dialogue space. Several years ago, **Biblical Conversations** emerged in response to a palpable desire for a vibrant and practical faith experience from a mixture of people including those who were agnostic. The goal from the beginning has been to enable a deep understand of Christian writings that include the bible, mystical theology, and spirituality, the desert mothers and fathers, existential questions, and a variety of other sources to discern their relevance to contemporary life. Through

The Missional Journey



constructive dialogue, participants create a space where some actively engage in discussions while others choose to listen and reflect. This environment is inclusive, safe, and open to all, encouraging questioning and exploration to support the missional journey of all those who participate. These gatherings take place every Thursday.

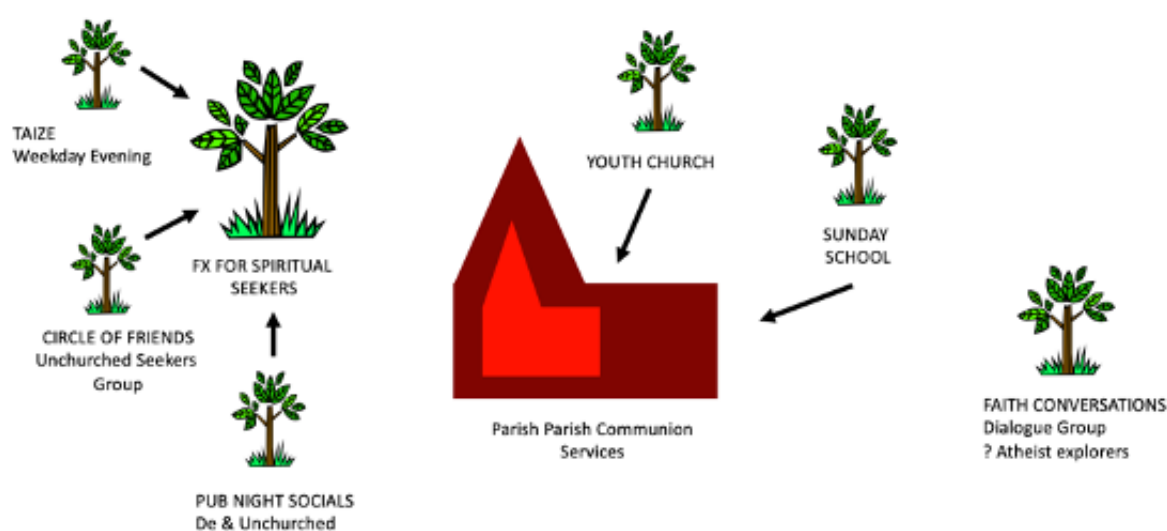
It is hoped that these initiatives will gather spiritual seekers, atheist questers, and the de-and-un-churched, and will in time, create new ecclesial communities birthed out of contextual mission. In so doing, we hope the process of listening, loving service, forming community, addressing Christian formation and discipleship and then finally developing new contextual worshipping communities in the parish church, will regenerate the parish church to be truly a missional hub in the neighbourhood. This process takes time and follows "The Missional Journey" diagram above.

The crucial insight is that such a mixed ecology parish vision is not about new bodies in seats for the Sunday morning

service for whom such worship may not be relevant or accessible, but more about transformation, so that there may be multiple missional congregations. This mature sense of 'unity in diversity' vision rather than 'unity in conformity' challenges the unconscious expectation of many churches arising from Christendom that then frees the church to be a rich diverse ecology. In so doing, the church can grow reflecting the diversity of the parish neighbourhood and at the same time renewing the parish church to be relationally relevant and contextual.

It is hoped that in time, and with the loving patience, support and curation of Canon Bahman, that these new initiatives will become mixed ecology ecclesial communities growing new Christians, new leaders, and new vocations, where the parish corporation and parish councils become more diverse and better resourced, with new participants who can share in the practical being and doing of being part of such a dynamic mixed ecology parish church.

STORY OF PARISH OF OUR SAVIOUR THE REDEEMER, HAMILTON



We Praise You for the Sun

ROSEMARY ANTSEY

I have always had an interest in environmental protection and social justice. I joined Climate Justice Niagara (CJN) in 2022 in order to learn more about the impact of increasing carbon dioxide emissions on our planet and the ways in which we can lower our personal impact. The mandate of CJN is to equip the leaders and people of the diocese to live more deeply into the Fifth Mark of Mission and our diocesan Mission Action Plan within our parishes, homes, and communities and to be strong advocates for local and global change.

In early 2023, I started to investigate the installation of solar panels on my home as a way to reduce my carbon footprint. I was fortunate that I knew someone who had recently installed solar panels and found his contractor had the most favourable cost estimate. In order to obtain the government grant for solar panels I needed to have an energy audit on my home and was pleased to discover that my home was almost as energy efficient as a new build; my efforts to insulate and conserve energy paid off.

My solar panel contractor arranged for the necessary contract with Alectra Utilities and the panels were installed in July, 2023. The electricity generated by solar panels is direct current and requires an inverter to convert the power to alternating current. The inverter my contractor installed is from Solar Edge and this device is connected to my modem allowing me to see the activity of my panels at any time. On my mobile phone I can view my electricity generation at the current time, daily rates, monthly and annually and also see the real time generation of each of my individual 16 panels. The app also gives an estimate of the environmental benefits of my energy generation in the form of CO₂ emissions saved and an equivalent number of trees planted. Electricity generated by the solar panels goes into the Alectra grid and my meter records this.

In the sunny summer months my electricity plus water bills were either a credit or a small amount as my generated electricity paid for both my water and electricity usage. The last few



months have been unusually cloudy, so I expect that my bills will be similar to last winter. The maximum government grant for solar panels is \$5,000, together with the \$600 cost of the energy audit. This grant reduced the cost of the panels to \$14,000 and the post-solar panel installation reduced my carbon footprint to below that of a new home. If I install a heat pump to replace my air conditioner and gas furnace my home will be net zero.

My future plans to do my part to fight climate change include installing a heat pump and electric water heater in my home, reducing my driving as much as possible, not flying or taking cruises, growing more vegetables in my garden and moving my savings from my bank to a credit union. The latter move is because big banks fund fossil fuel companies and do not fund green energy initiatives similarly. I will also continue to advocate against the building of new highways in Ontario, such as Highway 413 and the Bradford Bypass, which are unnecessary and expensive and which will impact environmentally sensitive areas and agricultural lands, including many acres within Ontario's Greenbelt.

I pray that God give us all the will and courage to simplify the way we live, to reduce the energy we use, to share the resources He provides and to be willingly to bear the cost of change.



Prayer for Climate Justice

God of life
Through whom all beauty and wonder come into being
We thank you for this Earth, our home
For the diversity of creation
And the blessings of earth, air and water

Grant us your grace that we may
Exercise wise stewardship of this Earth
Tread lightly upon it
And cherish its resources

Help us to move towards behaviors that are
environmentally healthy
To leave behind our consumer demand for plastics and our
wasteful practices
To act now for the good of future generations and all of life

Give us the will and courage to simplify the way we live
To reduce the energy we use
To share the resources you provide
And to bear the cost of change

As climate change confronts us
May we commit to the changes that need to be made

Help us to become instruments of a new creation
Founded on the covenant of your love.

We ask this through Jesus Christ, our Saviour
Amen



Toward a Stronger Community

Strengthening the Sense of Community in West Lincoln

LAUREN CLARK & STEPHEN LA SALLE

In recent years, mental health awareness has become a critical issue globally and here at home in our local community many of our residents struggle with loneliness, addiction, and even mental illness. Recognizing the need for a compassionate and inclusive response, The community of St. Luke's, Smithville, through our Mission Action Plan identified the need to become the soul of the community, not by expecting people to come to us, but rather, us going out to them.

Under the leadership of Stephen La Salle and Faith Bell, we developed a collaborative approach to working with other faith communities, community organizations, and the Township of West Lincoln. Calling this joint initiative, "Unified West Lincoln," our collective goal is to foster a "safe, secure, and supportive" community within West Lincoln, regardless of faith, belief, culture, or identity.

At the same time, we have begun to take significant strides in raising awareness about mental health. As a parish community we have worked together to address and break down the stigmas and barriers associated with mental health disorders. Our sermons, regular workshops, and even community events have become platforms for discussing mental health openly, while encouraging parishioners to challenge their own biases and seek to create a community without fear or judgment. In doing so, we, as a church, aim to reduce the stigma associated with mental health challenges and be an example for other faith communities.

Lauren Clark instructed the eight-week Sanctuary Mental Health Program to the community each week at the church this past fall. Using videos and group discussions, the goal of the program has been to raise awareness and start conversations in the community regarding mental health. For St. Luke's, Lauren is using this as a stepping stone towards a larger goal of offering mental health first aid courses in the spring of 2024. According to Lauren, "the more we can do to foster the



St. Luke's offered an eight-week Sanctuary Mental Health Program to the community.

Photo: Contributed by Lauren Clark and Stephen La Salle

discussion about mental health and reducing the stigma from it, will allow people to become more comfortable about sharing their own struggles with mental health."

To help foster a stronger sense of community within West Lincoln, we have also begun offering regular programming for residents including exercise classes, social events, and other programming. These all have the same goal of bringing people together and allowing them to feel safe and secure in who they are and not for what they think others want them to be.

For Faith, Lauren, Stephen and the community of St. Luke's this is just the beginning in a much larger plan for the parish to become a beacon of hope within the community. Through partnerships with community

organizations, such as the Jeff McKillop Mental Health Foundation, we are laying the foundation for St. Luke's to continue and expand the work that we are doing in the community to help make it a safe, secure, and supportive place for all to be a part of.

In Smithville the results of our efforts are being noticed. Over the last year, St. Luke's has seen a resurgence in attendance, with both new and familiar faces visiting the church each week. On social media, our presence continues to grow, as well. When people are asked what they like most about the church, the most common answer given is "the strong sense of community." For Smithville and the surrounding area of West Lincoln, the growing sense of community we are helping foster will

not only strengthen the community, but most importantly allow each other to embrace vulnerability. Ultimately this will foster an environment where people are able to walk alongside others in their life journey, no matter where they are in the moment.

St. Luke's, Smithville has embarked on a transformative journey to address the press-

ing issue of mental wellness within the local community of West Lincoln. The hope is to create and foster a safe, secure, and supportive environment for all residents, irrespective of their belief, culture or identity. St. Luke's aims to continue to expand their network by teaming up with local organizations and collaborators.



New Homes Renovations Landscaping

NEWVISIONHOMES.CA

We are your home renovation specialist in Hamilton, Stoney Creek, Brantford, & Halton regions.

Hamilton: (289) 239-7923
Oakville & Burlington: (905) 247 5988
office@newvisionhomes.ca

We take care of the details!





Move Seniors Lovingly
Honouring Our Fathers and Our Mothers
Downsize • Move • Design • Setup
Since 2005

Senior Move Transition Services
Answering Every Need

Downsizing, sale, disposal, donation of unwanted items, pack, storage, move, unpack with
"complete set-up evening of move"

CONTACT US FOR A FREE CONSULT
Halton: 647.714.8145
Hamilton & area: 905.769.0811
Niagara Region: 905.321.2886

www.moveseniorslovingly.com

Toronto • Mississauga • York Region
Oakville to Niagara • Durham • Waterloo/Wellington




barb@moveseniorslovingly.com

The Devil and Jazz Vespers.

THE VENERABLE JIM SANDILANDS

In the early twentieth century jazz earned the dubious honorific “the Devil’s Music.” Jazz thrived in the clubs, the so called “speakeasy,” danced with sensuality, freedom, cultural rebelliousness and perhaps most importantly grew in the nexus of black culture and white cultural privilege. The Devil’s Music later became associated with “Rock and Roll,” and was for many churchgoers a threat to the status quo, a dangerous outpouring of chaos and disorder setting loose passionate expressions of creativity and improvisation. Much safer to stay with the familiar rituals. Despite the fact that music of every genre has the capacity to be transformative, and is syncretic, borrowing from the past, jazz was for many years banished from the hallowed, particularly Caucasian, halls of worship. Associations with the alleys, drug culture, and the seedy side of our common life did not help. Yet over time jazz found its way into the dominant culture and into worship. To my mind the power of music which is improvised collectively and in the moment could not help but gain a place across races and cultures. Turns out the “Devil,” not surprisingly, has a following.

In many Black churches, Gospel and jazz genres have been the ground and being of lively music inviting movement and spirit filled praise throughout the history and growth of the genre. Meanwhile on the journey to “mainstream” culture there have been some significant signposts. I think of Duke Ellington’s 1965 “Sacred Concerts” as an example. As the Civil Rights Movement grew, so has the place and status of Jazz in the arts which have been and can still be dominated by white privilege. Over time and on the backs of public acceptance this is changing. Now it is noteworthy that our own Jazz Vespers in Niagara is approaching its third decade and is itself rooted in an innovation in New York in the 60s.

Ron Reinstra, in *Notes from the Loft, Reformed Worship Resources* writes: “Vespers is one of the daily offices celebrated at sunset in the Eastern Orthodox, Western, Catholic, Lutheran and Anglican traditions to give



thanks for the day and offer biddings for the night to come. All of these offices have roots in Jewish daily prayer cycles. Its format includes litanies of thanks, reading of lessons and psalms and singing of canticles, often the Magnificat or Song of Mary. Jazz Vespers, as a concept worship service and as an outreach ministry, began in New York City in the 1960s. Pastor John Gensel of St. Peter’s Lutheran Church in New York City befriended the city’s musicians and designed a service of prayer and jazz for folks who couldn’t make it to Sunday morning services after playing late night gigs on Saturday night. Some were concerned that jazz music would attract a wayward, nightclubbing crowd to church. Pastor Gensel wasn’t fazed. “That’s the kind we want,” he said. “The good ones can stay at home.”

Our Vespers is an improvisation on this form. The format and the music make room for a level of spontaneity that is not

always a feature of our Anglican worship. Yet none of it takes most of us very far from the familiar aspects of our gatherings. Jazz itself dances with tradition in that it lives in the joy of creatively playing with and bending the familiar grounds of rhythm, tempo, chord changes, and melody, constantly returning to resolutions. Jazz musicians refer to much of their musical library as “standards,” songs that provide the ground of musicians repertoire in clubs and on recordings for many years. Many songs at Vespers have their origins in the early days of jazz.

So in addition to the tunes at Vespers, I try to find music and poetry that continue a theme, to improvise the prayers and homily, if there is one, and to connect directly the congregation with the feelings that might be associated with the theme or season. Meanwhile there is plenty of room for the congregation to spiritually wander, reflect, and feel in the moment. When

Vespers works, the result is a form of worship, itself improvisational, and is accessible to music fans who might not think to attend a regular Sunday service. The service can also touch “notes” familiar to those who are steeped in tradition. To borrow from Marshall McLuhan, “the medium becomes the message.” The service can be lively in a way that resonates with the spirit of jazz and in a faith in the Living Word.

May I also say that playing in a jazz ensemble is an example of working creatively in a team where leadership could be described as “eucharistic” in a way that standard celebrations might not convey. As an ensemble plays as one body with freedom to express the sacred, as individuals the shared experience can be motivating and moving, offering a collective experience not focused on a single celebrant. In jazz leadership is shared and usually negotiated in the moment in the performance. It is compelling to

watch this taking place as musicians trade solos and reflect on each others offerings playfully. “Though we are many, we all share” becomes lived in the staging and presentation in ways that are not always reflected in our Sunday Eucharists.

Music has the capability of including those who, though not offering the music, are moved and even transformed by the shared experience. I am certain that this is not just a feature of jazz performances, but a special virtue of jazz is the reliance on a creative tension between taking what is given and reshaping it in surprising and unfamiliar ways in the moment. In a live performance the audience becomes a member of the band helping to shape the artistry of the players. I know this can happen in our more usual forms of worship. It is not always the case however that our practice reflects the spirit that is inherent in jazz.

Finally, jazz enters willingly into the so called “secular world,” crossing the artificial boundary we sometimes make with other musical forms. Of course there are other such adventures as musical genres become more fluid. I think of the Advent Café at St. Georges, St. Catharines as an example. I know that the Church of the Ascension is featuring a Chamber group and jazz quartet on a Saturday afternoon. Music has the power and the potential to transform us.

Currently you can find Jazz Vespers in Niagara monthly at St. Paul’s, Westdale, St. Christopher’s, Burlington, and St. Jude’s, Oakville. Check their websites for upcoming dates. You can also listen online on YouTube. Annually we offer at Christmas: A Charlie Brown Christmas which has developed a devoted following. It is worth noting that Christ Church, Deer Park in Toronto has offered Jazz Vespers monthly with Brian Barlow for over 25 years.

I have included a link to a YouTube video to give a sense of what you might experience if you come: tinyurl.com/47h8snkn. Nothing however can replace the experience of enjoying talented musicians working creatively together to liven the Spirit. So come join us. Hope to see you soon.

Taylor Swift: Mirrorball Spirituality



THE REVEREND CANON MARTHA TATARNIC

I got the idea to have a Taylor Swift music night at our Wednesday evening Advent Café service. Advent Café is one of our worship offerings, and its setting, evening time slot, and musical offerings allow us to be creative in a different way from Sunday mornings. Although Swift has made passing reference to considering herself a Christian, her music isn't faith-based, so our planning team was a little surprised by my choice. I made my pitch though, and Tracadie Cross, one of our Advent Café bands, began rehearsing.

My daughter and I have become increasingly committed and adoring fans of Swift's over the years, almost despite ourselves. We don't generally consider our taste to be mainstream. However, as people enamoured with the power of words, we can't help but be won over by the finely drawn stories which form the backbone of her songs. As music lovers, and my daughter as a song writer in her own right, we marvel at her mastery of melodies, hooks, different musical genres, and especially her jaw-dropping bridges.

It's because of our experience of moving through the world as women that has made our devotion most fierce. She opens up the multitudes our female experience contains in a way that has rarely, if ever, been tolerated on a mass stage. In the world of Taylor Swift, there is room for women to be lovesick, calculating, regretful, vengeful, funny, self-deprecating, proud, ambitious, petty, loyal, fickle, warm, cold, sexy, excluded, dominant, bullied, insecure, confident, wise, silly, try-hard, and hopeful.

She is the ultimate good girl,

socialized to be humble about her talent, quiet in her opinions, and apologetic of her ambition—a "Pathological people pleaser" as she labels herself. This construct has crumbled over the years before our eyes as this woman, who was originally signed as a fourteen-year-old song-writing savant, has had to respond to the never-ending criticism of her success, failed romances, and mass marketing genius, by learning to speak up, act out, and lean into all of her massive talent for the business of being in music, all while continuing to make her song writing talent central and to offer a transparent window into the basic human need for belonging, affirmation, loving and being loved.

The reaction to this evening in our church circles has been mixed, to say the least. There has been excitement, of course. Swift is the biggest pop star on the planet. It is hardly surprising to say that there are fans out there, even in our decidedly "not pop" Anglican congregations. But there has been opposition too. No doubt there are those who puzzle over having this music in a worship setting, but the opposition is primarily of a different sort. They see her and her music as frivolous. They are resentful of her vast, record-breaking success. They think she and her music aren't serious enough to warrant the kind of popularity and attention she has gained. They don't like her "complaining" about her privileged life.

Their reasons for their opposition are closely aligned with my reasons for wanting to explore Taylor Swift and her music in a worship setting in the first place. As the woman with the brightest spotlight in the world shining on her right now, she doesn't just tell her story, she tells our story. In her song *Mirrorball*, she imagines herself as a sparkling reflective object, showing "you every version of yourself tonight." It's this mirrorball that she offers, this reflection that she forces us to see—of ourselves, of our attitudes and assumptions about women—that is first in the list of the things I want the church to consider. Swift might have achieved unparalleled success, but she has also been the subject of constant misogynistic



Photo: Unsplash/ Paul Zoetemeijer

commentary about her body, looks, relationships, heartbreaks, ambition, and her failure to conform to the prescribed roles women are supposed to want for themselves. Her talent has been widely overlooked for much of her career in favour of belittling the romance about which she writes and judging the very female experience she details as being inconsequential, unworthy of serious attention.

I know a little bit about the way the spotlight can be glaring, distorted, and more reflective of those looking at me than it is of myself—both in the good and the bad things that get projected on me. I know about having my looks and wardrobe choices picked apart and about learning to balance my need to be affirmed and liked with also trying to find my own authentic voice. I know that the vulnerability and transparency I bring to my writing and preaching can be received with equal measures of gratitude and discomfort. I know what it is to be a woman who has a natural affinity with the gendered assumptions for what is "feminine," while also bristling against the many ways that my interests and abilities don't fit the mold.

The church has a lot for which it must answer in terms of its silencing of women's voices and its affirming of female experiences only as they fit into the tightly prescribed categories. Although I have lived my whole life in a world where women can be ordained in the Anglican church, and certainly my challenges as a woman in leadership are nothing compared to what

the women who went before me had to navigate, all women with a voice in our church today are still regularly running up against the weight of two thousand years of the church and the patriarchy being the coziest of bed fellows.

And at the same time, the history of the Christian faith is shot through with the ultimately uncontrollable, unstoppable energy of women who refuse to conform, of women who have figured out how to lead and speak from the sidelines to which they have been relegated, and of a God who is also experienced as offering motherly care, powerful Sophia Wisdom and fire-breathing, shape-shifting feminine Spirit. There is something relentless about female power, about an arc of history that will eventually force us to contend with the offerings of women in a real way. This is as much true about the ascendancy of Taylor Swift as it is of the history of the church.

I have political and cultural motivations for offering our Taylor Swift Night. But as we have been rehearsing the set list and preparing for the event, I have come to realize that there is something simpler and holier about why I think Swift's music can be considered in the context of worship. What has kept me in the church is not unlike what I imagine has kept Taylor Swift in the music business, even though she describes such levels of discouragement that she hid in her apartment for a full year and seriously toyed with quitting. I stay because the Spirit is at work. Because I can't help

experiencing each and every day how the Spirit is at work in the mundane, flawed details of all of our lives, because I can't help seeing beauty and truth in the stories of our lives, because I want to give that beauty and truth expression in my own small way, in the stories that I lift up, in the offering that I can make. That's my job as a priest: to lift up. And I look to a variety of sources and inspirations, both inside and outside of the church, to teach me how to be more tuned in and braver in this work.

Taylor Swift is many things. She is one of the most successful business people in the history of music. She is a trend setter, a record breaker, a target of the paparazzi, a singer and performer, a lightning rod for criticism and adulation. She knows that the spotlight comes and goes and that the precipice on which she is currently standing will at some point shift. She has had a particular experience of navigating fame because she is a woman, and she has gained the courage to reflect back to us the misogynist and patriarchal dynamics that still hold such cultural currency. Ultimately what has made her the legend she is, what will outlast the gossip and the scandals, the hero worship and the public scapegoating, is her songs and the careful way she attends to the nuances of emotions, the shades of colour, the smallest details of what we see and value in one another, how we feel and what we take away.

That can't help but feel holy.

Anglicans in Action Helping Families One Meal at a Time

BY LORI MARTIN

What started in May 2020 by a concerned group of Anglicans to help address the growing issue of food insecurity in Niagara has evolved into a program that, as of the end of 2023, has helped feed almost 180,000 people. The Anglicans in Action Meal Kit Program provides family and single meal kits to Community Care in St. Catharines and Thorold. The initial response was thought to be short term in nature, but the reality is the need is there and increasing.

The Family Meal Kit consists of a recipe and the required food items for a nutritious meal to feed a family of four. The Single Meal Kit consists of healthy meal options that include a protein item and a variety of crackers, granola bar, fruit cup/pudding, cookies, drink and spoon

& napkin. The single meal kits are intended for individuals who do not have access to cooking facilities. The goal is to provide a nutritious and inexpensive meal and the included recipe is a helpful tool for families on a tight budget.

Teams of volunteers, working through five Anglican churches, purchase groceries, assemble kits and deliver them to Community Care. The meal kits are distributed by Community Care in St. Catharines and Thorold. Currently, two hundred and eighteen family and ninety-eight single meal kits are delivered to Community Care each week. Every meal kit is packed with loving care.

Funds to purchase food items have been made available through grants and private donations. The program has had the fortune of receiving grants

from the Branscombe Family Foundation, the United Way, Ecclesiastical Insurance and the Diocese of Niagara. Private donations from individuals in Anglican parishes as well as the broader community have greatly contributed to the ability of this program to continue. Projected costs to continue providing Community Care with meal kits at the current number are \$134,000 for 2024. Thankfully our volunteer teams are very good at shopping sales so while the projected costs average \$8.00/kit, the actual cost can be slightly less. Some of the funds for 2024 have been secured through the generosity of the Branscombe Family Foundation, the United Way, the Diocese of Niagara, and private donations. The two administrators of the program continue to work to find other

sources of funding.

When the meal kit program started, early in the Covid-19 pandemic, teams worked on their own due to the gathering restrictions set by public health. It is important to this group to remember that we are working as a community, supporting those in our community that are in need. As time has gone on and gathering restrictions eased, some teams continue to work from their homes while other teams are working from their churches. Recently two teams began working side by side at the same location further supporting the idea that we are a community supporting community. As a member of one of those teams, I think the coffee and chat afterwards is as uplifting as the work!

What is the future of the

Niagara Anglicans in Action Meal Kit Program? It is evident that the need is there and the kits are appreciated by the clients of Community Care. Not only are they receiving a meal that has been prepared with love and intention, the meal kits provide an example of a meal they could create on their own with basic and inexpensive ingredients. The future of the program is tied directly to the commitment of our volunteers and to securing the funds to purchase the groceries.

If you would like more information about the Anglicans in Action Meal Kit Program, please email anglicansinaction@stbarnabasanglican.ca.



Left: Volunteers assemble the meal kits.

Below: Completed meal kits are ready for delivery.

Photos: Contributed by Lori Martin



Empowered Seniors

SPEAKERS SERIES

MARION GOARD
Broker

Register for our monthly seminars, where you'll gain valuable and honest information regarding topics that are important to senior living and retired people.

APRIL 1:30PM - 3:00PM	3	Retirement Homes - They Aren't All Same. Explore The Similarities and Differences.
MAY 1:30PM - 3:00PM	8	The Truth About Death, Dying and Funerals. Navigating End of Life Decisions
JUNE 1:30PM - 3:00PM	12	Frauds and Scams - How to Stay Safe and Protect Yourself

BURLINGTON ART GALLERY
1333 Lakeshore Rd.
Burlington ON
Doors open at 1:00pm

ABOUT THE EVENTS
This is a FREE service to seniors and their families. Reservations are strongly encouraged, as space is limited. 905-330-5201

EDUCATIONAL PARTNERS:

MARION GOARD
Broker

LIFESTYLE 55+ MASTER AGENT AND SENIOR REAL ESTATE SPECIALIST®
905-330-5201
mariongoard@kw.com
www.mariongoard.ca

KWEDGE
KELLERWILLIAMS, EDGE REALTY

Niagara Anglican Deadlines and Submission Guidelines

Upcoming Deadlines:

- June - April 26
- September - July 26
- October - August 30

Submissions:

- News, Letters, Reviews**
(books, films, music, theatre)
- 400 words or less
- Articles** - 600 words or less

Original cartoons or art -

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

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

Questions or information:

Contact the Editor at editor@niagaraanglican.ca

SUNRISE

• STAINED GLASS •

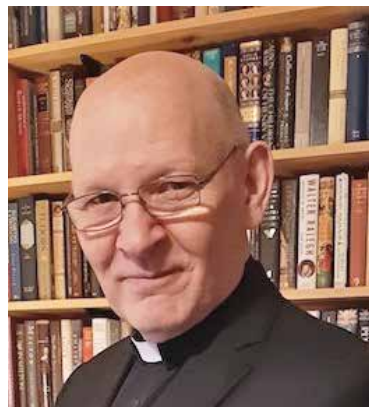
SINCE 1979

- MEMORIAL WINDOWS
- PROTECTIVE GLAZING
- REPAIRS & MILLWORK
- RELEADING & RESTORATION

97 Wharncliffe Rd. S. London, Ont. N6J 2K2
Toll Free 877-575-2321

www.sunrisestainedglass.com

The Doors of Antiquity



THE REVEREND MICHAEL COREN

Back in January I turned 65. I'm officially old. I know that because in a quite startling display of largesse the city of Toronto has given me just over a dollar's reduction on my public transport. I'm an old, white, straight male. Throw in "dead" and I've hit the jackpot! Hardly the most sought-after demographic in the new age of the young and diverse.

None of that bothers me but losing friends to cancer or heart attacks at an exponential rate certainly does. Beyond those I love are the ones I've never met. The deaths of famous people in sport, entertainment, or public life who I revered, who represent stages in my childhood, youth, and happiness. Each death is like another brick in the wall of my being removed and discarded. Will I topple? It sometimes feels that way. And I know that some of you reading this right now will be nodding in agreement.

My parents were both gone by their mid-70s. I lead a healthier lifestyle, don't smoke, and listen to rather than ignore doctors, but genes are powerful indicators. The cold embrace of the tomb and all that. I think about my mum and dad a great deal these days. Fond memories but also deep regret and guilt for the way

I treated them. Taking parents for granted is common and not especially wrong but I sometimes cringe at the way I acted.

All rather dark and sombre. But I will not go gently into that dark night, and won't go angrily either. There are problems out there without doubt, but my experience of younger people, through my four children, with students I sometimes teach, and with the St. Luke's, Burlington, community, is rejuvenating rather than depressing. Kids working two jobs to pay for college, having a genuine rather than ostentatious concern for the planet and for those around them, and being far more accepting and tolerant than were those of my generation.

It's easy to mock their enthusiasms but with some obvious exceptions they have an authentic empathy with the marginalized and persecuted.

Complacency isn't some privilege we're suddenly awarded once our pension kicks in. Learn from the young rather than dismiss them, and be enlivened by the sometimes-stinging but still fresh winds of change. Christ was all about change and his followers have to remember that.

As for our legacy, what we leave behind, we need to be more perceptive. My books and journalism will soon be forgotten, and with a handful of exceptions that applies to every writer. My legacy as a Christian and as a priest will, I hope, be different. It's what I did for others. Every person I've tried to help, every meagre act of generosity, every act of forgiveness, every effort to try to do the right thing, support for those who are forgotten, sacrifices, and attempts to simply make things better. Not grand and usually small, unknown contributions

to the timeless and seamless world of kindness and goodness. That's the transformative aspect of the human condition, that's what lives after us.

There's something else. Each time I stand at the altar and preside and consecrate I feel a link with the timeless, an attachment to history and to those who have stood there before me but also to those yet to come. Beyond the human, I feel part of the seamless garment that is the eternal church of Christ, the life and teaching of the Son of God. No earthly fear or favour can hold me, I am part of so much more than all of that.

The doors of antiquity are now open wide, not to despair but to hope and to faith. The sun shines as it has always done, and hope and love are so much more beautiful and powerful than fear or malice. Thank God for that. Thank God every single day.

The Guelph Seminar: Promoting Transformative Conversations

THE REVEREND CANON LUCY REID

Back in 1997 a small group of clergy and laypeople from different denominations in Guelph met to discuss how to promote constructive and educational conversations about faith in a city whose university has no Religious Studies or Theology departments. We were aware that lifelong discipleship requires opportunities for learning and reflection, where people can encounter new perspectives that have the power to transform and deepen their faith, and live it out in the world. And we knew that sermons and church study groups were not reaching those outside our churches who nevertheless might be seeking.

And so the Guelph Seminar was born: a small ecumenical collective dedicated to organizing public speaker events in Guelph, with a focus on progressive, thoughtful and sometimes marginalized voices. With no budget other than ticket sales, we have been able over the years to bring to Guelph a wide array of speakers, including Bishop John Spong, Marcus Borg, Amy-Jill Levine, Karen

JOHN DEAR
Priest / Peace Activist / Author
THE GOSPEL OF PEACE
Nonviolence in the tradition of Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr.
Public Lecture
Tuesday, April 16, 3 PM
All Saints Lutheran Anglican Church
210 Silvercreek Parkway N., Guelph
No Charge (donations welcome)
Copies of "The Gospel of Peace" will be available at the event - \$25 (cash)

Armstrong, Sallie McFague, Diarmid O'Murchu, and Rabbi Elyse Goldstein.

At times the Guelph Seminar has partnered with others, such as the Ignatius Jesuit Centre in Guelph, St. Jerome's College in Waterloo, the Guelph Organic Conference, the Sacred Wisdom Centre, and local churches. Most recently the ecumenical campus minister at the University of Guelph, Andrew Hyde, has

joined the seminar leadership, as has Greg Kennedy, executive director of the Ignatius Jesuit Centre. All of us are passionate about bringing twenty-first century issues into the spotlight in conversation with intelligent, life-giving faith.

This spring the Guelph Seminar is bringing two important voices to the city: a peace activist and a mystic. On Tuesday April 16 at 3 pm

HOLDING OUR PLANET
WISDOM'S WORK IN TRANSFORMING CRISIS
A PRESENTATION BY
Cynthia Bourgeault
TUES. MAY 7, 2024
HARCOURT MEMORIAL UNITED CHURCH - 87 DEAN AVE. GUELPH ONTARIO
7PM START - DOORS OPEN AT 6:30PM
The Rev. Cynthia Bourgeault, Ph.D. is a modern-day mystic, Episcopal priest, writer and internationally acclaimed retreat leader. A long-time student of Fr. Thomas Keating, she is the founder of an international network of contemplative Wisdom Schools and is author of more than a dozen books including *Wisdom Jesus*, *The Meaning of Mary Magdalene*, and *Wisdom Way of Knowing*. She has been honoured by the *Watkins Review* as one of the hundred most influential living spiritual teachers of our times.
TICKETS ARE LIMITED - COST IS \$25 - AND AVAILABLE THROUGH EVENTBRITE.CA
THIS EVENT IS SPONSORED BY THE GUELPH SEMINAR. FOR MORE INFO EMAIL: [GUELPHSEMINAR@GMAIL.COM](mailto:guelphseminar@gmail.com)

gospels. Arrested many times for his peace activism, John Dear is a challenging and engaging speaker. Tickets are free and available at the door.

On Tuesday May 7 at 7pm the Rev. Cynthia Bourgeault will be speaking at Harcourt Memorial United Church (87 Dean Ave, Guelph) on *Holding Our Planet: Wisdom's Work in Transforming Crisis*. Bourgeault is a modern-day mystic, Episcopal priest, teacher, retreat leader, and founder of an international network of contemplative wisdom schools. She has been honoured by the *Watkins Review* as one of the hundred most influential spiritual teachers of our time. Tickets are limited, and are \$25, available through Eventbrite.ca.

Both John Dear and Cynthia Bourgeault will be addressing critical issues today: the quest for peace in violent times, and the place of spiritual wisdom in the climate crisis. They offer strong Christian voices that can inspire, inform and change us, as we all seek to grow in our faith and be good news for our world. All are welcome to their presentations.

Fr. John Dear will be speaking at All Saints Lutheran Anglican Church (210 Silvercreek Parkway N, Guelph) on his latest book, *The Gospel of Peace: A Commentary on Matthew, Mark and Luke from the Perspective of Non-Violence*. A Roman Catholic priest, Dear sees Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr as carrying out the non-violence teachings of Jesus that are embedded in the