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HURON CHURCH NEWS

ANGLICAN DIOCESE OF HURON • Huron Church News is a section of the Anglican Journal • DECEMBER 2021

PWRDF rolls out on-line 'Mapping the ground we stand on'

Since the release of the on-line version of "Mapping the Ground We Stand On", in June 2021, 150 individuals in seven groupings from around the Diocese of Huron have so far participated in the exercise facilitated by Province of Ontario facilitators, Rev. Canon Greg Smith (Huron) and Cheryl Marek (Toronto).

By Rev. Canon Greg Smith

When the Truth and Reconciliation Commission first laid out its Calls to Action in 2015, Recommendations 48 and 49 were specifically directed to churches.

Archbishop Mark McDonald has said that it is important for the reconciliation journey that churches avail themselves of a diversity of learning opportunities. In response, PWRDF, which has long had relationships with indigenous partner organizations in Canada, decided it was important to produce a resource that could help.

Adele Finney, then Executive Director of PWRDF and Esther Wesley (Cree First Nation), then co-ordinator of the Anglican Fund for Healing and Reconciliation, teamed up to create an interactive exercise called "Mapping the Ground We Stand On". It was released and facilitators were trained in late 2019.

The exercise was organized around a floor map of the northern part of Turtle Island



Photo: PWRDF

that we now call Canada. The first part of the exercise invites an exploration of the names of some of the Indigenous peoples that have been present on the land for millennia and then for "settlers" to engage their personal family history of arrival, and how they come to be here on the land now.

The second part of the exercise invites a deeper exploration of

two elements of the relationship between indigenous peoples and settlers (or new arrivals), namely the Doctrine of Discovery, and Indigenous Knowledge. Along the way there are opportunities for participants to gather in sharing circles and to express their hopes and disappointments for the relationship between all peoples who now call this land "home".

Of course, in early 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic struck, meaning that live gatherings were not possible for the duration of the worst of the pandemic. No one suspected how long this would last.

Finally in early 2021 it appeared that the pandemic was not short term and so the staff of PWRDF set to work to adapt the mapping exercise as an

"Mapping the Ground We Stand On" facilitators around a floor map of the northern part of Turtle Island, back in 2019: they were trained for the in-person exercise and they had to accommodate to conditions created by the pandemic. Online version of the exercise was launched in June 2021.

online version that could be offered to groups of up to 25 participants via the ZOOM medium.

Using animation and video, the exercise attempts to offer an experience as close as possible to the original intent.

Since its release in June 2021, 150 individuals in seven groupings from around the Diocese of Huron have so far participated in the exercise facilitated by Province of Ontario facilitators, Rev. Canon Greg Smith (Huron) and Cheryl Marek (Toronto). They have also been able to conduct one in-person exercise for 14 Camp Huron summer staff in a COVID safe environment.

Continues on Page 4: More Exercises Planned Across Canada

Orange Heart in front of St. Michael and All Angels: Page 3

Catechumenal ministries: actually, it's something very familiar

By Rev. Lisa Wang

Cat-a-who-when-what-all? "Catechumenal" might seem like a fancy new word for something strange and obscure, but in fact it's an old word for something very familiar: something the Church does every day.

The term "catechumen" (from a Greek word meaning to inform or instruct) was used by the ancient Christians to refer to adults being prepared for baptism. So, a catechumen is someone who is learning. Desiring to become Christians, catechumens entered into an extensive course of instruction and formation which, culminating in the sacraments of Christian initiation (baptism, confirmation, Eucharist), would integrate them fully into the life and mission of the Church.

Yet, our learning doesn't end with our baptism and confirmation; it is only beginning! In



Fra Angelico: Saint Dominic (Detail from the Mocking of Christ)

his charge to the 180th Synod of this diocese, Bishop Todd reminded us that the life of the Church is "a continuing conversion to the fullness of the Gospel." "Continuing conversion" means that we keep on changing, growing, and going deeper. We keep on learning. Indeed, we become "life-long learners"!

We never stop learning, because we're not just learning about someone; we're getting to know someone. Our learning is an encounter, a relationship with a person, Jesus Christ, through whom we share in the life of God.

This is how Bishop Todd invited us to think of ourselves as a "Learning Church":

A Learning Church seeks spiritual formation that leads to changes in life that bear fruit in action. This involves us in the joy of discovery. It deepens our fascination with the scriptures and Christian traditions. It leads us to embrace the way of Jesus. A Learning Church focuses its learning on Jesus.

Maybe you're someone who loves to learn. You know what the "joy of discovery" feels like when you learn something new. Or maybe you're someone who doesn't enjoy learning. The important thing to realize is that the kind of learning we're talking about isn't about facts and figures. It's about building a relationship. In the context of relationship, the "joy of discovery" is about getting to know someone, and becoming known ourselves. What "deepens our fascination" isn't fascination with information, but with the God we love, who loves us.

That's why we can't think of learning as something only

children do, or as one more thing we don't have time for. We don't meet someone once, and then say we know them. We come to know someone over many years, and many shared experiences. We come to know someone over time — a lifetime.

Inspired by our Church's ancient practice, all Christians, young and old, can be regarded as catechumens: people who are learning. Catechumenal ministries, then, are ministries of learning; not just for those being baptized, but for everyone. How does learning happen in your congregation or community? What new possibilities for learning can you imagine? What would happen if those possibilities became a reality? How would it impact the life and ministry of your congregation or community?

Rev. Dr. Lisa Wang is the Developer for Catechumenal Ministries for the Diocese of Huron.

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Together, we will find a newness in our future

In the first week of November, the clergy of our diocese gathered in Stratford for the first “Bishop’s Clergy Conference” in a while.

It was different from other years—masks were worn, distance was kept, the agenda was simple and flexible, and the work we did was primarily worship.

Beautiful liturgies carried most of what needed to be done: we focused on lament, then healing, and finally reaffirmation of faith and vocation. God worked away in the prayer, the meals, the conversations, and in the times of rest. Thanks be to God.

I am very grateful to, and for, the people who serve in holy orders across the Diocese of Huron. Alone, none of us have every single gift for ministry but, together, we find an over-



**BISHOP
TODD
TOWNSHEND**

Every one of you who reads this is a minister of the gospel according to your own faith, gifts, experience, and learning. We are in this together.

flow of everything we need to be faithful stewards of “word and sacrament” in this time.

That doesn’t mean that the deacons and priests of our diocese are not still exhausted

and grieving—like everyone else—because of this season of COVID-19. They are, to varying degrees. Yet, when I looked around the room at the faces of colleagues, I saw a group who will be able to faithfully follow the guiding of the Holy Spirit in the months and years to come—and in so doing, we will be able to recover, reconnect, rebuild, or whatever else is needed for the flourishing of faith and life in the Anglican tradition.

Of course, none of the clergy are anything without the foundation of their own baptism and the mutual ministry of all the baptized. Every one of you who reads this is a minister of the gospel according to your own faith, gifts, experience, and learning. We are in this together. The only way we can do well is “together”. Only together can the whole church be faithful,

generous, and committed. Together, we will find a newness in our future, a newness that will activate that power working in us that can do more than we can ask or imagine.

We enter a new liturgical year with the season of Advent. It is such a sacred and beautiful time of the year. I look forward to hearing the customary scripture readings and prayers. I look forward to hearing (and perhaps singing!) the music of the season. I look forward to being drawn more deeply into the mystery of the Incarnation of God and the promised coming of Christ. And I look forward to hearing the ways in which you are following the work of the Holy Spirit in your places.

Every blessing of the season to you, your loved ones, and your community.

+ Todd

Advent: the time to begin at the beginning

By Rev. Mary Farmer

Once again, we find ourselves at the beginning of the Church year. Advent: the time to begin at the beginning, as we anticipate the story of the birth of Jesus, God among us.

Yet it is the busiest and most anticipated season by the world around us, much of which has no interest at all in Jesus or anything to do with that story of faith. Surrounded by a bustling and busy world that is focused on consumerism, entertainment and Santa, it can be challenging to find the time and energy to make room for God.

As we slowly emerge from the prolonged season of COVID that has enveloped us, I am finding I need something specific to focus on. As we have slowly transitioned back to in person contact and

ANGLICAN FELLOWSHIP OF PRAYER

worship, hope has emerged as a recurring theme. Hope that the worst of the pandemic is behind us. Hope that we will feel safe as we begin to gather. Hope that our communities continue to support those who have returned to the building and those who are, as yet, unable to do that. Hope that we are able to see where the Holy Spirit is moving in our lives, parish families and the world. So, I have decided to make ‘hope’ the theme that grounds my Advent prayer journey this year.

Our Advent observances begin with lighting the candle of hope in the Advent wreath. It reminds us that this is the beginning of a season to antic-

ipate something special. This year we are acutely aware of what it means not to have been able to be together to mark the rhythm of the Church year, so for many we eagerly anticipate sharing the story that leads up to the birth of Christ with our communities.

Whether or not your prayer practices include momentary pauses, formal prayers or prolonged silence, there is always time in the chaos and busyness of life to ‘recalculate’ the path and re-establish a connection with the centre of our being. I find when I am inwardly centred, I am better able to be outwardly focused, and deal with whatever comes my way.



Orange heart in front of St. Michael and All Angels

The heart is a visible sign of our commitment to journey forward with our Indigenous siblings, to listening and learning

By Janet McIlwain

Following the discovery of the remains of 215 children lost at Kamloops Residential School, the parishioners at St. Michael and All Angels, London felt compelled to honour these little souls in some meaningful way. The goal was to provide our community with a visible and tangible place to connect with their spiritual home during a time of such grief while the doors were closed to in-person worship.

We created in our altar a holy space of honour, grief, love and hopefulness. A Maxine Noel image of Motherhood sits amid an orange fabric backdrop, alongside a pair of children's shoes, a small teddy bear and a Circle of Friends.

The space is illuminated by candles, reflecting the red glass hearts and clear glass beads representing tears.

The space continues to be focal point in our worship in the shadow of the discovery of more and more unmarked graves. Our worship services continue to begin with the lighting of a candle in memory



Placing of each one of the 1,600 orange flags was a reminder of each of the children affected by the residential schools

of the lost children and a prayer of Reconciliation of Penitence.

In advance of our Truth and Reconciliation Sunday, our St. Michaels community was encouraged to wear orange to worship as a show our support of our Indigenous brothers and sisters. As parishioner after parishioner arrived, the limited capacity sanctuary filled with orange, a moving message of love and commitment.

In lieu of a homily, our priest, Ven. Sam Thomas, shared instead a time of learning, a history lesson, a timeline of our country's relationship with its Indigenous Peoples, including the history of residential and day schools.

As source material for much of his reflection, Sam sought reference from the book "A Space for Race", co-authored by our Resident Preacher, Dr.

Wendy Fletcher and Kathy Hogarth. Sam concluded his message by reading Prime Minister Stephen Harper's 2008 speech of apology to the Indigenous Peoples of Canada for the wrong doings brought upon them.

Following Sam's reflection, life-long parishioner and Literacy Facilitator at London Public Libraries, Frances Cutt, shared a reflection on where we go from here. In her work, Frances liaises regularly with representatives of the Indigenous community, and brings an informed perspective.

Following Frances's reflection and Communion, Bishop Bob Bennett led the community as together, we prayed for the children who were lost through the residential schools, the families, communities and generations broken by their impact. Bishop Bob prayed the following Mi'kmaq prayer as we blessed the orange flags we would be placing on our front lawn.

*"Creator, open our hearts
To peace and healing between all people. Creator, open our hearts,
To provide and protect for all the children of the earth. Creator, open our hearts,*

To respect for the earth, and all the gifts of the earth. Creator, open our hearts,

To end exclusion violence, and fear among all. Thank-you for the gifts of this day and every day. Amen."

Following both services, we placed orange flags in a prepared heart shape on the front lawn. Some people took one flag, some took many, and some watched quietly from the sidelines. The placing of each one of the 1,600 orange flags was a reminder of each of the children affected by the residential schools, those who didn't come home, those who survived and the generations living with the consequences.

The heart is a visible sign of our commitment to journey forward with our Indigenous siblings, to listening and learning. We know more children will be discovered, and the path ahead will not be an easy one, but we trust that God, the Creator, is with us all as we journey toward real truth and reconciliation.

Janet McIlwain is a warden at St. Michael and All Angels, London.

We have work to do and we need to show our community that we are listening

(From Frances Cutt's reflection on Truth and Reconciliation Sunday)

(...) We are only beginning the Truth stage of the process and we must be patient. We need to listen and be patient with those who have suffered as a result of colonization and residential schools. They have been patiently waiting for us to listen since first contact, so we must show them the same respect.

We must also be patient with those who struggle to accept the terrible history of our country and Church. It can be difficult to see the world through the eyes of another. We hurt as we say "I didn't know. Why didn't they teach us about this? How could people hurt children and claim they were doing God's work?"

It's okay to ask those questions. We need to ask questions and be open to the answers.

Jenna Rose Sands is a local Indigenous woman, a public speaker, as well as an Atlohsa Peace Award recipient, and she tells people to "learn and understand without taking on the guilt and responsibility." She

doesn't want people to feel bad on a personal level, but she does want them to open their minds to the truth.

The first step to opening our minds to the truth is to listen. Seek out authentic Indigenous voices instead of relying on dangerous stereotypes. Watch shows and movies created by Indigenous people that provide a realistic glimpse into their lives. Listen to Indigenous voices on the news or podcasts. Read books and don't limit yourself to heavy nonfiction. Read fiction – adult or children's – to gain a different perspective. When you are ready, participate in a Blanket Exercise or online training. (...)

Although our government has declared Sept. 30 as Truth and Reconciliation Day, we are called to listen, learn and journey with our Indigenous community for as long as it takes to heal.(...)

We have work to do and we need to show our community that we are listening. We ask each one of you to help us build a visible sign of our dedication to the healing process. Not everyone is ready to take the same steps as others. We understand and as a family we will support each other on this journey. As we leave today, everyone is encouraged to help us build a heart of

orange flags on the front lawn. Some of us are ready to plant those flags in a very public space for all to see, but we must also be respectful of those who are not. Everyone has a place whether they actively create the heart, stand silently and watch or commit to listen and learn.

Murray Sinclair, a former senator and chief commissioner of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), said this in an interview:

"Education is the key to reconciliation.

I did say ... at the end of the TRC report that we will not achieve reconciliation in my lifetime. We will probably not achieve it in the lifetime of my children. We may not even achieve it in the lifetime of my grandchildren,"

"But if we make a concerted effort ... then eventually we will be able, some day, to wake up and, to our surprise, find that we are treating each other in a way that was intended when contact was first made."

We pray that this heart filled with orange flags will be both a visible reminder of the thousands of lives that were lost or destroyed as a result of abuse and oppression, and a declaration of our commitment to the truth and reconciliation process.



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More exercises planned across Canada



Mapping the Ground at Camp Huron, Summer 2021

From Page 1

The facilitators also strive for an indigenous presence at the exercises and have been grateful for the participation of Gloria Thomson (Metis), Bruce Weaver (Bay of Quinte/Tyendinaga, Haudenosaunee), and the Ven. Val Kerr (Bay of Quinte/Tyendinaga, Haudenosaunee).

So far, another 50 individuals from the Diocese of Niagara have also participated and there are more exercises being

planned in the Diocese of Toronto.

Other PWRDF facilitators in the other ecclesiastical provinces are also rolling out the on-line exercise across Canada.

Many have expressed the mixed curse and blessing of this time of pandemic.

One of the blessings has been the learning that we can make use of the technology of our time in a good way. It is likely that, while it is anticipated that the in-person version of Map-

ping the Ground will return, the on-line version will now continue as an option that makes the exercise accessible to more individuals without the necessity of leaving home or travelling across distances.

For exercise booking information groups may contact Christine Hills (PWRDF) at chills@pwrdf.org or Greg Smith at gregsmith@diohuron.org.

Rev. Canon Greg Smith is the PWRDF Huron representative.

Community pantry for homeless at St. Stephen's, Stratford



Sunday, October 17 at St. Stephen's: blankets, bags, plastic mats and sleeping bags ready for distribution on Stratford streets

St. Stephen's Stratford parishioners have always been community focused. During their spring and summer prayer walks, they noticed an increase in visual homelessness. After several virtual cafés they decided to increase our outreach efforts. Here is what happened next:

"We were gifted with a metal box that was quickly turned into our Community Pantry.

It is stocked and will be decorated by the children of the parish. They have taken on the task of monitoring the needs of the shelves. We encourage anyone to give what they can and take what they need. Rev. Stephen blessed the pantry during one of our outdoor services. October 17 saw him also bless the many blankets, bags, plastic mats and sleeping bags ready for distribution on the streets of Stratford as the cold weather approaches.

"We are truly blessed with this street ministry and our spiritual leader."

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Getting to know the lives of the obscure saints

Saint Dymphna is known as the patron saint of those who suffer from mental illnesses and nervous system disorders, epileptics, mental health professionals, incest victims, runaways and abused children.

By Rev. Susan Bagshaw

Several months ago, I was asked if I would write an icon of Saint Dymphna for someone who practices in the mental health profession.

I, of course, had never heard of such a saint. I agreed if only to learn more about this person and what her story was. And so, the journey began to get to know the figure I was about to write in paint and gold on wood.

Saint Dymphna (Daphne is a much easier translation of the name) died as a martyr around 650 A.D. in defence of her vow of chastity and her faithfulness as a devout follower of Christ.

Her story was first written down by Canon Aubert of Avranches in Cambrai, France in the 13th century as commissioned by the Bishop of Cambrai based on oral tradition and compelling stories of miraculous healings of those who were mentally ill that took place at the site where Dymphna was martyred. She was canonized in 1247.

The story begins when Dymphna was born to a pagan king of one of the kingdoms in Ireland called Oriel. His name was Damon, but there is no record of his wife's name that we can find. His wife became a devout Christian, and had her daughter secretly baptized as well.

Unfortunately, King Damon's wife died when Dymphna was an adolescent, and the death of his beautiful wife became the unravelling of the king's mental state. His courtiers urged him to remarry thinking it would



Rev. Susan Bagshaw with her depiction of Saint Dymphna

bring stability to both Damon's life and the kingdom, so they set out to find a suitable wife for him. None were found to satisfy the king, nor were they as beautiful as his wife had been. His daughter, however, was.

King Damon fixated on the beautiful resemblance of his daughter to his dead wife, and insisted she marry him. Dymphna refused these unnatural feelings toward her, fled the kingdom, and went on a 1400 km journey with her

priest-confessor St. Gerebernus and a handful of attendants, along with her financial resources, and boarded a ship to Antwerp, Belgium and then on to the town of Geel.

Eventually her father followed her trail - follow the money - and found her settled in Geel. By this time, she had built a hospice for the poor and sick, and had developed a reputation for her kindness and healing gifts in the community. Further refusing to marry her father, King Damon had her

priest-confessor Gerebernus killed by his soldiers and, in a rage at her final refusal to marry him, he himself drew his sword and cut off Dymphna's head, while the soldiers executed those who remained of her small court. Dymphna died around the age of 15 years.

The short, sad life of Dymphna - losing her mother at a young age, fleeing the terror brought on by her father's illness, and the eventual cruel death she suffered while standing firm in her vow of chastity and refusal to be in an incestuous relationship with her father, cost her her life. Her story has been impactful to me as I painted her sad image and think of many who continue to suffer in similar ways today. Although Dymphna's story is submersed in the outward manifestations of mental illness, fear, incest and violence are also part of her story, and sadly for so many others as well. It does not go unnoticed that as I write this, we are heading towards the global 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence (November 25 - December 10).

Today the community of Geel still honours the legend of caring for those with mental illness established by St. Dymphna in the 7th century. This unique community has taken care of those considered 'mad' for over 500 years by its citizens taking those in need of care into their homes and treating them not as patients, but as guests or boarders that continues to this day. Geel today has a world-class sanatorium dedicated to the pursuit of

mental wellness and treatment and a church built and dedicated in her honour (the first was built in 1484 but burned down, and a second, larger church was rebuilt in 1532). We can safely attribute these to Dymphna's legacy in their community.

Dymphna's personal experience at seeing the horrific effects that mental illness had on her father, along with the embrace of the community in Geel and her faith in Christ Jesus gave her the courage and empathy to take care of those who needed the gifts of healing and wholeness for which she is remembered.

Take what you will from this story as fact or legend, her message of wellness and wholeness is one that we read time and time again in scripture given to us by the greatest of healers, our Saviour Jesus Christ.

That is what we should take away from Dymphna's story.

Rev. Susan Bagshaw is the deacon at St. John's Church, Cambridge.



Counselling centre for youth opens in Exeter

Trivitt Memorial Anglican Church in Exeter in partnership with the Community Counselling Centre of London officially opened a counselling centre for youth at its location at 264 Main St, Exeter.

Community Counselling Exeter held its open house on Sunday, October 31, and it opened its doors for clients on Monday, November 1.

The ribbon was officially cut by Rt. Rev. Todd Townshend, Bishop of Huron, during the open house event.

Community Counselling Exeter will provide subsidized counselling services for children, youth, and young adults ages 12 to 25.

Services will be operated by Community Counselling Centre of London, and hosted and sponsored by Trivitt Memorial Anglican Church. Subsidized counselling is available based



on each individual situation.

The centre provides counselling on Mondays and Wednesdays from 11 am to 7 pm. A free Art Therapy group for youth dealing with anxiety will be offered on Tuesdays from 4 pm to 6 pm.

Eligible clients are residents of Exeter and South Huron. Clients wishing to utilize the services of

Community Counselling Exeter are invited to call 226.314.2011 to inquire about counselling services and the free Art Therapy group for youth.

Tax deductible donations to Trivitt Memorial - Community Counselling Exeter can be made to Trivitt Memorial Anglican Church, 264 Main St, Exeter, ON

The ribbon cutting ceremony: Bishop Todd Townshend officially opens the Community Counseling Centre in Trivitt Memorial Church, Exeter, on October 31

(Photo credit: Times-Advance)

Tax deductible donations to Community Counselling Centre of London can be made directly to <https://www.canadahelps.org/en/charities/community-counselling-centre-of-london/CanadaHelps> Community Counselling Centre of London website: www.communitycounselinglondon.com

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ANGLICAN CHURCH WOMEN

The joy of Christmas: Being blessed by His presence



Wow! This year with all of its uncertainty has flown by. Once again it is time to celebrate Advent and the most Holy Day of Christ's birth.

An Archangel came to Mary and told her she was going to have a child. Mary questioned this saying, "How can this be? I am a virgin."

She was told that she would have the Son of God. When Joseph her betrothed found out Mary was with child he was going to refuse to marry her. In a dream the Archangel came to him and assured him it was okay to marry Mary that she was carrying the Son of God.

The Roman Empire sent out orders that people had to register in the towns where they were born. So, Joseph put Mary on the back of a donkey, as she was near delivery, and they traveled to Nazareth. They looked for lodging, but noth-

ing was available. They were offered the stable where Jesus was born.

The angels came to the frightened shepherds and announced with joy the birth of Jesus. They were told: "Fear not for we bring you tidings of great joy."

With excitement the shepherds went to see the wondrous sight of the Christ child and they worshipped Him. There was a star over the place where Jesus was born, and the Three Kings followed that star until they encountered Herod. They told Herod they were there to worship the new king. Herod became jealous and frightened that he would be replaced. He asked the wise men to return to him and tell him where the new king was so he could also worship Him.

They continued travelling until the star stopped moving. They presented Jesus with gifts and worshipped Him. The

wise men were warned not to go back to Herod that he had evil intentions. They returned to their homes by an alternate route. Joseph was warned in a dream to take Mary and the child and flee for their safety.

Who would have thought what this would mean for us thirty-three years in the future, and thousands of years later? We have been blessed by the presence of Jesus many thousands of times. How many of us consider how blessed we truly are? Do we thank Him for our abundant blessings, or do we just take for granted what He does for us nonstop? Do we think that we have achieved success all on our own?

May you all have a Merry Christmas and a very Happy New Year hopefully more normal. May the Lord richly bless you.

Barbara Jackson, ACW
Diocesan Council President

PASTORAL PROGRESSIONS

Appointments

Bishop Townshend appointed the Reverend Dr. Lisa Wang as the Developer for Catechumenal Ministries for the Diocese of Huron, effective October 1, 2021.

Bishop Townshend appointed The Reverend Canon Robert Park as the rector of St. Mark's, Brantford, effective January 1, 2022. Canon Rob is currently the rector of St. George's, Georgetown in the Diocese of Niagara.

Ordination

Bishop Townshend announced that the following will be called to the Diaconate at a service of Ordination to be held on Tuesday, November 30, the Feast of St. Andrew at 7pm at the Cathedral Church of St. Paul, London:

- Mr. Brendon Bedford
- Ms. Stephanie Donaldson
- Ms. Jean Doyle
- Mr. Gilles Hache
- Mr. Craig Love
- Ms. Carol McCurdy
- Ms. Ann Webber

Inductions

On behalf of Bishop Townshend, the Venerable Kristen Aikman inducted The Reverend Amanda Longmoore as the Rector of St. John's-in-the-Wilderness, Bright's Grove at an outdoor service on Sunday, September 26, 2021.

On behalf of Bishop Townshend, the Venerable Janet Griffith Clarke inducted The Reverend Enrique Martinez as the Rector of the Parish of Long Point Bay (Port Ryerse Memo-

rial Church, Port Ryerse; St. John's, Woodhouse; St. John's, Port Rowan; St. Andrew's-by-the-Lake, Turkey Point and Christ Church Chapel of Ease, Vittoria) on the Feast of St. Michael and All Angels, September 29.

Retirement

Bishop Todd Townshend accepted the request to retire of the Venerable Perry Chuiipka, effective June 5, 2022.

Archdeacon Perry was ordained a deacon in May 1987 and priested in May 1988, both in the diocese of Algoma. He served as a curate in St. Thomas Church in Thunder Bay. His first posting was in a three-point charge (Christ Church, Port Sydney, St. Mary's Beatrice and St. George's Falkenburg). Then he served at St. John The Divine Church in Copper Cliff and the Church of the Resurrection in Sudbury. He also helped part time at Thorneloe College Chapel in Sudbury.

He came on the strength of Huron in May 2008 and has served the parishes of St. Peter's, Lucknow; St. John's, Brussels; Trinity, Blyth; St. Paul's-Trinity, Wingham; St. John the Evangelist, Kitchener, the Parish of the Bruce Peninsula (Trinity, Warton; Christ Church, Lion's Head; St. Edmund's, Tobermory; St. Margaret's, Cape Chin; St. Peter-by-the-Lake, Sauble Beach; and St. Andrew's, Howdenvale) and as the Pastor of St. Peter's Lutheran Church, Warton. He

was appointed a Canon of the Cathedral in May 2011 and the Archdeacon of Congregational Development in December of that year.

Archdeacon Perry has also served on the Diocesan Council, the Financial Development committee, the Council of Advice and as the co-chair of the Congregational Coaches.

We look forward to honouring Archdeacon Perry on his retirement.

Resignation

Shyla Guy, Resource Assistant in Church House is moving to the east coast of Canada. While this is a wonderful opportunity for Shyla and her son, Liam, her sense of humour, adaptability and contribution to our team will be sorely missed!

Shyla's last day in office was October 15, 2021.

Rest In Peace

Mr. Colin Maddison, the youngest brother of the Reverend Canon Gaye Whippey died suddenly on October 3 in England.

The Reverend Richard (Dick) Hebbourn died on Saturday, October 2, 2021.

Dick was ordained a deacon in May 1996 and priested in November 1996. He served as an associate priest at the parish of Trinity, Sarnia as well as providing interim and supply ministry throughout Lambton county. He also served on the Diocesan Compensation Committee.

WAY OF LOVE

SEVEN PRACTICES FOR JESUS-CENTERED LIFE

Social and Ecological Justice Huron is offering an Advent study that draws from the discussion of the "Way of Love: seven practices for Jesus-centered life" as described in Stephanie Spellers' "The Church Cracked Open: Disruption, Decline, and New Hope for Beloved Community".

Each week, this resource will invite participants to reflect on some of the practices for Jesus-centered life through the lens of the Gospel story and activities in the Diocese of Huron.

This program is designed with flexibility in mind allowing it to be used independently, and as an online and/or in person program within congregations, deaneries, or other groups.

We hope that all who engage find this journey meaningful.

For more information contact us at:
sejh@diohuron.org

Donate online
to your parish or to the diocese:

<https://diohuron.org/covid-19-resource-hub/>

They gave us their blood to keep us alive

'Christ came to our bedside not in colours or robes, but in the veins of those women who wanted nothing more from us but that we live': The unsung story of the Blood Sisters, the good Samaritans who defended and protected their gay brothers and others who had contracted the HIV virus.

By John-Paul Markides

'I had AIDS...,' and she sat next to me and said she would be my blood sister.'

There were many that helped — these were an exception in the beginning and not the norm. When no one would sit beside us, touch us, or visit us: they did. When there was a shortage of blood, they came in the hundreds and gave what no one else would. They gave us the blood from their bodies, to keep us alive.

Back in the early 1980s, before I was even born, there was a movement among the lesbian women in the LGBTIQ community to defend and protect their gay brothers as well as others who had contracted the HIV virus. Amidst a growing pandemic of HIV (especially in the United States), a group of lesbians who called themselves the Blood Sisters organized themselves into groups to do blood drives for gay men with AIDS — men who were desperate and in need of blood transfusion.

This was an almost scandalous venture, years before Princess Diana and Pope John-Paul II would have their iconic embrace of the AIDS patients. These women were Christ, the very embodiment of the Good Samaritan — one who does not help because it's easy, but because it's right, at a time when people saw us in the same way that Christ's people looked on the Leper.

These blood sisters are one of the reasons why the term L-GBT+ was adopted rather than the then popular G-LBT. The shift to LGBTQ as opposed to GLBT was a deliberate move to honour these lesbians who were primary caretakers to



Norbu Gyuachung/Unsplash

people, when nurses would not enter into the room of a gay AIDS patient, where doctors would speak to patients from the door.

At a time of a pandemic which claimed a generation of gay men, it was the lesbians who would care for us. There were many people who opened hospices. There were many religious and non-religious institutions that went out of their way to make people with AIDS feel human. But it was these ladies who came to our bedsides and sat with us...

It was these ladies who gave us dignity in our last hours. As a gay man I would like to thank all of those people, these unsung heroes, who worked so hard to help the members of our community suffering from HIV/AIDS at a time when we were lepers.

It is so strange to tell the story of a pandemic when we are still in a pandemic. Does anybody remember the gay pandemic, the gay disease? That time when an illness ran through our communities: a silent death, when our friends just started to disappear... disowned by families scared not just of our illness but of who we were. Our partners and loved

ones were denied entrance for hospital visits. That time when we were isolated, hated, and abandoned.

Where was our Christ? Where was our saviour? Where was the church?

Christ came to our bedside not in colours or robes, but in the veins of those women who wanted nothing more from us but that we live, and if not, that we die with the dignity of a human being. The church would come to our aid, and it did a lot, and still does... but they were not the Good Samaritans of every story. Hopefully, this is a lesson we have learned as a church.

I was still a gleam in my mother's eye when the AIDS pandemic ravaged the world. I was in grade six when they devised the treatments that help people with HIV live long and normal lives. Before they invented the "Prep" pill that stops those who do not have the disease from contracting it, before they realized that a person with HIV+ who is taking medication and has an "undetectable" viral load was not able to transfer the virus.

The story of HIV in our community has come a long way since the 1980s, when a

few of our lesbian sisters said they would not stand by and watch as their brothers and friends died, alone isolated and demoralized by a health system unprepared for a pandemic and a society unprepared to recognize the dignity of gay, lesbian, and trans people.

We will not forget: not the lives of those who were lost, and not the action of those people who reached out and held us as we died. I did not die, but my people did. I will and cannot forget the truth of what happened. Even as I celebrate that much of society has embraced my people...

I cannot forget what a blind eye of hate can do to me and those I love. I AM PROUD to be a member of a community that still packs into small squares and memorials to remember the lost generation of young LGBTQ2S+ people who died because the world didn't have time for the "Gay Disease". To this day churches still persist in seeing AIDS as a punishment from God, as if communicable diseases infected on command.

In the time of COVID, the world stopped to save the most vulnerable; but in the time of HIV, the world kept running right over the graves of those who were less desirable. Today, governments worked together — people went across the aisle to work with rivals, to make sure that those who are in need had their needs met. It became an imperative to find and isolate a vaccine for this illness to save the lives of the most vulnerable. But in the LGBTQ community, we remember a time when there was a disease that rocked our people. A time when the government turned a blind eye, a time when a pandemic that killed only those

who were less desirable was able to roam free until it eventually caught on in other communities. It's hard to say these things. It's hard to think that so many died. It's hard to talk about how the people who did die were treated by the doctors, nurses and families they had grown to depend upon — cast out and left alone.

There were many who came to the aid of the LGBTQ community: all of them should be celebrated, but on World AIDS Day this year (December 1), I would like to celebrate the unsung heroes of the lesbian blood sisters.

These vulnerable groups of women were willing to put their lives on the line, or at least until they knew how the virus was spread. They did this to remind us that, while we may be a long string of letters in the LGBTQ2S+ community, we are a community that lives and dies together for the freedom to love. The community has never been one in that we are all the same — the lesbian community is as different from the gay one as the trans are from the straight community. We don't band together because we have the same likes; we band together because we have the same rights. We have pride in our ability to stand together, we have strength in our ability to support each other and we have sadness when society ignores things like AIDS, or the ongoing abuse and murder of our trans people. Our strength is in our community, and we honour this today — and every day.

Bro. John-Paul Markides CFC (He/Him) B.A., MDiv, MTS is a Franciscan Friar (Community of Francis and Clare), and a member of the Proud Anglicans of Huron.

The Brotherhood of Anglican Churchmen meets again... at least in voice and vision



Hoping to gather in person soon:

The members of the Brotherhood of Anglican Churchmen met online to celebrate 70 years of their operation and support to Huron parishes. Their annual meeting was on October 23, 2021.

To find out more about BAC in the Diocese of Huron visit their website: <https://bac.diohuron.org/>

After what seemed like a long time, the Brotherhood of Anglican Churchmen (B.A.C.) members from across the Diocese of Huron met by voice and vision on Saturday, October 23 at 10am.

What all had hoped would be the opportunity to celebrate 70 years of operation and support to parishes, deaneries and the diocese by the men of the diocese, the get-together was instead by voice and vision. In person get-togethers will wait for the health of our communities, our parishes and our diocese to return us to normal.

The get-together over voice and vision (phone and computer) allowed the Association

to vote into office President Vic Templar from London, Vice President Jim Rigney from Windsor, 2nd Vice President Wilf Clegg from Waterloo and allow the continuing service of Secretary Francis Richardson from Meaford and Treasurer Dennis Cartier from Blenheim.

The Association welcomed new Deanery Representatives Mike Whitehead from Brant/Norfolk and Perry Wong from Essex. They joined Deanery Representatives Ron Wilton from Oxford and Harry Harris from London. President Sheldon Parsons from the Deanery of Lambton/Kent finally became Past President after the organization was able to meet

together - even if only by voice and vision.

The BAC continues to do lots of good things in their communities and together, as an Association, supports the work of the Monica Place in Kitchener/Waterloo, Camp Huron in the County of Huron (our Diocese program for kids) and the Huron College Scholarship Fund in London.

If you are involved in organizations within the Diocese and want to look at becoming a part of the Brotherhood of Anglican Churchmen, give us a call. We'd be happy to speak to you about the advantages.

The Brotherhood of Anglican Churchmen

Holistic Christianity: Creation care for a beloved community

By Caroline Sharp

As you may have guessed by now, Social and Ecological Justice Huron is knee deep in the book *The Church Cracked Open* by Stephanie Spellers.

Stephanie writes at the start of chapter two of her book:

People are aching the world over for beloved community. You don't have to be religious to long for it. There is something elemental and compelling about communities of people who help one another to grow into all that they were created to be. Where each person is as committed to the other's flourishing and to the flourishing of the whole. Where the members are willing to sacrifice their own comfort and even lives for the sake of the other and for the dream they share. You don't have to be religious to seek beloved community. I believe we humans are created with a homing device that begins to hum and light up when we see individuals and communities driven not by ego but by self-giving love.

This concept is pretty much as old as the existence of human beings but something happened along the way that caused us to live extraordinarily different lives than we are meant to live. God's creation process is holistic. According to Oxford Languages the definition for holistic is: "characterized by comprehension of the

SOCIAL AND ECOLOGICAL JUSTICE



parts of something as intimately interconnected and explicable only by reference to the whole." Only God is omniscient whereas we struggle with seeing the whole picture — that's how science was invented — we are searching for that unknown knowledge God couldn't fit into our heads.

Shortly before the birth of science was a humankind who were nomads. They hunted and foraged for their food where and when it was available. Because the process of feeding everyone really didn't take much time, there was more time for leisure.

Various rituals and ceremonies were the primitive human's method of entertainment. They were in tune with their envi-

ronments but also with each other. When someone was in need, everyone sacrificed for the wellbeing of the whole. Instead of letting one person starve, everyone ate a little less. It is natural for us to desire beloved community but it appears that something stops us from actually living it out.

Spellers suggests that our egos are what get in the way of living out beloved community. Ego is something that was born along with greed when humans evolved (sort of) from hunting and gathering to agriculture. Slowly through the years, but especially more recently, we have lost our way in regard to our holistic understanding of the world. People don't want to think about where their roast

beef or bacon came from. Many Canadians, especially younger generations, lack the ability to identify the many species of native trees and plants. We are disconnected!

Being disconnected from the rest of creation has caused us to suffer from stress, depression, anxiety, heart disease, diabetes, obesity and more. Our sedentary lives in concrete jungles are making us ill. If we think of the term "disconnected" in regard to telephones, I believe a lot of us would get a little edgy or suffer from withdrawal if our phones were disconnected. The good news is that we can use our technology to help us get back to our roots!

There are a number of apps that have been created to help us identify the world around us. This past summer I have started using some of these apps (PictureThis (for plants), Picture Bird, Picture Insect, and eTick) to identify the world around me. I have found that it is fairly accurate but the odd plant isn't identified correctly which can be caused by blurry pictures or bad angles. Knowing which native plants grow in your vicinity can be helpful for knowing what you can or can't eat. Foraging is something that is gaining popularity among naturalists and the ecologically minded.

Plants that we call weeds are often edible. Dandelions are one of those plants that we are all familiar with. Did you

know the entire plant from root to flower is edible? It's true! Plantains are another common "weed" that is edible. Really, a weed is an unwanted plant, however, if we learn about the properties of nature around us, we begin to connect with nature.

The many people who keep animals unknowingly do so as another means to connect with nature. Dogs, for instance, are handy to have closeby. For eons, domesticated or not, dogs have lingered near humans who create garbage and food waste. They benefit from us and we delight in the beauty and complexity of God's creation and all of our parts within it.

When we start to view creation as a product of God and recognize its holistic manner, we are uplifted. We feel happier, more whole and perhaps we may start to recognize this feeling as something called love. Self-giving love, what Spellers believes is needed for beloved community to occur, comes out of connecting with everything else God has made and allowing that feeling of love to consume us so that we can share our light with others and flourish together.

We all shall flourish together — all ages, all genders, all colours, all species! Everything that God has made is good and shall live holistically as one; as a beloved community!

Caroline Sharp is a tri-chair of SEJH.

'God loves a cheerful giver'

By Ven. Kim Van Allen

St. John's-by-the-Lake, Grand Bend, is embarking on a Stewardship Campaign they have named 'Joyful Giving'.

They created a Stewardship Committee who explored resources available on our diocesan stewardship webpage as well as the Diocese of Toronto and other organizations. St. John's-by-the-Lake has invested time and energy preparing a stewardship focus that is right for them. Like other aspects of ministry, stewardship is shaped by the needs and the context. Taking time to explore resources and to have a conversation about what we want to accomplish makes good sense. This approach also builds understanding and may create the path towards a mutually shared ministry.

Communicating all of this is well-planned in this parish involving a new Communications' Committee and development of a narrative budget.



Giving is a way of life. It goes beyond money, but it does involve our resources too.

Narrative budgets are a wonderful tool to help us see the cost of a ministry — for example 'worship' costs might include: resources, HR, paper, copying, heat, etc. — rather than look at each of these specific costs as traditional budget lines alone. Words and pictures help paint a meaningful picture beyond numbers.

'Joyful giving' reminds me of the biblical passage 'God loves a cheerful giver' from 2 Corinthians 9:7. God does not want a grumpy giver! Where is the joy in that? Verse 7 begins with

these words 'Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion ...'

A parishioner once asked me 'Kim, when is it enough?' This was a serious and faithful question from a man who gave generously of his time, his skills, and his money. His generosity was a way of life for him. He lived joyful giving through his personal, community, and work relationships just as he did through his involvement in the church. He lived the life of a disciple.

He wasn't one of the people gathered for bible study or prayer group. His skill and interests took him into other aspects of parish life.

How would you answer his question? When have we given enough? Perhaps it is when the 'giving', whatever that might be, no longer gives us joy. I think that is the message of 'God loves a cheerful giver' — emphasis on cheerful!

Paul would add that if giving of our selves feels like too much, it could be beyond our reach at this time or it could mean that we are not ready to give that much. Giving is a spiritual aspect of our discipleship. I know we do not look at stewardship from the lens of spirituality, but that is where it belongs.

Giving is a way of life. It goes beyond money, but it does involve our resources too. Think of all the ways you have given of yourselves. Reflect on the ways you are a cheerful giver. Is it easy for you to give generously of your time? Alternatively, do you feel you are

too busy to nurture some of the relationships in your life? Do you donate money generously or have you been donating the same 2% of your income for the last decade? Are you able to help someone out when they need the kind of skills God has given you or do you resent these requests?

Perhaps your parish would like to explore more deeply the Christian life which we call Discipleship. Joyful Giving has a cousin, Gratitude. Perhaps gratitude is the fruit of Joyful Giving. When we give generously of our selves, someone will likely be grateful for our gift whether it is a caring presence, our assistance, or something we have shared. We also will feel grateful for the joy we have experienced in giving and this feeling may surprise us!

Joyful Giving — be surprised!

Ven. Kim Van Allen is a member of the diocesan Stewardship Committee and the Archdeacon of Huron/Perth.

Curiosity: Being free to wonder aloud with others

By Rev. Canon Val Kenyon

We have all heard the expression, curiosity killed the cat. It is generally used as a warning that being curious can get us into trouble and that sometimes questions, especially prying ones, are best not asked and that if the questioners persist, the outcomes will be less than pleasant.

It is my experience of late that we live in an age of questions. How do we remain safe in a time of COVID and yet find and maintain those connections that are so important to us? How and when will we return to those practices in the Church that we have missed so much during this time of pandemic? What will the long-term effect of the pandemic be on our society, on our families and on our parishes? Questions, lots of them.

I would suggest, however, that as disciples of Jesus, we are all about the questions. While as humans we like to have our questions answered, preferring always to see the outline of the path upon which we are walking, it is often through the questions that new perspectives and understandings appear and evolve. If we are wise and can tolerate the process, that is the discomfort of not always knowing, questions can unlock doors for us that previously remained out of our reach. If we allow questions to lead us to more questions, resisting the



Education for Ministry is spiritual, theological, liturgical, and practical formation for laypeople. EfM is about integrating faith and life, and communicating our faith to others.



temptation to rush to answers, we may find ourselves learning and growing in ways quite unanticipated. As children, most of us were quite comfortable with questions, as so much of the world and our circumstances were as yet unknown to us. However, as we matured it was the answers that grew in importance and understandably so in an adult world and yet, do we ever outgrow the need to engage in critical, thoughtful practices? We are currently citizens in a world and disciples in a Church that has had many of its practices up-ended over the course of these many months of pandemic. While the truths of the Gospel and the guiding

principles of God's kingdom remain constant, in many corners, previous answers and previous solutions are no longer relevant and so, curiosity becomes our friend.

As the cat was cautioned, curiosity, that is, embracing the questions and allowing questions to lead us to more questions and opportunities for expanded perspectives, is not for the faint hearted. There is, without doubt, a certain risk involved, but that has always been the case with learning and growing. As we learn something new, will it not ask us to make a choice, perhaps a different one than we have made in the past. This should

If we can cultivate and encourage curiosity around all that God is seeking to do in our lives, and in the communities in which we live and serve, with time and patience our wonderings upheld by God's Spirit will lead us into all that is next.

not surprise us. During Jesus ministry among us so much of his time was dedicated to urging those around him to move out of their comfortable certainties, into something new and as yet unknown? Even now, as we pray for God's direction in uncertain times and circumstances, implicit in our prayers is a willingness to be taken somewhere as yet undiscovered, perhaps even unimagined. In our questions and in our prayers born out of these questions, we surrender ourselves to what is still developing and yet to come, not because we feel confidence in our own capacities, but because we trust the One who has led us to this point, even if for a time our path continues to be a fit foggy.

An important gift that we can give one another in all of this, in the questions and in our musings, is the space to allow for this process to unfold. As we create safe space to wonder with one another, God's Spirit is able to move and breath among, around and through us. If we can cultivate and encourage curiosity around all

that God is seeking to do in our lives, and in the communities in which we live and serve, with time and patience our wonderings upheld by God's Spirit will lead us into all that is next. In these times of challenge, are we calling on God's grace to hold this space, to encourage curiosity and to find comfort in the questions and in the processes that lead to wondering?

At Education for Ministry, participants' questions are key and each week all are invited into a safe space where people are encouraged to ask, examine, discuss and ponder, without criticism or judgment. The goal of our time together is to create and maintain a space to be free to wonder aloud with others.

Want to learn more about Education for Ministry in the Diocese of Huron, please be in touch with Libi Clifford, the Diocese of Huron EfM Coordinator or myself Val Kenyon at valeriekenyon@diohuron.org, to hear some of the details and the possibilities.

Rev. Dr. Canon Val Kenyon is EfM Animator in Huron.

Advent Activities 2021

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
28 HOPE Pray; be always on the watch	29 Read Luke 21: 25-36	30 Watch a film version of the Gospels this Advent	1 Encourage someone with kind words	2 Invite someone to discover part of God's beautiful Earth with you	3 Set aside a time and place to listen to the Holy Spirit	4 Listen to God's voice in music today
5 LOVE How can I prepare the way?	6 Read Luke 3: 1-6	7 Bring lunch to someone who doesn't get out much	8 Use a centreing prayer to hear God's voice	9 Reconcile with someone you're been estranged from	10 Study the life of Jesus written by scholars	11 Give a small gift to someone
12 JOY Share the good news of the Messiah's coming	13 Read Luke 3:7-18	14 Invite someone to share coffee and conversation	15 Fight for a cause that Jesus would support	16 Re-read and study the Gospels this month	17 Bake muffins or cookies for co-workers or neighbours	18 Write a note of encouragement to someone who needs it
19 PEACE Take heart! The Lord will fulfill his promises	20 Read Luke 1:39-45	21 Listen to someone's story	22 Pray for every neighbour on your street	23 Do errands for a shut-in	24 Drop off a veggie tray to hospital nurses	25 Share your Christmas feast with others
						

A gift to our readers from the Anglican Diocese of Fredericton, courtesy of the New Brunswick Anglican editor Gisele McKnight

MERRY CHRISTMAS!

Investing in the vocational leadership of tomorrow

The wonderful thing about word-of-mouth advertising is that you can never quite be sure of how it's going to spread or where your reputation can take you!

Over the past few weeks I have watched in wonder as theology courses, hosted through Huron University College's Licentiate in Theology program, made accessible through Zoom and advertised through social media, suddenly exploded in enrolment by students both within our Diocese and now representing communities as far away as the Yukon and United States.

One course, Understanding Anglican Liturgy, taught by Bishop William Cliff of the Diocese of Brandon, Manitoba, currently has 60 participants representing six different dioceses (five in Canada and one in the US).

The students are comprised of an interesting mixture of lay and ordained. Many of them serve in remote communities and haven't had access to theological education through traditional styles of learning – travelling to study at a seminary. All of them have articulated a deep craving for theological learning and a desire to put their studies into practice through their service in the Anglican Church.

Over the past seven years that I have been involved in coordinating courses through HUC I have seen a significant uptick in student enrolment, especially among lay leaders wishing to better equip themselves for ministry that they are, more often than not, already doing in their parishes.



How are you being called to service?

Bishop Todd Townshend, pictured with students from his 'Preacher's Toolbox' homelitics class in the LTh program.



GROWING BEYOND THE DOORS
REV. GRAYHAME BOWCOTT

Whenever I am asked about the ways in which we can best equip healthy and growing congregations in the present and future, my go to response has been: identifying the members of our communities who are curious to learn more about God and service to others.

You've heard the saying: the proof is in the pudding! Take, as evidence of this encouraging trend of growth, the fact that three of our upcoming ordinands to the Diaconate in the Diocese of Huron have been engaged students in the Licentiate of Theology program: Stephanie Donaldson, Gilles Haché and Carol McCurdy. Each of these has sought to enrich their learning through theological education. Each have also been heavily involved in their congregation's ministries and outreach.

All three of them have chosen to engage in theological education as a means of unlocking their vocational potential. In their courses they

have been able to explore key vocational questions: Who is God? Where is God active in the Church? And, ultimately, what is my role in serving God and others through the life and ministries of our Church?

Whenever I am asked about the ways in which we can best equip healthy and growing congregations in the present and future, my go to response has been: identifying the members of our communities who are curious to learn more about God and service to others and then finding whatever ways possible to enable them to access the education they

need to feed their curiosity and allow for them to explore their vocation.

I'm convinced that enabling vocational discernment in our congregations is something that Anglicans need to become much better at doing. We often ask the question: where are our future leaders going to come from? I think that God answers this question by causing us to reflect on our own personal vocations. God responds: how are you being called to service?

The starting point for any congregation, whether large or small, is to invest in the vocational leadership of its members. In our Diocese, there are

now numerous, affordable and accessible options for equipping leaders. We are blessed to have three colleges: Canterbury, Renison and Huron within our borders. With programming offered by congregational coaches, through courses hosted through the Education for Ministry (EfM) program and in the many online options being offered through Huron's Licentiate in Theology program, there is an abundance of resources to equip congregational leaders, wardens, lay readers, prayer leaders and potential postulants for ministry.

Interested in exploring your own vocation? I'm happy to connect and share the many possibilities of first steps with you!

Rev. Dr. Grayhame Bowcott is passionate about fostering congregational relationships and sharing our Anglican vocation with others. He serves as rector of St. George's, The Parish of The Blue Mountains. grayhamebowcott@diohuron.org

Three suggestions in one word: SHARE!!

Our dependence on social media has increased throughout the pandemic.

More and more individuals across all generations have relied upon social media to keep them connected with family, friends, and work. And churches are no different. We rushed to get services online, host Bible studies and Zoom coffee hours. All of which was and is really important in sharing the Good News.

The caution though is to remember not to treat social media as a broadcast medium solely. Social media is not just about sharing content, but it is predominantly about engagement. Here are a few tips to keep in mind as we continue to engage with parishioners and the greater world through

Sharing and interacting with posts from your church is simple but it also shows to the world how important a relationship with Jesus Christ is to you personally.



MEDIA BYTES
REV. MARTY LEVESQUE

various social media channels whether as individuals or from our church accounts.

Share your burdens. Whether that is as a church or as an individual. Don't be afraid to share those less than perfect moments of life, especially the ones when you personally need God to show up. Christians

suffer. Non-believers suffer. Pain and suffering are universal experiences. Authenticity goes a long way when building or maintaining relationships.

Share testimony. Many of us are tempted to use social media to announce events and drive traffic to said events. Most of us forget to share pictures or follow up posts from events that have been advertised.

Telling our stories, of success and failures, is an important component of testifying to the work of the Spirit in our lives and churches. Always remem-

ber to share a follow-up post.

Share posts from your church. For individual members of congregations, the single and most important thing you can do to help your church grow and thrive is sharing your church's content on your personal accounts.

Sharing and interacting with posts from your church is simple but it also shows to the world how important a relationship with Jesus Christ is to you personally.

By following these three suggestions, we can as a whole church, leverage the mass adoption of social media from multiple generations for the benefit of the Kingdom of God.

Rev. Marty Levesque is the diocesan social media officer and rector of All Saints' in Waterloo. martylevesque@diohuron.org



<https://diohuron.org>



<https://www.youtube.com/user/diohuron>



<https://twitter.com/diohuron>



<https://www.facebook.com/diocesefhuron>

Days of celebration – Our story of faith

There is a certain expectation that a December article being written for this diocesan newspaper in October should include some sorrowful tone of how the commercialization of Christmas is evident at the time of writing.

It is very easy to feel myself slipping into that mindset after having seen lights on a Christmas tree inside an apartment on October 23. The sighting of a combination of Hot Cross buns and Easter Egg chocolates next to pumpkin pies and gingerbread house kits, which are in close proximity to copious amounts of Halloween candies generates a seasonal confusion syndrome which is in need of an antidote.

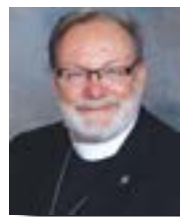
As people of faith, what are we to do?

May I suggest that an answer may be found as close as your personal church calendar. Hidden in plain sight are remarkable stories of people of faith, who down through the ages have stories and traditions attached to their lives which may generate all kinds of personal or family celebrations. How we make these stories our own, will, I have every confidence, deepen our own faith and enhance our daily lives.

Signs, symbols and even special food preparation have been linked with the observation of stories of faith through time. Generations of Christians have found that the use of



Alexander Schimmeck/Unsplash



A VIEW FROM THE BACK PEW
REV. CANON CHRISTOPHER B. J. PRATT

familiar elements of storytelling and acts of hospitality create a framework around which an example of faith may be passed along to the next generation. It is not limited to a "Teacher/Tell" relationship, where a story may be heard and forgotten in quick succession. By fully engaging in the experience and having that connection enhanced by a tangible sensory element, the potential of having that story remembered is greatly enhanced.

Throughout the Season of Advent an Advent Wreath is given a place of importance in our churches. It is, perhaps, an expectation that we would hope to find the Wreath in

that setting in the days leading up to the Christmas Season. Do you have one in your own home? Being creative with an Advent Wreath and ensuring that everyone has a part to play in lighting the Wreath throughout the Advent Season builds a sense of how the marking of time as people of faith is different from simply ticking off the days until December 25.

Advent calendars, which used to simply be found as paper products with small, perforated windows that opened up to show either Biblical scenes or Bible verses are hard to find. These days the little windows open up to reveal chocolates, jellybeans or, in some the larger collections, samples of jams, beer or scotch. Another option may be seeing each day of the Season

of Advent as a time to add to a collection of food which you may gift to your local food bank or generating some

other kind of meaningful act of generosity which will make a difference in the lives of others.

There are a number of congregations and individual clergy for whom the Feast Day of Saint Andrew on November 30, holds great significance. As a patron saint of a church or a day marking an Ordination anniversary, the white "X", of Saint Andrew's martyrdom is a familiar sign. While he worked as a fisherman, Andrew responded to the call of Jesus, who simply said, "Follow Me".

To celebrate his day, why not plan to enjoy a fish dinner, or some Scottish delicacy, since his link with Scotland is indelibly etched into that culture? Take the time to research the traditions which have generated that connection.

December 6 often slips by without full appreciation being given to the story of Saint Nicholas. This very real-life person has a story which is connected with the traditions of caring for children, pawnbrokers, and for those who are invested in church history of the fourth century, a link with the Council of Nicaea! Gift giving as a way to celebrate the Feast of Saint Nicholas is a feature of a number of European cultures. Discover the story of Saint Nicholas and make it a part of how you celebrate his faith and example of Christian witness.

December 13 is another day which does not have a high profile. It is the Feast of Saint

Lucy, a Christian martyr, whose acts of generosity and caring for the poor identified her as a person of faith in a time when being a follower of Jesus had extreme consequences. As one whose light of faith shone brightly in a darkened world, the life story of Saint Lucia was claimed by many Scandinavian cultures. They looked to the candles lit in her honour as beacons of hope breaking through the deep dark winter night.

The Season of Advent, the Season of Christmas, the Feast Days of the Saints all enhance the month of December. As people of faith, we may choose to mark time in a way which is different than the rest of society. The date of the day will remain the same, but the significance of the day will only be experienced when we take the time to discover the stories, the history and the traditions which make each day more than simply another square on the paper calendar.

It is our story of faith, which is ours to discover, claim as our own and to share with others. It is, perhaps the gift of great meaning which is ours to share as we celebrate, not only the gift of Christmas, but also the God given gift of each and every day.

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Our inner eye: Seeing God in all things

In each human soul there exists a divine element, a kind of inner eye capable of glimpsing something of God, for there exists a deep relationship, an affinity between human and divine nature

(Gregory of Nyssa c. 335–c. 394).

As a child, I watched the local church bus driving around the community. It was a short yellow school bus with the name of the church printed on its side. It felt 'weird.'

For some reason, I have not forgotten the 'strange' feeling of watching it scuttle about picking up whomever. It was repelling. And all I can surmise is that I had no knowledge or experience of a religious community. So, I didn't trust it.

The yellow bus actually scared me a bit. We fear what we don't know. And there was a suspicion that the bus represented life-altering intentions. Which has me wondering what it is like for those, as unwitting as my younger self, noticing me driving by sporting the license



AS I SEE IT

REV. JIM INNES

plate REVD JIM (a gift from my kids). Especially while I am also wearing my clergy collar.

I came into my religious awareness in my early 20's. It was the result of experiences at Huron Church Camp. A place that I began working, not as someone in the know about God, but as someone who wanted a job. Interestingly (perhaps to me only), one of my jobs (over the following years) was driving the small school bus.

Whatever our spiritual awareness, we are attracted to all things Holy. Whether we accept them as Holy, view them as 'interesting,' or challenge them as untrustworthy, we are, nonetheless, drawn to them.

My spiritual growth occurred cautiously. I was drawn slowly and often painstakingly into spiritual truths and religious appreciations. I usually began in some manner of confusion or anxiety, or outright fear. Sometimes I became more assured, more confident, less frightened, and overwhelmed. Other times, I remained just as confused-- but the issue felt less critical. This latter result is what I am most often experiencing during these 'senior' years.

Whatever our spiritual awareness, we are attracted to all things Holy. Whether we accept them as Holy, view them as 'interesting,' or challenge them as untrustworthy, we are, nonetheless, drawn to them.

One day this past summer, while out on my boat, I had an incredibly uplifting day. On my way back to the marina, the sun lowered into a warm, increasingly brilliant, orange horizon. I sent some pics of it (and a big

fish I caught) to a friend. His response was, "you're having a blessed day, Jim."

I had not thought of that day in those terms. But, I was indeed having a blessed day! And with my friend's reminder, I was able to 'breathe in' the moment a little deeper. I am left to ask why this was not something I would naturally define in this manner.

It seems to me, our inner eye, as described in the above quote by Gregory of Nyssa, is not just an innate function of our God-created natures but also a learned function. A process that accounts for, and lets go of, many distractions.

Our ability to see God in all things, even a few things, challenges us, not in faith, but in trust. It is an exciting mystical journey that I have found myself stumbling with all my life.

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It is about the birth of a child that changed history

To misquote the popular Christmas ditty, "I'm dreaming of a full church Christmas. Just like the one's I used to know."

I'm probably not alone in this and given that you will be reading this somewhere between a week and a month after I've written it, there might be a much clearer understanding of what will happen come December 24 and 25.

With two Easters and a Christmas already deconstructed by the tentacles of the pandemic, I'm cautiously optimistic that this year's celebration of the Birth of Christ will carry a strong resemblance to what I've known in the past. I'm also much more aware that my own frame of mind will make a huge contribution to the experience of Christmas in my life. It has been so very easy during the near two year run of restrictions, limitations, shutdowns and general "grinch-hood" ushered in by COVID 19, to be immediately negative and without expectation of finding what I'm looking for.

I'm reminded of a sign in a church long ago and far away (so long ago I was in Seminary) that proclaimed every Advent that "We are an expectant people!" I've quoted that banner in many homilies as I have rallied the troops to see Christmas as more than a blur of lights, credit card bills, hangovers and stomach aches. But maybe now it is me that is off kilter in my thinking.

The Christmas I want is the one with a full church, thunderous Carols, palpable joy, and celebration in every moment.



MOSTLY ABOUT RELIGION

REV. CANON KEITH NETHERY

Christmas still happened last year. Yes the big Christmas Eve service was two clergy and someone who (with permission) slipped in after we started our Eucharistic Celebration. I made the solo journey on Christmas morning to say Morning Prayer with the cloud of saints in the quiet, but creaky confines of St. James Westminster.

As I look back on both services, I can't help but remember the silent spirituality of these intimate gatherings to mark the birth in time of the timeless Son of God. The other Christmassy things like presents and waaaaay too much dessert came off about as normal, except there were a lot fewer people at the table. Still, there was in a real sense, both the spirituality and sentimentality of Christmas. Maybe I need to hold onto a bit of that for this year?



The Christmas I want is the one with a full church, thunderous Carols, palpable joy, and celebration in every moment. I want the family celebration with the requisite Nethery dessert table piled with just slightly less than the main course. I might even be up for some mall shopping and other Christmas events that I have shunned more and more as another calendar is deposited in the recycling bin. The introvert in me is amazed that my brain is thinking about commotion and crazy numbers of people, because I want to be the curmudgeon perched atop my chair wishing that the dizzying numbers of family and friends might depart so I can have some peace.

So, you see, last year, I got what I wanted. A quiet Christmas, reduced numbers of people, intimacy in worship,

and a break from the mad, mad world of shopping. And I'm still not happy!!

As I have alluded to in this space before, in a strange way the pandemic has done us a bit of a favour. With completely different understandings of what used to be every-day, commonplace, you can count on it events; we have the opportunity to reflect anew of just what it is that we want. Or maybe we've never really known what we wanted.

Just in the time that it has taken to write this story, I already find that my mind is asking out loud if I know what I'm talking about, or what I really want?

The first thing I did was misquote a Christmas song. Have I actually misquoted my entire expectations for this Christmas? Therein lies the joy of being human. We know exactly

what we want, until we get it and then we want something different!

So, I think I will simply take what Christmas gives me this year. If the church is full and the jazz carols are boisterously drawing people to the bliss of welcoming the Christ Child, sobeit. If the celebrations are small or if I again find myself intimately praying by myself in an empty church, I will accept that as well.

What I truly want is that Advent Banner to be the truth of my Christmas, I want to be an "expectant" person.

That doesn't mean getting what I want or, on the other end of the scale, insisting on something completely new. What it means is that I am spiritually fulfilled in expecting that God will again draw me close to welcome the birth of Jesus. I should know to expect that is what Christmas is about, but sometimes I allow the distractions to creep in. I'm sure there will be presents and lights and turkey and cookies and football and snow and all the other trimmings. But when it all comes down to December 24, for me, it is about the birth of a child that changed human history. No misquote here: "Joy to the World, the Lord is come. Let earth receive the King!"

Have a blessed Christmas!

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Thank you Miss M. for the experience of the story

Books were not a big part of my growing up years and the only time I went to a library was when the "Bookmobile" came around to the elementary school once a month or so.

I can still remember going into the Bookmobile and choosing a Thornton Burgess illustrated book, and the librarian telling me that the book was below my age group. Feeling somewhat shamed, I shrugged, and still check it out. I was a terrible reader, but I loved well done illustrations.

It wasn't until Grade 10 English class that I fell in love with my first classical story in literature.

Poor Miss M..., our red haired, middle aged, single English teacher, facing a whole classroom of girls in the commercial stream. Our minds were not strongly focused on literature. However, dressed in her white blouses and tartan skirts, she boldly took on the curriculum and began to read to us the gothic tragedy



LAUREL PATTENDEN

"Wuthering Heights" by Emily Bronte.

Class after class, we would listen to this story. Class after class, I fell more in love with this story. Or maybe the experience of the story. Such a treat to listen to a superb reader. It was a true immersion for me, a below average reader, into the world of literature. Absolutely mesmerizing!

My sweet memory of this time was the pure freedom to just listen. To experience a story of that level took me into a whole, new depth of enjoying a story. We didn't have to dissect the story until the end. At this time, I can't actually remember any dissecting but it was an English class so there must have been! Forget about the Cole's Notes! I just remember the story. The experience.



This Christmas, let us be in the cold with the shepherds, flying in the heavens with the angels, peering into the manger in the dark night. Let us ride our camels to visit the baby.

This time of year, we are all focused on another story. This story, too, is best listened to, read out loud to ourselves or others.

We rarely read the story of the birth of Jesus all in one sitting. We tend to read or hear parts every Sunday and then listen to explanations of the scripture reading.

Sometimes these explanations enhance the story but sometimes I wonder if they detract from experiencing the story. I understand the

need and place for discussing scripture. Yet, I also feel it's a detraction from the wonder of the Christmas story.

When you first heard this story as a child, did it matter that you didn't know the significance of the Old Testament prophecies? Did it cause you to debate the reason why Mary went to visit Elizabeth? As a child, did you stop and research the fact of a Roman census during the time frame of the story? Were we worried about historical fact? Did

we not think of the Magi as mysterious, sparkling visitors from the east not caring how many?

I wish Miss M... was still here to read to me. Wouldn't it be nice to hear her read the Christmas story from start to finish? To hear the wonder of it and take it into our hearts. Forgetting the Cole's Notes. Forgetting all those little study notes at the bottom of the pages in our Bibles.

Bonaventure wrote "To know much and taste nothing--of what use is that?" This Christmas, let us be in the cold with the shepherds, flying in the heavens with the angels, peering into the manger in the dark night. Let us ride our camels to visit the baby.

The majesty and reverence of this story is still open to us. There is only one of its kind. Are you open for the experience? It will be absolutely mesmerizing!

Laurel is retired and likes to spend her time in her art studio.