

The Presentation in the Temple: More than a Cute Story

A reflection by John Bowen

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More than \$18,000 raised for food security ministries across Niagara

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A section of the Anglican Journal



NIAGARA ANGLICAN

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JANUARY 2024

Welcome to Cathedral Café

Warming Centre Expands to Five Days per Week

A collaborative partnership model from St. Matthew's House (SMH) and Christ's Church Cathedral

An expanded daytime warming centre is launching December 1 and continues until March 31, 2024 at Christ's Church Cathedral. The Cathedral Café is a collaborative partnership between St. Matthew's House (SMH) and Christ's Church Cathedral, with support from Hamilton Out of the Cold and featuring 541 Eatery & Exchange as an additional drop-in site. The project is funded by the City of Hamilton's winter response program.

Cathedral Café, which

operates out of Cathedral Place, located at 252 James Street North, will provide a safe and supportive day time drop-in space for homeless individuals and those at risk of homelessness with a capacity for 40-50 people, Monday to Friday from 9 am to 4 pm. Guests will be able to access seating, warmth, friendly welcoming faces, activities, programs and services, washrooms and food, with the main focus being to provide breakfast and lunch daily and

a place to be when the weather turns cold.

Dean Tim Dobbin, rector at Christ's Church Cathedral, is passionate about the Cathedral Café project. "Connecting with our neighbourhood is in the DNA of our parish; this community is proud of its community engagement," he says. "Our Cathedral will welcome our guests into our main reception space where they can stay as long as they want. We know many of them by name and have a personal relationship with them. We invite them to our

See **WARMING CENTRE** Page 3



Prior to the announcement of its partnership and expansion, Cathedral Café was open with only limited hours.

Photo: Contributed by Christ's Church Cathedral

Ancient Church, Future Mission

The Mixed Ecology Parish



THE REVEREND CANON DR IAN MOOSBY

It has now been more than three months since I started as the Community Missioner and I am excited to be able to support

the missioners, chaplains, and parishes particularly to develop mission practice for those who have left our churches or who are not Christian and have no awareness or interest in the faith.

I have come to Canada after working as a missioner, parish rector, and mission advisor for over 20 years and as a lay missioner before that for 10 years in the Church of England in the Dioceses of London and Southwark, which is a very different context to the Diocese of Niagara. However, the challenge of turning around failing parishes in England and involvement in forming new missional communities

has afforded me some valuable experiences which I hope will help me to support the missions, parishes, and chaplaincies in the Diocese of Niagara and challenging post-covid context and 'cost-of-living-crisis' reality. A key focus for my role, working alongside Emily Hill, our parish development missioner, will be to support the exciting opportunity to develop 'mixed ecology' parishes and therefore help form a 'mixed ecology' diocese. So then, what is a 'mixed ecology parish'?

Ever since the Christian Church became recognised as the official religion of the Roman Empire, the Church in East and West was held

together in two strands—the place of parishes and dioceses as designated geographical area churches, alongside radical mission orientated ecclesial and monastic communities. This 'both and' church remains core to the balance of parish and radical Christian missional community. The etymology of 'parish' comes from the Greek and Latin to 'dwell beside, to be near, to sojourn with a stranger' and has always been associated with the practice of presence as a Christian community, and the offer to all to participate in a rhythm of worship, mission, and community to a locality or network.

This vision and practice for

Christians in such a form of parish church was to be sent out to practice the love of Christ with those who live and work in a particular neighbourhood. The Sunday morning Eucharist or Holy Communion service was the 'missional feast' for the body of Christ sent out to live out faith in the world every day of the week before being regathered on the next Sunday. At the same time radical Christian missional communities such as the Franciscans, the Carmelites, and the Dominicans, were sent to support parish churches and communities by practicing

See **Mixed Ecology** Page 2

Mixed Ecology Parishes

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1



St. Luke's Palermo is a mixed ecology parish, where a bilingual Mandarin congregation serves alongside the Sunday morning Holy Communion Service.

Photo: Contributed by St. Luke's, Palermo

a deep rhythm of Christian spirituality whilst attending to the missional challenge of the needs of the poor and those outside the church.

In a way, the 'mixed ecology' has always been in the DNA of parishes and dioceses, but we have not been conscious of using this term before. The term arises from biology, that deals with the relationship of organisms to one another and to their physical surrounding, advocating a healthy eco-system built on diversity of organisms, where biodiversity encourages an infrastructure that supports the mutual flourishing of diverse life.

Applied to the reality of the Canadian complex cultural context, a mixed ecology also denotes the reality that it is impossible to meet the missional, pastoral, and ministry needs of the incredible diversity of people with different languages, ethnicities, cultures, and other differences who live and work in our parishes by having just one faithful worship service on a Sunday. A strategy to renew parishes by taking a purely attractional 'come to our worship service' approach is not going to bridge the gap to the many people who are unlikely to come and participate in a homogeneous worship service.

The 'mixed ecology' parish

promotes the idea of a 'unity in diversity' model, where there are different congregations reaching different socio-cultural groups defined by different languages, cultures, and needs. Such parishes practice mission by having a number of differing missional congregations and activities aimed at building new ecclesial communities as part of a parish, where such parish governing councils and common community life need to reflect a membership of such a diverse parish church.

Many Anglican parish churches around the Anglican Communion including the Church of England are committed to the development of 'mixed ecology' parishes because they have proven to be extremely effective in bringing renewal to the parish church by getting back to the root understanding of what a parish is called to be. A good example of a developing mixed ecology parish churches in the Diocese of Niagara are the examples of St. Aidan's Church in Oakville, and St. Luke's Palermo where they include Mandarin bilingual congregations and services alongside the Sunday Morning Holy Communion Service and more. Another example is the services led by Fr. Antonio Illas, who leads Spanish services for the Migrant Farm Workers in

the parish churches of St Alban's Church in Beamsville and St. John's Church in Jordan.

In my own experience of a Parish Priest and Rector in the Church of England, I was able to assist two failing inner city parish churches in London to refocus and grow with a mixed ecology identity. One was a strongly Nigerian parish church adapted to ensure the need for a mission and a congregation of new to faith spiritual seekers, largely made up of university and art school students who needed their own expression of worship, mission, and community in St. Luke's Church in Peckham. At Christchurch Blackfriars in Central London, which was on the verge of closing, new life was found in a new monastic community founded in a mixed ecology, which brought daily prayer and more contemplative inspired mission and services that engaged with the many stressed out and mentally unwell people living and working in Central London. Both of these parishes would have closed if they had not been renewed by becoming mixed ecology parishes.

The mixed ecology parish therefore seeks to make our diocesan focus of 'being called to life, compelled to love' a reality by enabling parishes to respond to the missional possibilities particularly to the un-and-de-churched. Many 'nones and dones' are spiritually hungry, but require us to have the confidence to be obedient to Christ, and to follow him and go out into the parts of our neighbourhoods and contexts as he did, to be relationally engaged and to practice the Gospel led by the Spirit. In this way our parishes then can be regenerated and grow in this mixed ecology focus of human flourishing, because of the combination of a deepened discipleship, and a deepened sense of parish.

If I and Emily Hill can help and support you in a parish or chaplaincy context, please do reach out at ian.mobsby@niagaraanglican.ca or emily.hill@niagaraanglican.ca. I look forward to meeting many more of you in the months to come.



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Warming Centre Expands Hours

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

table and try to treat them like family.”

St. Matthew's House will act as the backbone service provider including overall supervision, staff and volunteer training, project monitoring and reporting, and food security support. SMH will also work in a collaborative partnership with an additional day time drop-in site at 541 Eatery & Exchange, providing access to a mobile support team for this site as it resumes operations after an extended closure. Hamilton Out of the Cold will be helping with food and volunteer support.

“Being able to work with Christ's Church Cathedral and Hamilton Out of the Cold and our other partners is a gift to SMH,” says Renée

Wetselaar, Executive Director, St. Matthew's House. “Together, we have a commitment to end homelessness in our community. The Cathedral Café gives us a great start.”

Cathedral Place, home to the worship and ministry space of Christ's Church Cathedral as well as the offices of the Anglican Diocese of Niagara, is a centralized and accessible location on James Street that will provide the space for the drop-in site, volunteer engagement and a staff hub, and includes programming space, auxiliary kitchen space, and washrooms. This drop-in site will be supported by a staff team comprised of a Program Supervisor/Volunteer Coordinator, three housing and

food security focused outreach workers for onsite triage and support, a security professional, as well as a rotation of trained volunteers.

St. Matthew's House is a unique community support agency that provides childcare services and support services to older adults 55+. Many of the people and families that it serves face barriers that it helps them overcome through its programs and services. SMH works in the heart of the Hamilton's most challenged neighbourhoods, with people facing, on average, the highest rates of poverty in the city. This is associated with the highest rates of ill-health, mental illness and limited education levels.



Visitors to Cathedral Café can also access a clothing cupboard in the space.

Photo: Contributed by Christ's Church Cathedral

“Little Things Make Big Things Happen”

Our individual Impact on Climate Change

PHIL GUGLIELMI

There isn't a day that goes by where we are not presented with so much information on the climate crisis. Greenhouse gases, carbon footprints, global warming, electrification, carbon capture etc., etc. Maybe we should call this climate chaos as the type and volume of information and opinion being regularly communicated probably makes many people tune out of the discussion. But the situation is very real and now more than ever, there is so much focus and debate globally on our environmental impact. We hear many forecasting doom and doubt but also hear a strong voice of hope that says that our efforts will result in positive change.

My personal interest in the whole climate issue stems from my involvement and responsibility in environmental improvement, energy use reduction, and

stewardship throughout my working career in industry. From my experience, I saw how previous attitudes towards the environment and climate impacted our world negatively. I also saw how quickly conditions started to improve once the environment took on a bigger priority and focus. My belief is that although technology drove a lot of change, the biggest impacts came from the involvement and individual actions, choices and behaviours of people towards energy use reduction and waste reduction.

The industry I worked in used a lot of fuel, water, and electricity over multiple large locations. I was fortunate to be able to work with many talented teams that developed innovative solutions to reduce energy use and waste. These resulted in real and significant reductions in overall energy use and environmental impacts over time. All of this

began as cost saving measures but quickly moved to sustainability as we realized that reducing our carbon footprint and overall environmental impact was necessary and was the right thing to do.

As work progressed, the pace of change really started to pick up when we involved more and more people at all levels. Individual behaviours changed as we shared information on things like daily energy usage and waste levels. People quickly started to rally around the information and look for ways to contribute to the overall effort. Soon we had many minds focused on improvement and contributing their ideas. It was amazing how the rate of progress picked up and how many new ideas came forward to further sustain the efforts. People were interested in the information, wanted to get involved, and celebrated achievements and

results as a group. The goals were achieved and exceeded and today the improvements continue to move forward.

Recently I was involved in the Zero Emissions Churches initiative at our church where we went into a lot of detail to evaluate our energy usage and also characterise our building for further improvement opportunities. As we assembled all the records and did the measurements of the church building to calculate our carbon footprint, I asked myself “my God, how will we ever be able to reduce the carbon footprint of this building given that it was never designed for energy efficiency?” Since I was in the church building, I figured God was the best one to ask that question to at that moment! Technical improvements would no doubt be very challenging along with the financial realities. But I was reminded that the



people of the parish, not just the physical building, are part of the whole effort and their individual behaviours, ideas, and involvement would help to reduce the overall carbon footprint of the church community.

There is a common saying that says “Many little things make big things happen.” When we look at what we can do as individuals to impact climate change, remember that although it may seem like a little thing, collectively it will contribute to a bigger result in our communities. I'm sure that the Climate Justice Niagara Facilitators at your church will welcome your involvement and contributions at any level. Get involved where you can!

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CALLED TO LIFE
COMPELLED TO LOVE

In other words

The Presentation In The Temple

More than a cute story

**JOHN BOWEN**

When we were doing Messy Church at our parish, one evening it was my turn to do the Bible story. I began by asking, “How many stories are there in the Bible?” After a moment’s thought, the answers began: “Ten! A hundred! A thousand!” The adults sat in amused silence. They knew a trick question when they heard it, the children not so much. Then I told them: “The answer is one! There is only one story in the Bible.” They were suitably surprised.

Then of course I had to explain. The Bible is the drama of a beautiful world gone wrong, and of a loving Creator who works to put things back together—and recruits human beings to be “co-workers” along the way. That’s the big story. And the dozens of little stories we hear week by week in church are the subplots to that biggest of stories, as the characters contribute their parts to the plot, for good or for evil.

Now suppose that, next summer, you were going to Stratford to see a play you’d never seen, and the traffic turned out be awful, and as a result you didn’t get there till the second half. You would have a hard time understanding the play. Why exactly are these people fighting? What is the promise everyone keeps referring to? Why did everyone laugh when she said that line? You get the idea.

When we read the Gospels, we are in the second half of the story, and there’s a lot we don’t understand unless we know what went before. The story of the presentation in the Temple is a good example. It looks so simple: a young couple bring their first child to the temple to give thanks to God, and two old people come and coo over the baby. It’s charming—a suitable sequel to the Christmas story—

but not much more than that. But let’s look more deeply.

Apart from Jesus and his parents, the main actors here are two old people, Simeon and Anna, and surprising things are said about each of them. Simeon, we are told, is “looking forward to the consolation of Israel.” Why does Israel need consoling? And why is he looking forward to it? And what about dear old Anna, who is excited at “the redemption of Jerusalem.” Why exactly does Jerusalem need redeeming?

Well, this is the kind of question you have when you arrive at the play after the interval! So let’s look back to what’s happened earlier in the play.

“The consolation of Israel” is a reminder of what was going on, some centuries earlier. The people of Judah had been in exile in Babylon for seventy years, and then a message came from Isaiah, saying “Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people, says your God.” Why should they be comforted—or consoled? (It’s the same word.) Because now they can finally go home, from Babylon to Jerusalem.

However, when they return to Jerusalem, and start to rebuild the city and the temple, it’s nothing like as wonderful as they thought it would be. It’s really not much of a comfort or a consolation. And the spiritual leaders—the prophets—begin to think, Surely God must have something more than this in mind. So they begin to look forward to a time of real “consolation,” somewhere down the road. Guess what: Simeon thinks that time is right here, in this baby!

And then there is Anna. She was looking for “the redemption of Jerusalem.” She believes that Jerusalem needs to be redeemed—ransomed—from some kind of captivity. It could simply mean that, like many people at that time, she is waiting for the Messiah to come and throw out the Romans, to “redeem” Jerusalem in that sense. But, later in the story, Jesus will say that he has come “to give his life a ransom for many”—a totally different kind of redeeming. Like Simeon, Anna recognises that this baby is somehow connected with



Presentation of Christ in the Temple, First Presbyterian Church, Belfast.

Photo: Unsplash/K. Mitch Hodge

what she and the whole country has been longing for!

But there’s more. Look at the words of Simeon, the “Nunc dimittis.” Here are the old words: Mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.

My eyes have seen “your salvation.” There’s another of those \$20 words—consolation, redemption, and now salvation—which are really just different facets of the same Gospel diamond. Salvation means deliverance and rescue, healing and wholeness. And when it’s applied to God, it means God stepping in to put things right—whether it’s bringing the exiles home from Babylon or Jesus healing a blind man.

But of course when Simeon says, “my eyes have seen thy salvation,” he hasn’t actually seen those things. So what exactly has he seen? Well, he’s looking at the baby in his arms. That’s what he sees. He doesn’t say this baby will teach us about salvation, or

child is “a light to lighten the Gentiles”—in other words light for the whole human race. How could he know that? I am quite sure he was very familiar with the earlier parts of the story, and particularly God’s promise to Abraham that through his descendants the whole world would be blessed. And now Simeon looks at this child and says, “This is it. This child is the fulfilment of that promise made by God 2000 years ago.”

You can think of it as an hourglass. The earlier parts of the story, which began with God’s creation of the world, narrow down over the centuries to this simple couple, and this little child. And from him, all these things—consolation, redemption, salvation—the things Jesus summarised as “the kingdom of God”—begin to spread out till they fill and bless the whole world. That’s the miracle of the presentation in the temple. That’s the miracle of Jesus.



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NSML Winter Registration Open

Registration is now open for the winter session of the Niagara School for Missional Leadership, and we encourage you to share information through your parishes and missions. NSML courses are open for everyone, lay and ordained!

Intentional Connection

Taught by Canon Ian Mobsby, this course will run on Monday evenings from 7:00–9:00 p.m. from January 15–February 26.

This course, designed specifically for lay leaders and deacons, will provide participants with the inspiration, tools, and practice necessary to confidently engage with people in your local neighbourhood and community. Together, we will learn how to discern and follow God who is already present in those contexts.

Our aim will be to deeply listen to those outside the church and get on board with what God is already doing. We invite you to participate in this course individually or, better yet, sign up as a parish group so you can explore intentionally connecting with your parish neighbours together.



Photo: Unsplash/Jack Hishmeh

Missional Preaching

Taught by Bishop Susan Bell, it will run on Tuesday mornings from 10:00–12:00 p.m. from January 16–March 5.

How do we connect God’s mission, and therefore the mission of the church, with the culture in which we live and speak in

ways that help people make sense of their lives and their purpose through the lens of the Gospel? How can our words as preachers help others follow Jesus’ Way of Love more closely?

How can we equip people to share their transformed lives in a way that opens a generous

door into faith and Christian community and allows the following process to unfold: “Witness[ing] to the way of Love changes the witness, changes those who witness the witness, and changes the world in which the witness is made.” (Michael B. Curry, *Songs My Grandma Sang* [Church Publishing: New York, 2015], 117.)

Missional Praying

Taught by Canon Christyn Perkons, *Missional Praying* will run on Tuesday evenings from 7:00–9:00 p.m. from January 16–February 20.

Praying (listening to and conversing with God) is the foundation of living missionally. What does living missionally mean? It starts with leaning into our common mission of sharing the Good News of God’s unconditional love for us as shown through the incarnated life, death and resurrection of Jesus and moves to discerning and embracing the particular ways God is uniquely calling to each one of us to live that mission in our daily lives. This becomes part of our lives as we love others as God loves us.

Christian Foundations I: From Abraham to Jesus

This course is taught by Patrick Paulsen and will run on Wednesday evenings from 7:00–9:00 p.m. from January

17–February 15.

Many people are familiar with the concept of an overarching narrative (storyline) when looking at the history of our faith: from the Old Testament, through to the New and on into the history of the church, we can see God at work. However, when people think of, say, the Old Testament, disconnected images come to mind (King David, the Exodus, prophets, and others). The problem is that many people have no real idea of how these individual stories flow together and fit into the historical narrative.

People are also often confused about just what the actual foundations of our faith are. What does God want to show us and how do we conform to his “plan”? If we are to share in God’s mission for the world, then we need to have a firm idea of “the-story-so-far” and do our best to write ourselves into it—and help others to do the same!

Each course combines elements of experiential and gathered learning with the opportunity of being mentored, all of which is rooted in missional praxis, theological reflection, and prayer.

Visit nsm1.ca to register. If you have any questions about our upcoming courses, please get in touch at registrar@nsm1.ca.



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Matching Gift Boosts Food Security Ministries During Winter Months

More than 2.3 million people across Ontario can't access nutritious food on a regular basis, including one in every five children. Almost 12 per cent of households in the Diocese of Niagara are worried that there won't be enough to eat. Churches throughout our diocese have been responding to this growing need through hosting and stocking community fridges, running food banks and community meal programs, cultivating community gardens, and delivering prepared meal boxes to those most in need in our communities. Due to rising grocery costs, the need is greater than ever and it's more expensive for churches to provide nutritious and healthy food to our neighbours in need.

"Christians have always responded in love and compassion to the world around us—it's who we are and how we're called by God," says Bishop Susan Bell. "So many of our parishes are responding to the food security concerns within their com-



Distributing food during COVID at the breakfast program of Holy Trinity, Welland.

Photo: Contributed by Holy Trinity Welland

munities, striving to uphold the dignity of every human being in extraordinary ways by ensuring

everyone has access to food, care, and support."

Year-over-year increases to

grocery prices of 10 per cent or more are forcing individuals and families to turn to help for

the first time, overwhelming an already stretched social safety net. Those already struggling are being pushed even further into poverty and as food insecurity disproportionately impacts those who are already vulnerable to other risk factors.

More than \$18,000 has been raised as part of a special appeal to support food security programming provided by our churches, thanks to a generous donor who matched donations up to \$10,000. All funds will go directly to our parishes, missions, and affiliated food security agencies to help meet the overwhelming need for support that is felt across the diocese. Grants, mostly in the range of \$1,500 to \$2,000 were issued to parishes, missions and affiliated ministries before Christmas to help support their ministries over the winter months.

Thank you to all who gave generously!

The Holy Land of Sorrows

THE REVEREND CANON SHARYN HALL

There is a long history behind the recent war in the Holy Land. The tragedy of religious hatred and strife has played out time and again in the land which three religions call holy.

About ten years ago, there was a short documentary on CBC television about two men, one Israeli and the other Palestinian. In years past, the two men had worked together, shared meals, even shared living quarters when they worked together in distant cities. Munir, the Palestinian, was welcomed into the family of Moshe, the Israeli. In a very poignant moment, Munir showed the CBC journalist a photograph of himself with the Israeli family and the family's little boy whom he loved dearly.

But violence and politics carved the Holy Land into sections where Jews and Palestinians could not go. Munir could not get permission from the Israeli military to go to where his friend lived and Moshe could not go to see his friend in Gaza because he might

be shot by armed fighters. The barriers of segregation were too dangerous so the two men had not seen each other for fifteen years.

After several months of negotiations, the CBC crew was able to find a place, a corner gas station, which was in a neutral zone where the two men could meet safely. The two men, then in their 60's, wept and hugged each other for a long time. It was heart-warming to see their joy, but it was also heart-wrenching to see how violence and religious intolerance can cause such sorrow for innocent people. The two men parted not knowing if or when they would see each other again and I have often wondered how their story continued.

The recent war between Israel and Hamas is a dispute over land which has been scarred by war for generations. It is a dispute which has its roots in the Biblical story of Abraham and his two sons, Isaac and Ishmael. The violence in the Middle East is a family feud which is thousands of years old, and yet many of the descendants of Abraham, Jew



Photo: Ablestock

and Palestinian, want to live together in peace. As Christians, we are not outsiders to the turmoil in the Middle East. We trace the story of Jesus from Bethlehem to Galilee to Jerusalem and yet we, like our Jewish and Muslim brothers and sisters, have no solution to the bitter violence in that region.

The aerial pictures of Gaza show the destruction of homes, hospitals and markets by Israeli bombs. The place is

barely habitable. Thousands of men, women and children have been maimed or killed. Hamas brutally killed many Israelis and kept many men, women and children as hostages for weeks. Now again is a time of lamentations and sorrows in the Holy Land.

As Christians, we want the whole Christmas story to be about blessing and peace, but there is reality in the story which includes danger and

sorrow. Mary and Joseph had to flee to Egypt to escape the danger of Herod's soldiers who were sent to slaughter innocent children. The Holy Family were also refugees from violence and tragedy. Innocent children have often been the most vulnerable to suffering as the result of hatred and intolerance.

All three religions of the Middle East are considered Abrahamic faiths, so as religious people we can pray for peace where ever we are and whatever our tradition. On the internet, there are 39,300,000 groups, organizations, networks of Jewish, Muslim and Christian faiths praying that peace will come to the land of endless strife and sorrow.

In the Biblical book of Lamentations, the steadfast love of the Lord never ceases and God's mercies never come to an end. We are called to persevere with faith in God's love and to counteract brutality and despair with compassion and hope. We are called as God's people to be hearts and hands to alleviate the suffering of others in our own communities and in war-torn lands far away.

Living Shalom and Salam



THE REVEREND MICHAEL COREN

I may be a Christian priest but I have three Jewish grandparents, so, to an anti-Semite I'm a Jew. Even worse, I'm an infiltrator, trying to destroy the church from within. Believe me, when I'm attacked on social media that abuse becomes abundantly and repeatedly clear. My family fled Russian pogroms in 1900, then lived in the east-end of London during the threat of pre-war fascism. They had direct, physical confrontations with Nazis.

I've also visited Israel and Palestine numerous times for 40 years, and have dear friends on all sides. I studied there, lived there, and genuinely understand the region, its history, and complexities.

Because of this I refuse to play the sordid game of triumphalism and exclusive truth. I will not stand with Israel or with Palestine, and won't utter platitudes and simplistic slogans about a situation that demands so much more than that. If I stand with anything it's with justice and peace. Let the extremists roar but I will not be moved. Apart from anything else, my faith demands that of me.

There are simultaneous truths that have to be made clear, and they really aren't so very difficult. First, the Hamas slaughter of the innocents on October 7th was barbaric and grotesque. To refuse to condemn it, let alone condone it, is a moral outrage. No relativism, no excuses, no infantile radicalism. Just explic-

itly reject rape, infanticide, and the murder of blameless people.

Second, the open wound of injustice towards Palestine and Palestinians remains, and until that is addressed there can be no lasting solution. Of course there are lies and distortions, of course the local as well as the super powers are hypocritical and exploitative, and of course the Palestinian leadership has often been disastrous. But none of that changes the reality of the Palestinians losing their homes and homeland.

Third, while Israel's campaign in Gaza may well destroy Hamas as a threat, it has come at the cost of countless innocent lives and will also achieve little if anything in the long run. Revenge is not policy, and an Israeli child killed by a blood-lusting terrorist is little different from a Palestinian baby pulled from the rubble after an Israeli missile attack. It will create another generation of young people eager to martyr themselves to attack Israel, it has alienated

much of world opinion, but most of all it will bring further agony to a people already living in appalling conditions.

If I had the ability I would silence the Islamists, the Jew-haters, and the predictable Marxists who know nothing of humanity; as well as the fundamentalist Israeli settlers, the extreme Zionists who care for nobody other than their cause, those diaspora Jewish people who are more extreme than most Israelis, and their right-wing Christian friends who want to fight the end times war to every last Jew and Arab.

They hold the edges of great net, and caught in it are the mass of ordinary Israelis and Palestinians. I'm not naïve, not inexperienced in the ways of conflict and tribal bitterness, but I also know that most on both sides want to live in dignity and safety, and are willing to make the compromises that are vital if anything of value is to be achieved. I've seen it repeatedly, and know it can happen. My

God it won't be easy but then little that is worth achieving ever is.

Just a few months ago I sat in a small house in Belfast with a man whose father had been shot and killed by a paramilitary gang. The murdered man wasn't involved in politics, just of a different religion to those who killed him. For many years my host had wanted revenge, then he gave up, then he devoted his life to peace and reconciliation. Now he lives in a country where there is a peace nobody ever thought remotely possible. In fact, it always is possible. Even in Israel and Palestine, if enough genuinely want it. As Christians our role is to always see the possibilities, to look to the path of radical and often frightening love and change, and to walk and work with God's plan for justice and peace. Saying Shalom or Salam is not enough, but living it is everything.

St. Paul's Caledonia Responds to Food Insecurity

THE REVEREND DEACON NANCY MCBRIDE

We are all aware of cost-of-living pressures, and the fact that more people than ever need to access their local food banks. St. Paul's Caledonia has a good track record of supporting our local food bank, through generous donations from parishioners. Learning of a particular need for breakfast cereals and peanut butter and jam (PBJ), Mary Hubert initiated Cereal Sunday one week and PBJ Sunday the next.

Mary (left) with her twin sister Margaret Bernhardt, are pictured on Cereal Sunday with a tower of cereal boxes. On PBJ Sunday, a wall of 45 jars of peanut butter and 13 jars of Jam was built on the pulpit!

Mary's plea for help had perfect timing, in the weeks leading up to 'Giving Tuesday' on November 28. The sisters have a great history of helping the food bank—each summer their gardens at the church supply fresh produce for the Food Bank.

Photo: Bill Brooks



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

The Dangerous Word Hastily

**THE REVEREND DEACON
RODERICK MCDOWELL**

Hastily is an adverb from the word haste. Hastily, according to the Oxford Language dictionary, means “with excessive speed or urgency, hurriedly”. An NRSV Bible concordance entitled Exhaustive Concordance by Dr. Bruce M. Metzger indicated “hastily” is used six times in the Bible. The noun from which it comes, haste, is used much more frequently. A common example is in Luke 1:39, where we are told that Mary set out in haste to visit her cousin Elizabeth after her encounter with the Archangel, Gabriel.

Acting hastily or in haste can be a good thing. A middle-aged man who experiences chest pains with pain running down his left arm should immediately take low dose aspirin and call 911. Sometimes we must act hastily but in this modern age it can have sad consequences.

As I compose this article, the tragedy of the Middle East and particularly between Israel and Gaza is still unfolding. People

are angry, frightened, and upset. Many of these emotions are common reactions to this type of tragedy. However, to act hastily in respect of one’s feelings can have tragic consequences.

The internet, email, and other modern communication methods, such as X (formerly known as Twitter) allow us to quickly respond to events and enable us to express our feelings. All we must do is type out and press the button and the email is sent. It could be something the entire world will see, and it will, as I understand, remain there forever.

There was a time when we had to make a phone call, speak to someone directly, or send that ancient document called a letter. Sending a letter meant we either had to type it or write, put in an envelope, and stamp it, and then mail it. It sounds tedious but it took time. My mother advised me that when I was writing an angry letter to do so, but put it aside for 24 hours and then decide whether to send it. We can save that angry email in as

a draft, but it is too easy not to do so.

I had the honour of serving as a deputy judge of the small claims court for 30 years and recently had to retire when I reached 75. Several years ago, the deputy judges formed a voluntary association called Ontario Deputy Judges Association and set up a Listserv. The list serve helps us share information about difficult cases and helps us all come up with solutions. It is also a place to share our frustrations and help each other with solutions.

Although I am now retired,

I still monitor the Listserv and have been able to render assistance to my former colleagues. The recent tragic events of October 7 deeply affected several members of the Listserv. Some of them are Jewish and have parents or family members who are Holocaust survivors. Unfortunately, one of the deputy judges, over wrought with what had happened, posted a very unfortunate commentary. This person later apologized but the damage was done. One of the deputy judges in particular was very hurt.

The word hastily does not

appear often in the Bible as I have indicated. In the Book of Sirach, c. 28, v. 11, the following appears: “A hasty quarrel kindles a fire, and a hasty dispute sheds blood”.

I know my colleague now deeply regrets what was done. But it has caused real difficulties. It has reminded me not to act in haste or hastily unless it is absolutely necessary. In most cases it is better to pause and spend time in prayer or with God. After some reflection we can decide to hit send or delete.



The Whispers of Sojourner and Eve

NANCY J. COOMBS

“If the first woman God ever made was strong enough to turn the world upside down all alone, these women together ought to be able to turn it back, and get it right side up again!”

–*SOJOURNER TRUTH, liberator and prophet, from “Ain’t I a woman?” speech (1851)*

Male voices shout though they cannot shut down
Yearnings—misguided malice won’t curtail
Sojourner. Nothing in her gentle frown
Could they steal, so all was hers to regale

Standing bold, in simple gown, she addressed
The powerful proud: from the heart emerged
Her tales of loss and patience that impressed
All who heard, understandings not submerged

Nothing derails hate like Truth, time’s dross, jeer
Lived wisdoms. Opening doors can avow
She always waited to be heard: I’m here!
No one listened except Jesus, till now

Ain’t I a woman? She asks, claiming place
By Eve, freedom fighters whispering grace

Nancy J. Coombs, Deputy Rector’s Warden at St. Jude’s Anglican Church in Oakville, ON, is the author of *The Audition: Poems of Longing, Limbo, and Restoration*, published this year by Wipf and Stock.

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Clearing the Air at St. Paul's, Fort Erie

THOMAS REBER

With the arrival of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, St. Paul's Anglican Church in Fort Erie faced the challenge of protecting people who came to our buildings. Yes, we could wear masks and use hand sanitizer, but cleaning the air we were breathing was a potentially more-effective and long-term solution. We had already increased the ventilation and air purification in the church proper but still had the much larger space in our parish centre to protect, including the areas occupied by the Fort Erie Co-operative Preschool and Fort Erie Meals on Wheels.

Three years later, with the help of a \$148,700 grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation, we now have healthier air in the parish centre, provided by four separate systems serving different zones of the centre. Each system includes a heat recovery ventilator (an HRV), air filtration, and UV lighting. Each of the HRV's completely exchanges the air in its zone up to six times an hour. The air filters help to clean the air, and UV lighting in the ductwork sterilizes the air. The HRV's are so powerful that in one room of the centre we can actually see the circulating air moving one of the chandeliers!

Our three-year project began in the summer of 2020, when the parish administrator of St. Paul's, John Newton, pointed us to the Ontario Trillium Foundation as a possible source of funding. John, along with our rector, Reverend Daniel Bennett and wardens Barbara



The committee that spearheaded the clean air project at St. Paul's, Fort Erie.

Photo: Contributed by St. Paul's, Fort Erie

Steele and I, formed a four-person grants committee to seek funding. We found the "Resilient Communities" fund, a special fund focused on helping organizations to recover from the problems caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Applying for a Resilient Communities grant involved providing two kinds of information: the first about our organization, and the second about the project itself. We provided a number of facts about our church, including its mission and the demographics of the population our parish centre served. In giving this information, we always had to take care to separate the parish centre and its functions from the church proper and its functions, because the Ontario Trillium Foundation would not fund projects to support worship itself.

For the second kind of information—about the project—we were required to provide a clear description of the technology we wanted to install, submit a quote from a contractor for the project, include a financial workbook detailing the costs of the project, and describe the positive results we expected from it.

Our first two applications for an Ontario Trillium Foundation grant were not approved, but with each application we improved our case with the help of phone consultations with Trillium Foundation coaches, and our third application was successful. Finally, with approval of the project by the diocese and the accomplishment of a \$25,000 parish capital campaign to pay for costs not covered by the grant, we could move ahead with the actual work, which was completed in

September of 2023.

From our experience with this project, we learned a good deal about the process of applying for grants. Following are some suggestions for other churches seeking grants. They are drawn from our experience with the Ontario Trillium Foundation but would apply to many granting agencies and foundations:

1. If the grantor offers several funding streams, be sure to select the one most appropriate for your project. At the start of our project, it took us a little time to figure out the best stream..
2. Read the grant application very carefully to be sure you understand what information is required.
3. As you prepare the application, if help is available from a coach or consultant at the granting agency or foundation, take advantage of

it. Conversations with such a person can be critical for the success of your application.

4. As you describe your project in your grant application, for clarity, use the terminology the grantor uses in its application form.

5. Be patient. After you complete your application, several months may pass before you receive a decision on it from the grantor.

6. Be persistent. Do not be discouraged if your first application is not successful.

Without the grant from the OTF, St. Paul's would simply not have had the financial resources to undertake our clean air project. But with the help of the grant, we now have significantly healthier air throughout our parish centre. Everyone who attends the many events in the centre is better protected from airborne disease.

YLTP Open for Applications

The Youth Leadership Training Program (YLTP) is now accepting applications for its year 1 group. The three-year leadership and faith formation program is planned for March 10-13.

"Life changing, fun, moving, challenging, and filled with Jesus" are words used to describe YLTP by past participants. Help spark the spiritual journey for another youth and invite them to participate.

The Youth Leadership Training

Program is a Christian-based learning experience sponsored by the Diocese of Niagara. The mission of YLTP is to help young people grow in six areas:

- **Call** - to articulate a sense of personal identity, awareness, and mission.
- **Stewardship** - to understand and practise service to others.
- **Living Community** - to work with others in an intentional, safe community.
- **Spiritual Enrichment** - through Christian worship and study.

- **Fostering Self** - to enhance leadership and related skills.
- **The Heart** - to have fun with good friends.

Applicants must be between the ages of 12 [Grade 7] and 15 years. Learn more about YLTP and how to apply at niagaraanglican.ca/cyfm/program/youth-leadership-training-program. The application deadline is January 24. For more information, please contact Sarah Bird by sarah.bird@niagaraanglican.ca or call 905-527-1316 x430.



YLTP 2022.

Photo: Contributed by Sarah Bird

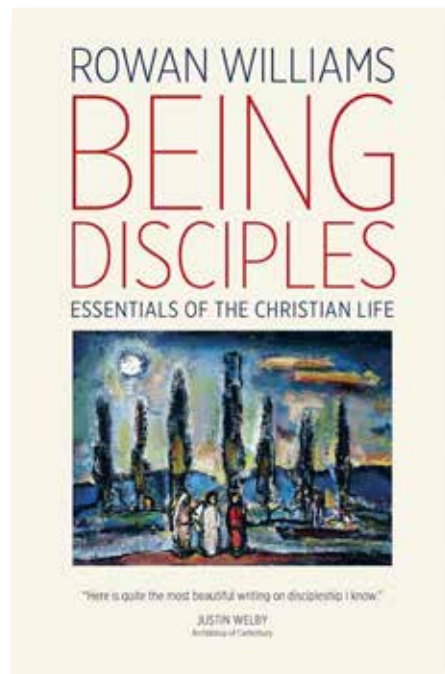
Being Disciples Chosen for Bishop's Lenten Book Study

Bishop Susan has chosen Rowan Williams book "Being Disciples: Essentials of Christian Life" for the 2024 Lenten Book Study.

The book, first published in 2016, gives us a series of short reflections calling us into the slow, deep simplicity of living into discipleship. It is a beautifully written contemplative book guiding us in the ways to become more like the One whom we worship. Being Disciples builds on Being Christian, first published in 2014. While Being Christian focused on four essentials of the Christian journey – the bible, the

eucharist, baptism, and prayer, Being Disciples encourages readers to make the connection with entering into the God's presence and being present with the world. "Discipleship is a state of being," says Williams. "Discipleship is about how we live; not just the decisions we make, not just the things we believe, but a state of being."

Williams' sees the church as a learning community where Christians learn to ask how what we do, what we think, and how we speak is open to Christ's and Christ's spirit, and how we can grow deeper into our



relationship with God and with each other.

Being Disciples is available for purchase wherever books are sold, and buying from a local independent bookstore is encouraged. Study Guides will be available before Lent begins. If you have questions, please contact Emily Hill, parish development missionary at emily.hill@niagaraanglican.ca.

Rowan Williams served as the 104th Archbishop of Canterbury from 2002-2012.

Jodey Porter Installed As Renison Chancellor

Renison University College installed Jodey Porter as its 10th Chancellor on Wednesday, November 29, 2023.

Porter brings to her new role a long and esteemed career in social justice and advocacy work, having served as Assistant Deputy Minister of Health for the Province of Ontario and three terms as Ontario Human Rights Commissioner. She was also a staff member at the United Nations Human Rights Commission; Executive Director of the Canadian Diabetes Association; and Director of Development for the Canadian National Institute for the Blind.

Porter, who lives with blindness, maintained the theme of togetherness and gifts of wisdom throughout her inspiring remarks. She spoke of the *donum non gratum*, the unwanted gift, or the dark side of wisdom. She spoke of disabil-

ity as an epistemological advantage: you are able to see the world differently and, therefore, hold a different wisdom. "I see Renison of a sanctuary of those with diverse wisdoms. This is a safe place for the wisdom of the other."

"Jodey Porter shares the values and Mission that Renison holds so deeply. Renison is committed to working towards a more fair and more equitable future for the next generation," said Renison President, Dr. Wendy Fletcher. "The work of Renison is to help plant the seeds for a brighter future; a future that we may not see first-hand, but we know will be well stewarded due to the industry and commitment of our students. We welcome Jodey into our garden and know that she is committed to nurturing these seeds of tomorrow."



Jodey Porter addresses the audience during the installation ceremony

Photos: Contributed by Renison University College



Newly installed chancellor Jodey Porter (centre) poses with principal Dr. Wendy Fletcher (left) and chair of the board Karen Spencer (right).

Bishops Speak Against Gambling Advertising

The bishops of the Ecclesiastical Province of Ontario, along with Primate Linda Nicholls and National Anglican Indigenous Archbishop Chris Harper, have issued a statement to express their collective opposition to advertisements for gambling on television, radio, and social media.

"Our mission as pastors is to defend the vulnerable and speak for those persons who may not have a voice, particularly youth in this case. Government policy has recognized that tobacco should not be advertised. This is true of other commodities.

We urge you to recognize that well-being of people can be deeply affected by addiction to gambling which is now brought into the living rooms and on the laptops, smart phones and tablets through this business model."

At its fall meeting, members of the Provincial Council of the Ecclesiastical Province of Ontario passed a motion adding strength to the bishops' opposition to online advertisements for gambling.

You can read the full statement at <https://www.province-ontario.anglican.ca/>

Sorry But Not Guilty



**THE REVEREND CANON
MARTHA TATARNIC**

Sometimes I fail as a pastor. I am someone who can turn myself inside out about all of the ways in which I don't measure up to my own sky high standards. But here, in this statement, I am not berating myself. I am stating the undeniable truth. Sometimes I fail as a pastor. Acknowledging this isn't just potentially a good thing. It is also hopeful.

There are different categories of my failing. There are mistakes that I make and from which I need to learn. There are wrong things I say and situations that I miss or misread, and I pray for the grace to make them right. These realities fall into the category of being a human being in need of forgiveness and more chances. A big part of adulthood for me is learning to be okay with not being perfect. A big part of why I am a Christian is because I ran up hard against the lie that I would be all right, I would be happy and whole and secure and fine, if I could just be put together and accomplished enough. I became a follower of Jesus because I can't go it alone or save myself.

There is another category of my failing, and this one has been a growing edge for me. Sometimes I fail not because I did something wrong but because there just isn't enough of me to go around. This is a reality of limits with which anyone working in any sort of helping profession needs to reckon. People get sick, and unless someone tells us, we don't know. Needs come up, but sometimes a crisis becomes the priority over those needs. Whether we work with clergy teams or whether we are in smaller churches where we are the only staff, we have to

learn to see the whole Body of Christ as part of the ministry of care along with us. And sometimes in the mind of someone who is struggling, not connecting with the ordained leader or rector of the church is just not good enough. Needs outside of church life rightfully become the priority at times. We have vocations to be parents, spouses, friends, children and siblings too. We even have a vocation to look after ourselves when we're sick or tired; it is wise stewardship of our limited resources to have self-care practices in place so that we aren't constantly trying to run the tank on empty.

This kind of failing can be difficult to accept. My temptation is to get defensive and then feel defeated. I want to detail all of the things that I have done that suddenly don't seem to matter. I want to litigate the reasons why it is unreasonable to expect me to be superhuman or why what I have done and offered should be considered enough. I want to give in and give up: the job is too much, the demands are too high, nobody can possibly live up to the expectations set for us. A nine to five desk job with minimal interpersonal interactions suddenly becomes a very appealing prospect.

If I can find the wherewithal to pause and take a breath in those moments, there are two things that allow me to stay and even to feel hope. The first is to recognize that, dimes to doughnuts, the criticism coming my way is lodged by someone who is hurting and who is hurting deeply. Do I know what it is to lash out at the wrong person when I'm in pain or distress mode? Yes, I certainly do. Recognizing that dynamic in myself can give me enough space to see that the criticism

coming my way might not be entirely, or at all, about me. I can feel sorry that a fellow sibling in Christ is hurting; I can feel sorry that they feel let down by me in that hurt. I can give myself the grace of recognizing that I did and gave what I could. The fact that it isn't enough isn't an indictment of me. And the pain of my neighbour deserves to be acknowledged with compassion.

All of those things can be true. That's because of the second thing that I try to remember. I'm not Jesus. I'm not God. I'm not Messiah. We don't put priests on pedestals quite the way that we used to, but all of us, still, can be prone to looking to other human beings to fulfill god-like roles of being our personal heroes and even saviours. We will always be disappointed by the limitations of even the best people in our lives. And we will always run up against our own limits when we're trying to be the best for others. In leading churches, we become projections of people's unlimited well of spiritual need, and we will fall short because we have limits. These limits, these failings, are opportunities to recalibrate our expectations, prayers and hope around One who can actually respond to our limitless need. I can feel sorry for the pain another person is feeling and sorry that I have only so many resources in being able to address that pain. But I don't need to feel guilty.

There's a place to locate my guilt and then to release it, and that's in the hands of God. That's also the place we need to keep turning to with our own wells of hurt, longing, pain, heartbreak and need. We can hold each other's pain with compassion and care, but we can't necessarily heal it. We can acknowledge with kindness, to ourselves and

others, the way in which my flawed and limited being will at times disappoint and fail another person. But we don't have to succumb to the weight of carrying that failing around

like an indictment of our being. We don't have to give up and do nothing because we can't do everything.

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Niagara Anglican Deadlines and Submission Guidelines

Upcoming Deadlines:
March - January 26
April - February 23
May - March 29

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

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

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

Questions or information:
Contact the Editor at editor@niagaraanglican.ca

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Week of Prayer Focuses on Great Commandments



The theme of this year's Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, chosen by an ecumenical planning team from Burkina Faso, is "You shall love the Lord your God ... and your neighbour as yourself."

Based on Luke 10:27, the international theme and resources "call Christians to act like Christ in loving like the Good Samaritan, showing mercy and compassion to those in need, regardless of their religious, ethnic, or social identity."

Every year, Christians from a different country choose the theme and prepare draft texts for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. The observance is an annual ecumenical celebration, that draws Christians together locally and globally for the building up of God's Church. Christians from every corner of the world are invited to pray for the unity of all Christians, to reflect on scripture together, to participate in ecumenical

services that are collaboratively organized and led, and to share fellowship with one another through special events.

According to the organizers, the worldwide celebration of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is "both the seed and the fruit of this striving for 'unity in diversity'." Through shared prayer, reflection, and fellowship, Christians from different traditions and denominations within the same community

have the opportunity to deepen their relationships and to bear witness to the Gospel together throughout the year.

In Niagara, there are a number of examples of ecumenical endeavours that exemplify the prayerful aspirations of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, including shared campus ministries at Brock University, the University of Guelph, and McMaster University. The Lutheran-Anglican-Roman Catholic dialogue has also, for over twenty-five years, drawn together leaders from the three denominations for prayer, conversation, and fellowship.

Another example of ecumenical

collaboration happens through KAIROS, which unites 10 churches and religious organizations, including the Anglican Church of Canada and the Primate's World Relief and Development Fund, together in faithful action for ecological justice and human rights.

In the northern hemisphere, the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is traditionally held between the Feast of the Confession of Saint Peter on January 18 and the Feast of the Conversion of Saint Paul on January 25.

To learn more, or to access the "Eight Days of Prayer" Bible Study, visit: weekofprayer.ca

Vestry Meetings Offer Chance to Reflect & Discern

THE VENERABLE BILL MOUS

After the Feast of the Epiphany is celebrated, a parish's collective energy shifts to what is an important period in the life of the Church, albeit one that is not in its official calendar: vestry season.

Happening annually in January or February, vestry meetings are the Church's equivalent of annual general meetings as they are commonly known as in the non-profit sector. They serve to gather a parish community together to reflect upon the year that was and chart a course for the year ahead. If you're baptised, 16 years of age or older, and have been involved in a congregation for at least 6 months, you are a

member of vestry.

In the coming weeks, parish administrators, wardens, and clergy will be spending countless hours preparing for their vestry meeting. Reports will be prepared, conversations will be had to invite people to serve in various capacities, and all the details that make for a successful meeting will be planned.

At annual vestry meetings, discernment about local ministry is undertaken, financial statements for the previous year are received, and churchwardens, lay representatives to Synod, and parish council members are elected or appointed. In addition, a budget for the coming year is passed and any other business connected with the temporalities of the parish



is transacted. Often there is also significant discussion about a particular ministry or mission action plan, a stewardship campaign, or some other matter related to parish life, such as a response to a current justice issue.

To assist with planning for

vestry meetings, an online workshop for wardens, treasurers and clergy took place in late November, one of several training sessions held in recent months to better equip parish leaders for their ministry.

One of the wonderful things about vestry meetings is that they create the space for the whole membership of a parish to contemplate how God's mission is being lived out locally. This is really important work that is essential for parishes to undertake with prayerful intentionality. Time and again, wisdom is shared during vestry meetings that helps a parish more faithfully come alongside the Spirit in its community, passing the faith of Jesus on to the next cohort of believers.

Today, in our corner of God's creation, we understand ourselves to be called to life and compelled to love. Ignited by the irresistible love of Jesus and renewed by the Holy Spirit, we partner with God to deepen faith, share stories and care for God's world.

That's the vision and mission of our diocese, as discerned through our Mission Action Plan process. Vestry meetings offer a great opportunity to reflect on where are you and your parish are being called to life and compelled to love through your various ministries.

If your parish has completed a Mission Action Plan (MAP), a vestry meeting is also a great time to review it, to make refinements, and to resource the initiatives arising from the MAP so that they are able to come to life in the coming year. If your parish hasn't, it's a good opportunity to make a plan to do so as a goal for the year ahead.

At their best, our governance structures create the space for the people of God to discern and resource the missional work to which we have discerned the Spirit to be calling us to for the building up of the Body of Christ. May it be so in all the vestry meetings that happen over the next two months!



Over 60 retired clergy gathered in Burlington in December for a luncheon hosted by Bishop Susan Bell and organized by Canon Alison D'Atri. Pictured here (L-R) are Canon Marni Nancekivell, Bishop Susan Bell, Archdeacon Lynne Marchant, Canon Margaret Murray, and Archdeacon Jim Sandilands.