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HURON CHURCH NEWS

ANGLICAN DIOCESE OF HURON • Huron Church News is a section of the Anglican Journal • JANUARY 2022

In God's presence, night and day: new deacons ordained



Photo: M.J. Idzerda/Huron Church News

On November 30, the Anglican Church of Canada marked the 45th anniversary of the ordination of women.
On that same day in 2021, Bishop of Huron, Rt. Rev. Tod Townshend ordained seven new deacons.
The service of ordination took place at St. Paul's Cathedral in London, Ontario.
The newly ordained enter their service in a time when significant changes to church ministries are being implemented in the Diocese of Huron.

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Anglican Foundation of Canada: Say Yes! to Kids grants go to eight projects in Huron

By Diane Dance

In the Anglican Church of Canada, where the pace of change is known to be a little on the slow side, it's rare to see the beginning, middle, and end of a new initiative all within the same calendar year. But that's what happened in 2021 when I was introduced to the Anglican Foundation of Canada's (AFC) Say Yes! to Kids campaign and Request for Proposals (RFP).

This past winter, as AFC's representative for the Diocese of Huron, I was briefed on the campaign plan and invited to do my part to make an ambitious investment in funding youth-focused ministry and outreach a success. And what a success it has been!

This past November, AFC's Board of Directors approved close to \$650,000 in grants and bursaries to 110 applicants—and an incredible \$468,000 of that was owing to the Say Yes! to Kids RFP. It is the largest one-time investment in youth-focused ministry the Canadian church has seen and touches many important spiritual and social impact zones: faith formation, resilience and



mental health, food security, enrichment in arts, education, and outdoor activities and more. Here in the Diocese of Huron, eight projects were awarded Say Yes! to Kids grants for a total of more than \$28,000 in funding.

From my initial briefing on Say Yes! to Kids, to the wonderful ending that was AFC's Grant Awards Celebration in our diocese, there has been a lot of hard work. Not a week has gone by where Terry and I haven't had something to do: advising on communications plans in the winter, campaigning for kids in the spring, encouraging ministry leaders to apply for funds throughout the summer, and reviewing some of the more than 80 applications that came in during the fall as members of the RFP Committee.

After a blizzard of activity here we are, back to winter again, in the still and quiet of Advent, reflecting on a year devoted to what some have described as the birth of a youth-focused movement within the church. I hope that is true.

There are challenges ahead, no doubt, especially for grant recipients. Many have received seed funding for pilot projects, and must turn their attention to the hard work of launching new initiatives in a church that doesn't always embrace change. We must pray for their success. And imagine what a joy it will be to watch these projects grow: revitalizing our church, and making a difference in so many lives.

Terry and I are grateful to everyone who took up our call to action to support Say Yes! to Kids—either as a donor or as an applicant and ministry leader. We both feel so encouraged to see so many parishes who understand that the work of the church is not simply to prop up an institution, but to change lives and give hope in a hurting world.

Diane Dance is AFC representative for Huron.

AFC's 2021 Grant Awards to the Diocese of Huron: \$44,750 to 11 Recipients

Say Yes! to Kids Grants:

- St. George's Anglican Church, London, Music From Around the World: \$1,800
- St. Paul's Cathedral, London, Series of musical concerts for children: \$5,000
- St. Paul's Anglican Church, Port Dover, Community Kids Matter: educational stencils & reading materials: \$2,500
- St. Mark's Anglican Church, Brantford, Revitalizing Children's Ministry at St. Mark's: \$3,700
- St. John in the Wilderness, Bright's Grove, VBS Young Beekeeper's Program: \$3,150
- St. John the Divine, Arva, Outreach to the Medway High School Community: \$5,000
- Trivitt Memorial Anglican Church, Exeter, Community Counselling Centre of Exeter: \$5,000
- St. James Anglican Church, Cambridge, Mental Health & Resilience Building for Children and Youth: \$2,100

Other 2021 Grant Awards:

- St. George's Anglican Church, Goderich Building for Ministry: \$10,000
- Five Oaks Education Centre, Paris, Creating connections through access to reliable wireless: \$5,000
- Mr. Brendon Bedford, Bursary Recipient



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Diocesan governance and leadership update

Grace and peace to you as we celebrate the seasons of Christmas and Epiphany!

An update on proposed changes to Diocesan Governance and Leadership:

With the coming retirement of the Secretary-Treasurer of the Diocese, Canon Paul Rathbone, and with some significant leadership shifts in the work of the Archdeacons, there is a need and opportunity to review the structures and practices of these very important ministries.

Therefore, two processes are simultaneously underway. First, the process of finding new leadership for Administration and Finance (a new Secretary-Treasurer) has begun and we hope to have a person in place by March 2022 to begin work on this transition. Second, the process of renewing the work of leadership in Archdeaconries is also underway. On December 10, 2021, I presented the Diocesan Council with a way forward for the ministry of Archdeacons.

Archdeacons are clergy who are called and authorized by the



**BISHOP
TODD
TOWNSHEND**

Bishop to share in the Bishop's ministry of episcopate (oversight) and to support the parishes and deaneries of the Diocese. For many years the Bishop of Huron also worked with one or two Suffragan Bishops who shared in episcopal ministry. For more than five years, there has only been one Bishop and the workload of the Archdeacons (among others) has increased considerably. We have also let go of a central "Director of Mission and Ministry" position over these years. As a result, the cost savings in the Diocesan offices has been significant but there is growing concern that, with these reductions, the Diocese cannot be sustainably served and led in the way it deserves and expects.

Therefore, I have proposed a reorganization of the way we commission and support Archdeacons. We will spend

the months of January and February refining the details of this proposal through a consultation process and Diocesan Council will help me come to a decision at our February 26, 2022 meeting. Here are the key points of the proposal:

We would move from seven (7) "Territorial Archdeacons" and Archdeaconries (areas) to three (3).

We would resource each of these three Territorial Archdeacons with \$40,000 from Diocesan funds in order to provide her/him with clerical or other support (in addition to the stipendiary resources currently provided by the Archdeacon's parish).

Each Archdeacon would spend half of her/his time doing archdeaconry work and the other half would continue to be work in her/his parish.

Archdeacons would make approximately twenty (20) Sunday visits per year to parishes in the area to worship with them, to support the local ministry team, and to better know, serve, and develop those communities.

Archdeacons would continue to work closely with the Bishop

who would also continue to visit and oversee all areas of the diocese on Sundays and at other times.

The "non-territorial" Archdeacons would continue in their roles without change.

This arrangement would be initially for a period of three years with a thorough assessment after two years. At that time, the Bishop and Diocesan Council (or Synod) could make appropriate changes or continue.

The cost for the first three years would not appear in the annual Diocesan budget but would come from unrestricted funds that have been realized through the sale of church buildings. (These resources would NOT come from the Huron Development Fund. According to Canon 12. H. 4. c, 50% of each sale is deposited in this capital fund and 50% is deposited into the Huron Development Fund).

Please continue to hold your parish and your diocese in prayer as we regroup and plan for the future that the Holy Spirit of God wills for us!

+ Todd

Prayer: The anchor in times of chaos

By Sharon Frank

Wishing everyone a blessed 2022 full of wonder and expectations!

As we enter this new year, we must be mindful that COVID19 is a moving target. In some places numbers go down and there is heard a collective sigh of relief, while in other places numbers soar and fear permeates.

No matter the numbers we must always remember that each number is a person, a human being, a global citizen, a child of God. Throughout the roller coaster ride of fluctuating covid numbers we must be consistent in our practice and in our need for prayer.

ANGLICAN FELLOWSHIP OF PRAYER

The consistency of prayer can be our anchor as we weather the chaos of a global pandemic. When things seem improved, we are encouraged to offer Thanks to the Divine Presence in our lives. When things are in decline then we can ask for strength and resilience, to face the challenges.

Prayers can offer new energy for all who face the ever-evolving ways of life; impacting those we know and love, our

neighbours near and far, and ourselves.

As Christians we must never lose sight of the fact that we are never alone, for Creator will always accompany us on the journey of life, in the good times and the not so good times.

Perhaps 2022 will bring a new normal, and a new way of communicating and being in relationship with our community and with the Eternal



Spirit, Mother and Father of us all. Prayer in all different ways can provide an opportunity to talk and to listen, to remember what was, to look at what is, to become inspired for what can be. Perhaps, opening the door to be part of the process in creating an exciting way forward.

O Great and loving Holy One, give all who read this article a new and better way to be in relationship with you and with all world citizens. Give us all the wear-with-all to work and advocate for a new and improved normal, a way to manage, to live and to flourish in 2022 and beyond. Amen.

Sharon Frank, Lay Member
AFP Huron Executive.

They cannot enter the healing waters, but we can serve

Final reflection on the efforts of a team at St. John the Evangelist, Leamington to help the homeless in their community

By Rev. Andrew Wilson

In “the world’s favourite musical, Les Miz,” there are scenes that try to change our view and understanding of the poor. We cry for Fantine, but do we really feel for Jean Valjean when he steals the sacred candlesticks from the church? A sinner unfit to be welcomed.

That is the state of homeless people, there is literally no where for them. Imagine having no place at the inn; imagine being asked to move even from behind a garbage bin.

Some readers may be asking of our experience: “Why would you allow the homeless to stay at your church?” There are two extremes to this question: it is God’s grace and mercy that commands us; they will not change, do not waste energy, or put anyone in danger.

Both answers may be correct, but I practice the former as a follower of Jesus who said give to all who ask, and acknowledge the reality of the latter.

Providing stability

What is right? I say, giving people a chance: seven times seventy chances.

Saying “no” is difficult, with or without resources, when someone comes to you soaking wet with literally nowhere to go. But why not send them to where all the resources are?

I invite you to investigate what is actually available, and to remember the sense of home and knowing where you are if you need to move far. If you had only the clothes on your back and a bag, where would you wish me to send you as a veritable refugee? How far is too far? Across town? Across the province?

The answer to why we allowed them to stay was practical – stability. We were able to have the systems that are in place locate them, easily and regularly. Things such as housing workers, OW, CMHA, intake programs and so on. Acronyms galore for services available.



**“It is good for us to be here”:
If you had only the clothes on your back and a bag...**

We arranged for daily food – they could be found in the same place. Knowing they were there, neighbours brought blankets or food or money, several even offered to do their laundry! Volunteers were able to see them, and bring them food and blankets and make other offers – the best being dignity and respect as a neighbour and human being. I will add that when we decided to ‘shut down,’ I received calls from four different departments in the space of two hours looking for people. Sadly, I could not tell them where to locate any of them.

A tight little interdependent community

The hardest learning was the depths people will go to meet their needs.

Tents are not weatherproof, so they were always cold, soaking wet, and hungry – drugs make that all that pain go away. They could present well one moment, and use the next. They would ask for everything and accept anything. And all of it remains mostly ruined behind them once they move. For they could carry only so much. (That is why garbage was a never-ending issue, as were toilets which we could offer only during the day.)

And while some could not ever hit their cup of coffee with sugar without making a huge mess, others raked the lawn

and tidied up because, “this is a church, what will the neighbours think?”

And within this, the strangest discovery was the predation by other homeless and low-level drug dealers that went on.

There was jealousy if someone else had more, and as I learned, demands for equality: where is my meal, why do they get one and not me, they got \$20 and I didn’t.

They had formed a tight little interdependent community, and that little community was part of a larger interdependent community. However, even as the homeless pilfered as they always do, others came in and robbed even them – cutting the tents, violating personal space and security.

It should be said: I never feared for my life or church property, but neither did I leave anything to chance. Kindness and being careful and sensible go hand-in-hand, you need to weed the forest that is their story. Many, many relationships have been destroyed by their past and ongoing behaviour. Many calls on my part led to more tears from those who have suffered along with their homeless loved ones, they suffered their abuse and pain.

“Do you want to be made well?”

The lament were the tears of people crying, “Why will

nobody help me?” I hope what I wrote above makes it clear that even if you find that our systems are underfunded and broken, they still exist, and many people offer all kinds of help. But this is their truth because they are trapped in their won darkness.

Reflecting Biblically, I take a snippet from John 5:

“When Jesus saw him lying there and knew that he had been there a long time, he said to him, ‘Do you want to be made well?’ The sick man answered him, ‘Sir, I have no one to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up; and while I am making my way, someone else steps down ahead of me.’”

They have the power to lie, cheat and steal to meet their basic needs, and yet they cannot show up to a meeting intended to fix their financial situation. They miss court dates, doctor appointments, mental health calls...

One person climbed into a car just as the housing worker arrived to see them because it was more important to get to the city to pick up a cheque than to be housed. No judgement on my part, they did not make the choice I would make as I sit in my heated house, their situation is quite unimaginable on my part. Addiction owned this person, pain and terror of detox was settling in that day.

What did Jesus teach us? First and foremost – forgiveness.

Forgiveness leads to healing – but do not forget the seven-times-seventy on our part. Some resources do not have the time or money to keep chasing people, so they would close the file, which is regrettable but understandable, whereas we were able to offer them kindness every day.

People lay by the pool but cannot get in. Jesus can and does heal, but there is a certain amount of participation required – the man of Beth-zatha waited for thirty-eight years.

To hear the lament and answer it in Jesus’ name

We spent three months with various people, and they went back to moving from place to place, hidden, faceless. The group ended up at an industrial park, out of sight and mind, one would have thought. But no, they were moved on within a week. And the cycle continues. They cannot enter the pool.

These are very complex issues that require a ‘long game’ mentality. We are dealing with people who mostly live a different truth than we do, and no amount of honesty or direction or even love can change that in a short time.

When a person who OD’d three times in a week tells you how they were OK, that the Narcan was the real problem and how they have cut down their use – that is their reality and their truth, which was met with love.

They cannot enter the healing waters, but we can serve. We all can serve.

We can serve directly and indirectly. We have received gifts of prayer, clothing, food, letters, and cheques. “And they held all things in common,” a word from Acts. I have also learned that people need to speak, to tell their story, to be heard, to exist and to be valid. All those at the edges are also children of God. I wholly believe we, the Anglican Church, are called to live out that part of the Gospel, to hear the lament and answer it in Jesus’ name.

Jean Valjean finds both forgiveness for stealing the candlesticks, but the Bishop declares them a gift: “You must use this precious silver to become an honest man, God has raised you out of darkness, I have saved your soul for God.” Ah, Mr. Hugo, you understand that Jesus says give to everyone who asks.

Rev. Andrew Wilson served as the rector of St. John the Evangelist, Leamington.

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'Delight yourself in the Lord our God'



**St. Paul's Cathedral,
London, Ontario.
Bishop Todd Townshend
with Huron's new deacons
at the Service of Ordination
on November 30, 2021
(from left to right):
Craig Love
Ann Webber
Gilles Haché
Stephanie Donaldson
Jean Doyle
Brandon Bedford
Carol McCurdy**

Today my heart is filled with joy and overflowed with peace.

Here I am, a few hours from my diaconal ordination. After 32 years of a mysterious journey, God's plan for me and for His Church has become a journey of mission.

There were moments when it was difficult to seize the light and see the path. But hope has always been there to light my way – and alleluia, the birth of a vocation to serve and to spread the words of Gospel sprang from the tomb. And here I am, filled with that hope and open to those words, in the very heart of the church in which we are one body.

I am originally from Rivière-du-Portage, New Brunswick, born into a family of 17 children, humble parents

who transmitted the Christian faith to us with conviction and certainty.

When I review my parents' effort to give us a Christian education – to make us a large Christian family – I think about the meaning of the message of the letter to the Corinthians (15,1-8). They shaped our hearts, they gave us faith in Jesus Christ. They laid the path – they were the path – that led to this moment: they passed on to me the faith that they had received from their parents.

Today a new mission as deacon opens before me, with new responsibilities and new challenges. As a deacon, I am called to be fruitful in the transmission of the faith and the proclamation of the Good News. Yes, quite a challenge; a whole new responsibility

and a whole new experience of faith. A challenge not only personal, but also the challenge of the whole Church, of our diocese, and of all the Christian churches!

On November 30, the Anglican Church of Canada marks a major anniversary in the life of the Church – forty-five years since the first women were ordained deacons and priests.

An extraordinary event, yes, but an event under the influence of the Holy Spirit who blows on his Church. This event in itself was a challenge of faith, a challenge of transmission of the faith, and of opening of our hearts to form only one body and one spirit in the One who animates us in our mission and our desire to transmit, in our turn, faith by proclaiming the Gospel.

On this day, the Church also celebrates the feast of St. Andrew.

What a great model of faith and evangelical value for us new deacons! He was one of the first apostles of Jesus, and the one who reminds us that our faith calls for a dialogue, especially at the ecumenical level. St. Andrew the apostle turned to the East, to the primate of the patriarchs of Constantinople. I pray with confidence that he will help me to walk together with all of you with whom I am called to build a Church of justice, a Church of hope, a Church where we learn together to live and grow, a Church of diversity, and a Church that becomes new every day by our desire to make known the roots of our faith.

Our human efforts to reach God are often tortuous, but

He always finds His way. Our heart and our conscience – this is the path through which God speaks. This is where He manifested his presence in me, and I can only thank Him for all the good He does for me.

I pray that I will be with you all a model of unity in diversity through our way of living, through our belonging to Christ in Church.

May the Spirit inspire me and make my ministry fruitful in this Church that I love.

"Delight yourself in the LORD your God and he will give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the LORD, trust in him and he will do this."

(Psalm 37: 4-5)

Hallelujah, Hallelujah!!!

Rev. Gilles Haché



Enveloped by love of the Divine...

Standing in the procession line in the narthex, listening to the organ music, seeing my family members in their pews, and noticing how many people had come together to witness the ordination my peers and me, time stood still.

My heart was filled with joy to see so many of God's children in one place, and I felt the love and strength of those who had gone before me. I shed tears of gratitude for God's grace that had brought me into that time and space. And, in that moment of connection I was in a thin place, enveloped by love of the Divine and all who were present, and watching via live stream. I felt a deep, penetrating peace that I was where I was supposed to be. The Holy Spirit sure works in mysterious ways!

There are so many moments during my ordination that are precious and sealed in my heart, and transformed me that night. I've been wondering how many lives were touched and changed by Christ's love that evening through their own connections with anyone engaged in any way with the service?

The Presentation, Examination and Prayer of Consecration stand out right now in my memory. The Presenters' voices of solidarity, the Examination responses from the Ordinands was unified "I do, I will, Amen!", and when Bishop Todd's Prayer of Consecration and laying on of hands happened, the sacredness of that act overwhelmed me and I had to blink away my tears. I'm still feeling the awe of that moment. Each moment of the Ordination was precious for me, even my anxious moment of remembering not to trip on my alb!

Being ordained into the Diaconate is the beginning of new life for me; inspirational, hope-filled, and a humbling privilege. Without the love of my husband, daughter, sons, chosen family, parishioners, neighbours, friends, and many people God put on my path along the way, I wouldn't be shaped into who I am. I am blessed to serve alongside my siblings in Christ as Deacons.

Thank you to all the folks involved who tirelessly crafted a joyous and safe service. To coin a phrase "it takes a village". We are all the unique and beautiful threads of servanthood in the family tapestry that God is creating. May God bless each one of you and yours this Advent season.

Rev. Carol McCurdy



Saying "I do" to God and to God's Church

*"I am in God's presence night and day
And he never turns his face away."*

These words of William Blake echoed through my mind this past weekend as I was walking down a stairwell on retreat at Mount Carmel monastery. The simple rhyme binds an outrageous statement which (as bold as it sounds) rings true to those with ears to hear.

Moses himself saw God's backside only once, yet here Blake sets in verse what we who devote our lives to Jesus believe and profess to be true: God is with us (not against us), not just once in a while but always. That is the gospel I live and breathe, the good news that opened my ears to hear God's call.

Two nights and three days at Mount Carmel offered a joyful opportunity to step back from things to reflect on some of the people and experiences that have led me to this happy point in my life. I took my share of restorative sleep on retreat, but it was a lot more than a good rest and some overdue quiet and solitude that helped me to prepare for my ordination to the diaconate.

The six other ordinands and two clergy who accompanied us played a crucial part, reminding me of why I feel so confident proclaiming Christ's Reign: I am in God's presence night and day, and God never turns God's face away.

In this way, the retreat was a foretaste of what I experienced during the ordination service, on the evening of the Feast of St. Andrew, when the seven of us each said "I do" to God and to God's Church: "I do commit myself to this trust and responsibility."

It felt very good to be shoulder to shoulder with the six other ordinands, and to know that for every person present at the ordination there were at least ten more praying for us elsewhere.

May God help us all to continue serving Christ in faith!

Rev. Craig Love

I was no longer the same person I was before the service

Having been asked to pen a few paragraphs on my reflections on the Service of Ordination that took place the past Tuesday on The Feast of St. Andrew, the entire process and the service itself, I struggle to put down words that adequately express my feelings.

As one who was ordained to the Sacred Order of the Diaconate I found the service to be one of deep meaning and spirituality.

I have attended many ordinations and am very familiar with the liturgy but for me personally any thoughts and feelings I have had in the past changed when I was one of the ordinands. It all took on a new and different meaning, I was going to be asked to make vows that would forever change my life. I was no longer a spectator. It was profound.

When Bishop Todd placed his hands on my head I felt the Holy Spirit leave his hands and enter my head

and go through my body. It was like nothing I have ever felt before, no lightning bolts or claps of thunder, just something beyond my understanding moving through my body. It became resident in my body and soul.

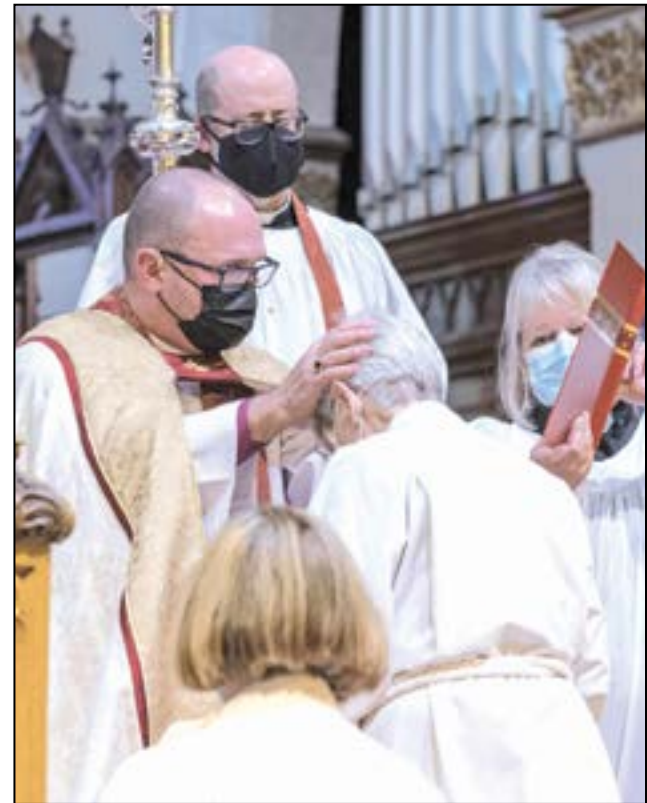
I was no longer the same person I was before the service.

Speaking of the service, it was beautiful and had many elements of pre-COVID ordinations. There was a choir, we processed up the aisle behind a crucifer having entered through the great west doors. The bishop celebrated at the high altar, all things that COVID had shut down, We were using God's house as it had been intended to be used, being blessed by the sheer glory and majesty of that most Holy place. Maybe that shouldn't be important, but for me it was.

Those who planned the service did an epic job, to be able to give us an incredibly powerful and extremely deep and emotional service while doing so with COVID protocols in place was a Herculean task. I cried tears of joy. Yes, there was an element of terror but as the light overcomes the darkness the joy overcame any terror.

I have been changed forever and am ready and willing to follow God's call and go where He sends me.

Rev. Stephanie Donaldson



A solemn, lovely and spirit filled evening

On the weekend prior to our Ordination the ordinands all attended a retreat at the Carmelite Monastery in Niagara Falls.

It is a beautiful spot and, as someone stated, the building felt saturated with prayer. We did not all know one another prior to this gathering, so it was a lovely opportunity to meet and spend some time together before the Ordination Service on Tuesday evening.

I am especially grateful to Ven. Nancy Adams and Rev. Mary Farmer for their leadership that weekend. The time spent on retreat provided us with a great opportunity to pray and reflect, rest and read, before our ordination.

The service was a solemn, lovely and spirit filled evening, touched with both grace and challenge. The church is at a true crossroads as Rev. Canon Tom Patterson stated in his homily. It is, indeed, an interesting time to be ordained as we move to new models of church, wading into new and often fractured times.

I am grateful to the people of St. Michael and All Angels Church, Bishop Todd, my friends and family for the ongoing support and prayers over the years and am immensely touched to now be ordained into the Diaconate. It is a true blessing and I look forward to continuing ministry at St. Michaels.

As we move through Advent my hope is that in our wondering and waiting for the Messiah we are touched by the grace of God and that we share that grace with others. Many thanks for this opportunity. Be well, and take good care of one another.

Rev. Jean Doyle

Meet the new members of Huron Church House team



Doreen Kyomugisha, Financial Assistant

We are pleased to welcome Doreen Kyomugisha to the Church House team!

Doreen was assisting Administration and Finance department on a part-time contract as we worked to catch up on the backlog created in the challenges of a pandemic reality, as well as the work involved with the Can-

ada Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS).

We are pleased to announce she has become a permanent member of Church House, with primary focus on Trust Accounting, while continuing to support other areas of the finance department.

Doreen has a degree in Business Administration – Finance

and Accounting, as well as years of experience working in the field.

Her skills and experience are an asset to our daily operations and support of the parishes in the diocese.

Doreen, our Financial Assistant can be reached at extension 241 or by email at financial@huron.anglican.ca

Helen Booth, Interim Director

The diocese is pleased to share that Helen Booth is continuing in her role as an Interim Director.

Helen has been working closely with the administration and finance staff to implement processes and build church relationships.

We appreciate the wealth of knowledge and experience in project management she brings to her role.

Helen continues as a warden at St Mark's Church, London and is a proud new granny for a second time with the family's newest addition.

Helen can be reached at extension 222 or by email at hbooth@huron.anglican.ca

*Jennifer McLaughlin,
Diocesan Human Resources
Officer*

*Photo: Doreen Kyomugisha
(sitting) and Helen Booth*

PASTORAL PROGRESSIONS

Appointments

Bishop Bishop Townshend appointed The Reverend Canon Vicars Hodge as the Associate Priest (part-time) at Trinity, Sarnia, effective November 1, 2021.

Ordination

On Tuesday, November 30th, the Feast of St. Andrew, the following people were ordained Deacons by Bishop Townshend at the Cathedral Church of St. Paul in London:

- The Rev. Brendon Bedford, Deacon Assistant, Holy Saviour, Waterloo
- The Rev. Stephanie Donaldson, Deacon with Special Responsibility for Outreach, St. James', Stratford
- The Rev. Jean Doyle, Deacon Assistant, St. Michael and All Angels, London
- The Rev. Gilles Hache, Deacon Assistant, Christ Church, Meaford
- The Rev. Dr. Craig Love, Deacon Assistant, St. George's of Forest Hill, Kitchener
- The Rev. Carol McCurdy, Deacon Assistant, St. George's, Owen Sound
- The Rev. Ann Webber, Deacon Assistant, St. Michael and All Angels, London

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 Memorial 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 Townshend accepted the wish of the Reverend Canon Dr. Lorne Mitchell to retire as the rector of St. James', Stratford, effective July 1, 2022.

Canon Lorne was ordained a deacon on May 22, 1988 in the Diocese of Ontario and priested in March of 1989. He came on the strength of Huron in 1994 and served the parishes of St. John the Evangelist, Kitchener and St. James', Stratford. Canon Lorne served on the Postulancy Board, the Doctrine and Worship Committee and as the Archdeacon of Huron/Perth. He was named to the Cathedral Chapter of Canons in 2010.

Miscellaneous

The Reverend Andrew Wilson concluded his ministry as the Rector of St. John's, Leamington on November 21st. Andrew remains a priest in good standing.

Rest In Peace

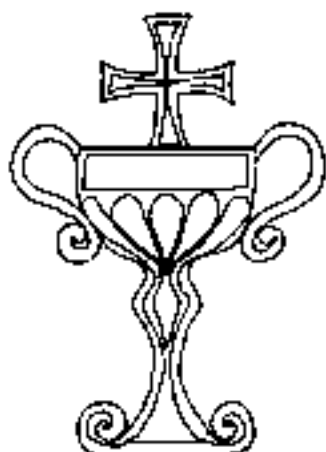
Ms. Cheryl Yako died on Friday, November 19th, survived by her daughters Hana and Lillian, son-in-law Levi and grandson Hudson. Cheryl was a faithful member of Christ Church, Amherstburg serving God in all aspects of church

life, most recently as Warden and Chair of the Selection Committee. In the Deanery of Essex she has been a long time member of the Deanery Executive and Deanery Council, Co-chair of the Bishop's Friends Committee and a tireless worker for the Essex Deanery Golf Tournament. Funeral arrangements are not yet complete. May Cheryl Rest in peace and rise in glory.

Mrs. Margaret Shaw, a retired Church House employee, died on November 10. Margaret served as the bishop's secretary, retiring in 1997. May Margaret rest in peace and rise in glory.

Mr. Keith Wilson, widower of the Reverend Canon France Ouimet-Wilson, is survived by their sons Eric and David and families. May Keith rest in peace and rise in glory.

Beryl May Henly passed away peacefully, on October 30, 2021, at the age of 90. Predeceased by her dear husband, The Rev'd Roy Henly (2020). May she rest in peace and rise in glory.



Announcing our return to overnight programs for 2022

After two long summers we are so looking forward to gathering again. How we have missed everyone!

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We need action heroes, not passive zeroes

The issues of discrimination, inequality, violence, and marginalization should be the call for all of us, as Anglicans, to stand up and to take action.

By Sydney Brouillard-Coyle

We are once again entering a time of New Year's Resolutions - things that we commit to doing that will last approximately two weeks before we give up and revert back to our old habits.

We say that we will do better - take care of ourselves, eat healthier, volunteer in our community, commit to more spiritual practices - but the actual follow through rarely happens.

But we cannot afford to continue to be complacent, to be neutral, to stick with the "old" ways because that's what makes us more comfortable. If the pandemic has (hopefully) taught us anything, it's that we must be willing to challenge the status quo, to look for new ways of engaging with society and with each other, and to change our habits to better love our neighbours.

In 2021, we have seen the pandemic continue to destroy families, communities, and vulnerable populations, particularly when considering the inequitable distribution of vaccinations.



Sydney Brouillard-Coyle

We cannot be neutral. We cannot be passive. We cannot make a resolution and fail to follow through.

We have seen the effects of climate change becoming more and more apparent each passing day.

The discovery of the bodies of many Indigenous children on former residential school sites has pushed us to think deeper about our own roles in perpetuating colonial and white supremacist practices.

Over 460 transgender and gender-diverse people have died due to systemic and interpersonal transphobia worldwide.

Rates of mental illness, addiction, and suicide attempts have skyrocketed like never before, and the housing and poverty crisis continue to be exacerbated due to unsafe working con-

ditions, minimum wage that does not equal living wage, and a lack of affordable housing.

These issues of discrimination, inequality, violence, and marginalization should be the call for all of us, as Anglicans, to stand up and to take action.

Through the Marks of Mission, we have committed to: proclaiming the Good News of the Kingdom; teaching, baptizing, and nurturing new believers; responding to human need with loving service; seeking to transform unjust structures of society, challenging violence of every kind, and pursuing peace and reconciliation; and striving to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustaining and renewing the life of the Earth. Each of these Marks provides a unique way for the Holy Spirit to guide our faith, our teaching, and our advocacy.

We cannot be neutral. We cannot be passive. We cannot make a resolution and fail to follow through. I found a particularly profound quote while browsing social media that stated: "We need action heroes, not passive zeroes".

What does it look like for us to be action heroes? To move

away from complacency in the face of injustice? To embrace every child of God in the fullness they were created to be? To call out injustice, dismantle systemic discrimination, and create an equitable society for all? How do we walk with Jesus as action heroes for social justice?

As we move into 2021, let us pray that we can show justice through our radical diversity and inclusion, following in the footsteps that Jesus left behind.

We pray that God's presence remains known among each and every one of us as we seek to transform our world to reflect the image of God, rather than the image of what we want.

We pray that each of us, and our church, is led away from the temptation to be complicit in the face of injustice - and instead, that we are given the courage to learn how to be true allies to all of God's beloved children. Amen.

Sydney Brouillard-Coyle (*ney/nem/nir*) is co-chair of Proud Anglicans of Huron and music director at St. Paul's Anglican Church.

"Nothing ventured, nothing gained": Major change needs to happen

By Kyle Gascho

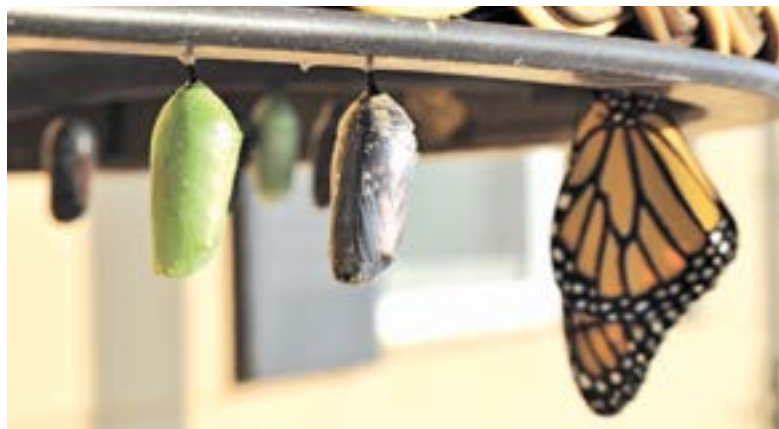
"For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven" ...

These are the first words of Ecclesiastes 3. I'm not sure about you, but the first thing that comes to mind upon reading this first sentence is change.

Yes, I said it! Change is the thing most of us in Church land (and even beyond) dread. The entire world has gone through significant change over the past two years.

As we delve further into the passage from Ecclesiastes 3, we read that there is "a time to embrace". We need to embrace the changes happening all around us. Societal change, environmental change, technological change, etc., are all types of change we see happening around us in everyday life. Embrace them!

Our Church has so much to offer, and maintaining the status quo is not going to help us keep the doors open. Shake things up and try new things! Host a Super Bowl party or weekly hockey night in Canada showings in your parish hall! Try out your first ever online auction!



As the famous proverb says, "nothing ventured, nothing gained"! If you try something new and it fails, you are no further ahead than when you first started. My good friend says he's going to throw a geriatric dance party at St. James, and I'm going to hold him to that!

Ecclesiastes 3 states that there is "a time to break down, and a time to build up". Without change there can't be growth, and without growth leaves death.

How do we grow when the Anglican Church of Canada is experiencing declining membership? How do we reverse this trend?

In his doctoral thesis "Bucking the Trend: A Study of the Local Theologies Contributing to Numerically Growing Anglican Congregations in the

dioceses of Huron and Toronto", Rev. Dr. Grayhame Bowcott highlights numerous congregations that are "bucking the trend" and have actually seen growth in past years.

What are these congregations doing differently to see an increase in average attendance?

It has become evident that in order to stay relevant in our communities, major change needs to happen.

Gone are the days that we can rely on traditional ways to keeping our doors open. It's time to think outside the box and to shift our focus outward rather than inward.

Kyle Gascho is the support assistant at Huron Church House and Verger at St. James', Stratford.

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BEST WISHES FOR A WONDERFUL CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR

A virgin birth: Gender fluidity in nature

By Caroline N. Sharp

As a nature nut and environmental enthusiast, but especially as a farmer, I've realized that God has so much to teach us through Creation.

This past year, God has had a lot to teach me about gender in nature. I have had a flock of ducks for two years now.

Last year I started with 22. I bought 20 female ducks for egg production and the farmer I bought them from threw in two extra that happened to get caught alongside the others.

One of the extras had a short neck whom we affectionately named Tiny Tina. The other, however, was a male that my husband named Bruce (after Bruce Springsteen). But, last year I didn't learn nearly as much as I did this year despite starting off with 100 female ducks.

This past summer one of my summer co-op students noticed that one of our Khaki Campbell ducks had orange feet instead of the usual brown. She had been dubbed Willow (very few of them actually get named because they mostly look the same).

About halfway through the summer the ducks began to molt, and I didn't think much of it, at least until the feather at the tip of Willow's tail began to curl (generally a sign of being male) and a male colour pattern began to form. I put a

SOCIAL AND ECOLOGICAL JUSTICE



Willow/Willie the Khaki Campbell duck that changed gender. Only the males tend to have orange feet.

query out to the duck groups I belong to on Facebook. At first I thought maybe the nice fellow who sold them to me pulled a fast one on me but shortly an answer came. Female ducks can become male ducks! It's true!

You see, with humans a female has two of the same chromosomes (XX) while a

male has two different chromosomes (XY). With ducks this is reversed (with different letters) and so while one ovary produces one letter, the other ovary makes the other. If something happens (through disease or genetics) to the ovary producing female hormones, only the male hormone is produced and thus the female becomes male.

We are all part of one body, so for a healthy mind, body, and soul we are required to love ourselves and others as a whole picture.

Through this gender switch, Willow became Willie. He adopted a small harem and enjoyed every moment of chasing the female ducks around all summer. I even found a fertilized egg, so the metamorphosis was complete. But then came autumn and poor Willie had to endure some more adjustments.

God's design is flawless - remember this. Male ducks lose their male body part over the winter - sort of. This happens for a reason. If Willie had it his way, he would continue to be fruitful and multiply all year through but because ducklings wouldn't survive being born in the winter (without human intervention), God designed male ducks in a way that doesn't allow them to procreate during this brutal season. How cool is God's Creation!?!

This gender fluidity isn't specific to ducks either. Some creatures are able to change gender for whatever reason and some are able to procreate without a partner!

Take frogs for example: certain breeds of frogs can change gender if there are too many females - some become male. Sharks, starfish, and certain lizards and insects don't need a partner to make babies -

this is called parthenogenesis. Although parthenogenesis explains a virgin birth, humans and mammals are not capable of this, requiring the other half of their DNA to exist. So, the virgin birth still remains a mystery and a miracle.

What is not a mystery is God's call for us to love one another no matter who they are - to see the face of Christ in everyone. If a young woman is capable of saying "yes" to bearing God's son even though life could have turned out very differently for her, then we can put in a little more effort to know all of God's people and God's Creation.

Everything is intricately linked, whether we can see it or not, as one giant tapestry. We are all part of one body, so for a healthy mind, body, and soul we are required to love ourselves and others as a whole picture.

As Beyoncé said: "Be healthy and take care of yourself, but be happy with the beautiful things that make you, you." I say, be happy with all the beautiful things that make us human. Be happy with all the beautiful people and things that God created.

Caroline Sharp is a tri-chair of SEJH.

Narrative budgets: communicating the impact of numbers on your parish

By Rev. Raymond Hodgson

The stories we tell are powerful tools to help people to hear and connect to the wonderful things that God has done and continues to do in the world.

We share these stories in many ways including hymns, readings, preaching, and stained glass because this is Good News that we want everyone to hear - and we want everyone to join in the joy and liberation that Jesus brings.

And then we talk about the \$1,400 we need to pay the hydro bill this year. And \$500 for photocopying. Let's not forget the \$23,000 for apportionment...

Looking at rows and columns of numbers on a spreadsheet can feel so disconnected from the mission and ministry which we feel called by God to join.

While spreadsheets and those who prepare them have an important role in supporting the work of the Church, there are better ways for us to



giving

communicate the impact that these numbers have on the lives of people in our parishes and communities, and how our financial gifts support the work that God is doing in the world.

A Narrative Budget is one tool by which we can reframe our financial conversations in ways that tell the story of how the parish is having an impact in the world. It doesn't replace the financial statements, but instead presents the same information in a different format

that helps us to see how ministry and mission are connected to those expenses. There's no one way to do this, and each parish is unique, but reorganizing the numbers into 4-6 categories is a good place to start.

Categories can be things like Worship, Pastoral Care, Christian Education, and Community Outreach. Some parishes like to include a category for administrative or overhead costs that are hard to divide up, while others perform more

At the end of the day, financial resources are important only in how they allow us to join in the redeeming, reconciling, and healing work that God is doing.

elaborate calculations and assign costs as appropriate. What we really want to do is help people hear and understand how our parish is joining in God's work - to tell our story.

Building expenses become about providing a safe, clean, and warm place for lonely seniors to gather to play cards and enjoy fellowship, for young people to learn and develop through Scouting and Guiding, and for the People of God to gather for worship.

Apportionment is understood to be about providing Spiritual Care for youth on university campuses and at Camp Huron, training and supporting the next generation of clergy, and helping to share the Good News in rural and remote locations in Canada's North.

The Parish Administrator is recognized for the ways in which they support worship, and outreach, and pastoral care, and Christian Education, and everything else we do as a community.

At the end of the day, financial resources are important only in how they allow us to join in the redeeming, reconciling, and healing work that God is doing. Narrative budgets are one way in which we can help people to hear, understand, and invite them to join in that work.

Rev. Dr. Raymond Hodgson is a member of the diocesan Stewardship Committee and the rector and priest-in-charge at the Church of Saint Bartholomew, Sarnia.

Happy new... things to learn!

By Rev. Canon Val Kenyon

New Year's resolutions, we've all made them, and we have all broken them.

While these kinds of experiences may leave us skeptical about the value of resolutions at New Year's or at any other time, I think that at the core of these resolutions, is a tenacious desire to be ever evolving, ever learning both as human beings and as disciples of Jesus.

This desire is a very positive Spirit-inspired one, one that deserves to be nurtured and supported.

Ongoing learning, of course, is central to what happens at EfM, where a large part of the process is designed to allow participants to engage in small-group, in-depth conversation groups as together they address the questions of how their lives are shaped and guided by their Christian faith. The timelessness of Scripture is often experienced by group members and faith moves from the realm of theory into practice.

But what is it that keeps participants coming back to this particular learning experience?

Let's hear some of the participants' reflections:



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.



▶ I'm learning to find God in the ordinary and I'm finding this deepens my understanding of all of life...

▶ I think it makes me a better Christian because my faith has become more personal...

▶ I have learned that

context is important and I can now apply that understanding to all parts of my life; it really helps me better understand my past actions as well...

▶ Every week is something new as we learn to think more about the Bible and the stories in it...

Ongoing learning is central to what happens at EfM, where a large part of the process is designed to allow participants to engage in small-group, in-depth conversation groups as together they address the questions of how their lives are shaped and guided by their Christian faith.

Congratulations to three of 2021 EfM graduates:

Terri Ellison, Gary Rose, and Tim Howes.

All smiles at a recent graduation service held at St Jude's early in November to mark all the effort and energy to complete four years of Education for Ministry. Well done!

▶ EfM challenges us to look at the Bible and Christianity differently as our preconceptions are challenged...

▶ Living my faith is an all-week endeavour. I volunteer my time for lots of different things, but EfM... I do that for me...

▶ Learning takes time, and so I keep coming back to give myself the time I need to think and to reflect...

▶ The more I read the Bible, the more I'm realizing that its message is timeless, filled with universal metaphors...

So, happy new year! My prayer for us all is that wherever we are, whatever resolutions we may or may not have made in previous years, we will continue to open ourselves to the many learning experiences all around us.

To hear more about Education for Ministry within the Diocese of Huron, and how you can be involved, please just reach out to Libi Clifford, the Diocese of Huron EfM Coordinator or myself Val Kenyon at valeriekenyon@diohuron.org.

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

Catechumenal ministry: Old wine in new wineskins?

By Rev. Lisa Wang

In the ancient Church, a "catechumen" was someone on the way to becoming a Christian.

After an extensive course of instruction and formation, catechumens were integrated into the life and mission of the Church through the sacraments of Christian initiation: baptism, confirmation, Eucharist.

Catechumenal ministries are ministries of learning inspired by the process engaged by catechumens. To put a different spin on Christ's parable, you could say these ministries are like old wine in new wineskins!

Taking for our inspiration this ancient program of formation and education, we invite all Christians to grow into a deeper life in Christ.

Why old wine? Consider for a moment the way Jesus him-



self formed his disciples.

- He invited them into relationship with him.
- He taught them who God is.
- He taught them the gospel's way of love.
- He taught them how to pray.
- He revealed to them the mysteries of the Kingdom.

The things that Jesus taught his disciples are the very same things we have learned (and are still learning) as Christians today.

• And he sent them out in mission.

The things that Jesus taught his disciples are the very same things we have learned (and are still learning) as Christians today. They're like a fine old wine. And they're not meant to be hidden away in a dusty cellar! They're meant to be shared and savoured, for they bring us life.

The things that Jesus taught us are meant to be known, prayed, lived, and celebrated each day of our lives.

Why new wineskins? While much education still takes place in traditional ways, not all learning happens in a classroom. The kind of learning we're talking about — growing

deeper in our life in Christ — happens over a lifetime, among those in different stages of their lives, and among those of different backgrounds and interests, different gifts and graces.

We all learn in different ways. Traditional ways of learning are, of course, effective and remain very important. At the same time, we also need new ways of learning that can reach everyone, no matter who or where they are.

What doesn't change are the things Jesus teaches us: the things we need to keep on learning. We need to let Jesus show us who God is, and how to follow his way of love in the

world. We need to let Jesus teach us how to pray, so that the Spirit can be at work in us and through us. We need to let Jesus meet us in word and sacrament, in symbol and song, in ritual and gesture, in one another and all creation. And we need to let Jesus send us out into the world so that he can give it his own life. We need to let Jesus reveal the Kingdom.

How are these things taught and learned in your congregation or community? How are they known, prayed, lived, and celebrated — or do they need to be, more fully and abundantly? Do you need old wine in new wineskins? Or is a lively catechumenal ministry already happening in your church, parish, or deanery?

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

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Lighting up our community relationships

Like many Anglican congregations throughout our Diocese, St. George's, The Blue Mountains has adapted to the pandemic norms of hybrid Sunday services, combining in-person worship with live streamed virtual attendance.

These innovations have allowed us to stay connected with most of our membership, yet there is one very important group within our parish family that has not "tuned in" with the same level of engagement: our young families and children.

Many of our families with unvaccinated children have expressed their hesitancy in returning to church. For some, they are concerned about the thoughts of other parishioners at having unvaccinated children sharing a worship space with our more vulnerable senior populations. Another comment from one family was that their children spend their entire week masked at school; the weekend is the one time in their routine where they take a vacation from Covid protocols. While the pandemic has been difficult on all people, I would argue that it has hit our youngest congregation members the hardest, in the sense that many have been completely cut off from church and from their faith communities at a time when our support may be needed the most.

This was the challenging reality that our Parish Council kept in mind when we began planning for this year's Christmas services. If it was unlikely that our youngest families were going to come to us for Christmas, how could we bring Christmas to them?



Clarksburg Tour of Light 2021 (from left to right): Rev. Grayhame Bowcott, Councillor Peter Bordignon, Mayor Alar Soever, Sarah Filion (Clarksburg Business Association Chair), Legion President Shawn McKinlay and Councillor Andrea Matrasovs.



GROWING BEYOND THE DOORS
REV. GRAYHAME BOWCOTT

The answer came through the contributions of parishioners who are still very much "young at heart". It was decided that St. George's would host an outdoor community Christmas event for all the young families of the neighbourhood. Our mission: enable them to feel cared for and to share the message of the Christmas story!

As I am writing article, the following details for our outdoor event have been planned for this upcoming Saturday December 11: we are preparing to welcome 250 participants (parents and children) to an

A question to consider as we transition into another year of pandemic uncertainty: How is your congregation reaching out to your local families and neighbourhood in ways that show you care?

outdoor tree lighting ceremony and carol service.

Reaching out through our community partnerships, St. George's will be offering hot chocolate and Timbits (sponsored through our local Tim Hortons).

A planning committee has arranged for 3,000 Christmas lights to illuminate a prominent spruce tree on the corner of our church grounds. Saint Nicholas will be joining us for the tree lighting ceremony (brought to life by the Mayor of the Town of the Blue Mountains, Alar Soever) with other town coun-

sellors in attendance. We have invited two local choral groups to join our St. George's choir in the leading of both sacred and secular Christmas carols, with all participants receiving their own carol book!

For the youngest participants, an outdoor theater will be constructed of hay bales and the classic Rudolf the Rednose Reindeer movie will shown. Finally, following prayers for our community, in the moment when the Christmas tree is "lit up," our planning group has arranged for a "no bang" fireworks illumination show that will be a

special surprise for our guests. Our hope for this event is to relay the message that Anglicans in our community care about our local relationships and that we are willing to reach out to find families where they are.

As we transition into another year of pandemic uncertainty, allow me to leave you with this question to consider: how is your congregation reaching out to your local families and neighbourhood in ways that show you care? May you be blessed in your efforts of forming new relationships and may you have fun in the process too!

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

A few tips for short-form video content

Short-form video content is predicted to rule social media in 2022.

This is already evident in the rise of TikTok as the place to be and connect. But many other places are perfect for short-form video content. These platforms include YouTube, Instagram Reels, and Snapchat.

If you want your church to reach a high volume of seekers, then creating short-form video content is the way to go. The rise of short-form video allows individuals to be informed, educated, and entertained all in literally a few seconds or minutes. This is especially true when it comes to church specific content.

As we look forward to 2022 here are a few tips for short-form video content.

Engaging a new demographic in the life of the church: The rise of short-form video allows individuals to be informed, educated, and entertained all in literally a few seconds or minutes.



MEDIA BYTES
REV. MARTY LEVESQUE

1) Grab their attention. Do it either through the concept of a series or in the first few seconds of the short-form video. 65% of viewers who watch the first three seconds of a video will continue to at least the ten-second mark,

and 45% will watch for thirty seconds.

2) Short means short. The maximum length of any video should not exceed 5 minutes. Ideally like TikTok or Reels, this will be no longer than 2 minutes.

3) Edit for social media. Be conscious of the various trends and don't be afraid of sharp cuts. Just think of covering a tomato with your hand and then removing your hand to show the food all diced and ready for the recipe.

To help fill this space, All Saints' Anglican Church

in Waterloo has recently launched Soul Savours, a monthly short-form video. You can find the first couple of episodes of the parish' YouTube channel (<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCq-3JPIL7qpL7H9l1EFg9XTg>). Each episode features the pastors of All Saints' making a recipe from an old church cookbook.

The idea is pretty simple. Have a little fun, celebrate our past and all the potlucks and bake sales that have helped sustain the church over the years (and the weird recipes we used to love) and engage a new demographic in the life of the church.

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/dioceesofhuron>

How do you measure a year?

“Five hundred twenty-five thousand six hundred minutes...so dear. How do you measure a year?”

There are a wide variety of options found in the lyrics of the song, “Seasons of Love” which was a part of the award-winning Broadway show, “Rent”, first presented twenty-five years ago.

*In daylight, in sunsets
In midnight, in cups of coffee
In inches, in miles
In laughter, in strife
In five hundred twenty-five thousand six hundred minutes
How do you measure a year in the life?*

I invite you to use whatever media tool is available to you and listen to the song. The music elevates the message of the words and gives an added sense of urgency to the need to offer an answer to the question posed for all of us.

How do you measure a year in your life?

A new year provides an opportunity for new ways to generate an answer to that question. The empty pages of a paper calendar hold such promise. What will fill the five hundred twenty-five thousand six hundred minutes in your life in 2022? Will you shape the year or will you be shaped by events beyond your control?

At the heart of how each of us approaches 2022 is the essential reality which we may not fully grasp. Each moment of life is a God-given gift. We cannot speed up or slow down the pace



Alexey Savchenko/Unsplash



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

of time. How we view each minute allows us the opportunity to fully value and appreciate what a wonderful gift we have been given. How we use each moment will provide an insight as to how much we treasure the gift of each day.

In her address to the opening session of the 11th General Synod of the Church of England, Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth the Second reflected:

None of us can slow the passage of time and while we often focus on all that has changed in the intervening years, much remains unchanged, including the Gospel of Christ and His teaching.

The thoughts offered by a woman of faith, who, at the age of 95, has witnessed and lived

through many telling moments of historical importance, has much to give to us as we embark on a journey into a new year. The search for a solid and strong foundation upon which we may build our lives has, as the Queen indicated, no further to look than the Gospels.

The Church measures a year differently than the world in which we live. Beginning on Advent Sunday, the community of faith uses signs and symbols to establish a framework around which we may build a strong spiritual foundation for our day to day living. There are seasons of celebration which may point to profound moments of insight guiding us through the daunting moments of life. Throughout the year the Church pauses to remember and celebrate the lives of faithful servants of our Lord, who by their words and witness provide stories of how being a faithful follower of Jesus is not simply a challenge in our contemporary world, but has been

a reality of discipleship through the years.

The transition from year end to the beginning of a new year may be highlighted by watching the celebration and fireworks which ring out around the globe. Watching the march of time as nations mark the transitional moment from one year to the next is a wonderful experience.

People who remember the joy of travelling, may also have the opportunity to remember their visit to a special location which is being highlighted in the media reports of New Year's Eve. Others may simply note that the new year is a time to buckle down and tackle whatever new year's resolutions they have claimed will be given preference in the days that lie ahead. However, the fireworks' flash is gone in an instant and resolutions often get lost as other priorities rise up to claim a place of importance in our lives.

As each calendar year draws to a close and a new year dawns, I often recall words which were offered to a world in crisis during times of great uncertainty. In 1939, King George the Sixth during his Christmas radio broadcast, quoted a poem which had been written by Minnie Louise Haskins. As he spoke to individuals who were grappling with the essential challenge of survival against great odds in that time and place, it seems to me that the words he shared have not lost their power over the years.

And I said to the man who stood at the gate of the year: "Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown." And he replied: "Go out into the darkness and put your hand into the Hand of God. That shall be to you better than light and safer than a known way."

So I went forth, and finding the Hand of God, trod gladly into the night. And He led me towards the hills and the breaking of the day...

I suspect that the year ahead will be filled with challenges for us as we live in a world filled with uncertainty and turmoil. Yet at the heart of our lives is the reality of our faith. We step out into a world filled with the darkness of floods and fire, injustice and great needs. We step out into a world where the causes which demand our time, our talent and our energy seem so prolific that we may feel overwhelmed. We step out into a world where fear of infection limits our ability to be with our family and our friends. Yet for all of that, it is my hope and prayer that each of us will try to pattern our lives in such a way where we may claim each of the five hundred twenty five thousand six hundred minutes as the gift they are and seek to use them well in the service of Our Lord.

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The advent of Christmas: A peaceful blessing

In the middle of St Peter's square, there stands a magnificent tall stone structure. It is about four and half thousand years old. It originally stood in the temple of the sun in an Egyptian city. You see it in all pictures of St Peters square – towering over the thousands of visitors swarming into Rome.

During the frightful reign of Emperor Caligula, this grand monument was brought to Rome. Under its shadow, in the years to follow, Peter was martyred (during the reign of Emperor Nero).

In the beginning, on top of the monument, there stood a golden globe – a representation of the sun god. In time, a cross replaced it – the cross of Christ. And on the pedestal of the structure, there are two inscriptions.

The first translated means 'Christ has conquered, Christ now rules, Christ now reigns supreme.' The other inscription, "The Lion of Judah has



AS I SEE IT
REV. JIM INNES

The advent of Christmas is overflowing with reminders that Love, not Hate, conquers all. The most obvious of these are the festive gatherings of family and friends.

conquered."

This 131' granite stone monument is a triumphant symbol of the powerful Love of God, as lived and died for by Jesus. As Christians phrase it, "we have been conquered by the Love of God, exhibited by Jesus, and sustained by the movement of Spirit."

The advent of Christmas is overflowing with reminders that Love, not Hate, conquers all. The most obvious of these are the festive gatherings of

family and friends. Though Jesus may not be at their conscious center, the Love he stood for (and through which he gave himself to death) flows freely and graciously. And those who do not have such family and friends (or are separated from them) feel the loss.

I am reminded of one of the most enduring images of World War One. Opposing troops along the Western Front put aside their differences to

share carols and exchange gifts around Christmas 1914. And there is now evidence to argue that such truces continued throughout the War.

As one such example, here is a letter home, written by Pr. R. MacKinnon. He was a soldier of Scottish descent serving with a Canadian regiment on Vimy Ridge in 1916:

"Here we are again, as the song says. I had quite a good Xmas considering I was in the front line. Xmas eve was pretty

stiff, sentry-go up to the hips in mud of course. (...) We had a truce on Xmas Day, and our German friends were quite friendly. They came over to see us, and we traded bully beef for cigars. Xmas was 'tray bon' which means very good."

This story is a Love story. It is the Love of God. Though more felt, then verbalized, there was a shared humanity in those trenches--a heartfelt desire for intimacy in a peaceful place. As I see it, though the soldiers may have struggled to name what they created that day, there was, nonetheless, an inherent want of harmonious goodwill. A wish that arose from their spiritual selves – that place in their hearts that instinctively knows that all good is measured by the peace they can create for themselves and those they love.

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A small picture in the big album of my life

I recently picked up the 2003 edition of the Diocese of Huron Clergy Directory. I kind of remember posing for pictures at my first Synod in Huron and eventually the book came in the mail and found a nice place on a book shelf and has spent most of its existence there.

At first, I was just looking at the pictures which brought back a memory or two. And then some things hit me.

First, how few of these colleagues were still in active full-time ministry in Huron. I suppose it shouldn't surprise me that in 18 years many clergy had reached the magic number and opted for retirement.

But what struck with lasting impact was the number of people pictured in that book that have died. People that helped welcome me on my return to Huron after two decades on the prairies. People who have impacted who I am in my continuing, growing, shrinking, evolving, changing life of faith.

I could certainly share some of the stories that popped open for me, including a couple of good old fashioned belly laughs. But rather I want to reflect on time and change and pandemic and all the crazy mixed-up feelings that come with spending extended periods of your life with people.

There is no such thing as normal. We will always be looking forward and back as we try to find our way.



MOSTLY ABOUT RELIGION

REV. CANON KEITH NETHERY



Roman Kraft/Unsplash

were moments I just stopped and sat quietly to think.

Looking at this directory is a small picture in the big album of my life. It may seem like a short time, but so much is different, so much has changed, there is so much potential and so much grief, all rolled into one. Just like my entire life, and your entire life and everyone else's entire life!

It's good to review, to enjoy memories. It's wise to think about what worked and what didn't. It's prudent to note that everything will change and hope that growth will come with new ideas from new people. By extension, it caused me to think of others that I have travelled with on the road of faith and also outside the

church. To think about friends from many years ago, the communities in which I lived, the memories (in truth, both good and bad) that leap from those times. But also, to realize that time never stands still. No matter how much I enjoyed certain parts of my life, there was and is always something next.

So, from the thoughts of what was, I moved to the thoughts of what is to come. When the people I journey with today look back in 20 years, what will they see, what will they think, what will they remember, what will have been life giving?

2021 has been a strange year, equaled in this sense only by 2020. So much that we thought we knew, that we thought was permanent, that we believed we

could trust; has been shaken, stirred and rearranged. We have been forced to pivot day by day to learn new ways to do things, to try and find the way through the problems of a pandemic and to see a place where life would again be normal.

And that's the rub. There is no such thing as normal. We will always be looking forward and back as we try to find our way. We will always have fond memories and moments that we wish we could forget. We might think that things were normal, but that lasted only for a moment, and then the new normal arrived. The pandemic has only sped up this process, not fundamentally changed it.

So, as we start 2022, whatever it will be, let us be prepared for change. Let us look back at the photo directories and the memories that have shaped us for a year, for a decade, for a lifetime. We will remember those who have made a difference, we will see dramatic changes and be challenged to deal with new realities. It's good to reflect; it's good to take stock; it's good to dream. Yep, it's a New Year! May it be full of memories and the challenge to move forward in love and faith.

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Knitters of mind knots: A tale for overthinkers

This article is for all of us who overthink. For those talented people who can knit knots in their heads without even trying.

We are delightful souls in our own way, but we can create a dust storm in a dustless mind. Praying those never-ending prayers in fear that we leave someone or something out. Then returning to edit them. This month of January is a good time for over thinkers to set a new way of thinking and/or a new way to pray.

Helping our over-thought thoughts and prayers to not spoil our thoughts and prayers. If you are a knitter of mind knots you will understand that. Please, just don't over think it! My tale of overthinking begins.

Just like thousands of families before us, our family became intimate with Covid-19. The rules were all followed. Once the fevers set in, loss of taste and smell, body aches and tiredness occurred, I wondered what I could do thousands of miles away from our loved ones who were sick. The first to catch the virus was a child under five. Within twenty-four hours an adult also succumbed to the various symptoms. Immedi-



LAUREL PATTENDEN

ately I sent out an email prayer request to friends with an explanation of the situation.

This turned out to be very interesting for an overthinker, as the replies arrived. Few of them replied with the word 'prayer' but the word 'thought' dominated the replies.

Being the grandmother of a grandchild under five and mother-in-law to his mother, both with Covid, I was perhaps a little more anxious, judgmental, narrow minded, dissecting and critical of the replies. Overthinking at it's very best. Sorry, it just happens to me sometimes.

My thought bubbles could be read: "Why are they just sending us their thoughts! I want prayers! Can't they just sit down for twenty-five seconds, take a deep breath, exhale and say a prayer using the names of the sick?" I don't know about you, but my thoughts tend to come and go with the speed



Thoughts in, thoughts out, thoughts remembered, thoughts forgotten. Monkey mind at the best of times. Why do we even say 'you are in our thoughts'?

of light. Thoughts in, thoughts out, thoughts remembered, thoughts forgotten. Monkey mind at the best of times. Why do we even say 'you are in our thoughts'? Can you possibly find exactly where that 'thought' is in your thoughts?

Most of the time we live in a whirlwind of thoughts blowing around in our heads. What is a thought anyways? Merriam-Webster dictionary writes: it is an idea, plan, opinion, picture etc. Another definition writes a thought is the action or process of thinking. That is a bit too circular for me and if you 'think' deeply about it I am sure it would create mental motion

sickness!

This was the first time I have sent out an email prayer request to so many people. Truthfully, I had no idea of what to expect. Is the word 'thought' the new, acceptable word for 'prayer'? Is the word prayer too personal? Our Merriam-Webster source gives us a very general definition of prayer with two parts. Prayer is a direct address (such as a petition) to God or a god in word or thought plus an earnest request or wish.

Hmmmm. The prayer definition had the word 'thought' in it. Oh dear, does this mean prayer can be a thought? I am not totally sure

at this moment, but I am sure that I have a dull headache coming on.

Maybe Mary F. Smith, a Quaker and later Scottish Episcopalian, who wrote: "Prayer is an exercise of the spirit, as thought is of the mind", can help clear up my thoughts on thought and prayer. Well, perhaps not as much as I would like. So, does the spirit not have thought? Or does the thought of prayer in the mind not affect the spirit? And on and on.

"Stop" I think. "Stop" I pray. Take a deep breath. Exhale.

Looking back on the replies to my plea for prayer, I understand that the word "thought" and "prayer" does not matter at all. What matters is what gave rise to the individual responses. My cry out for prayers touched my friends. Their minds were touched. Their spirits were touched. They responded. They ALL responded! 100%. Promptly! I want to thank them for all their thoughts and prayers, which is love after all! By the way, those in our family who had Covid have fully recovered.

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