

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS - MORE THAN HITTING THE 'LIKE' BUTTON
Rev. Marty Levesque shares his experience with Tithe.ly.
Page 9

COUNTING YOUR BLESSINGS: THE LESSONS OF THE PANDEMIC
The pandemic challenges us to look seriously at traditions we hold dear.
Page 10



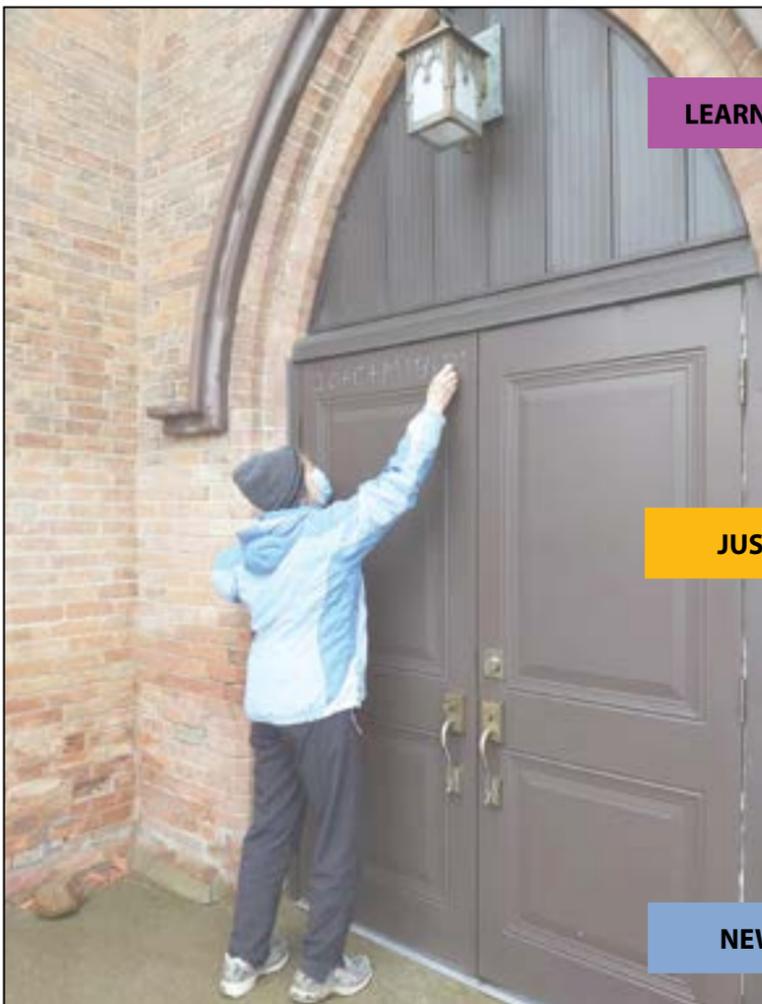
BASIC INCOME FOR CANADIANS
Getting ready for Social and Ecological Justice Huron's Lenten online study.
Page 8

HURON CHURCH NEWS

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

20+C+M+B+21: What does 2021 have in store for us?

With all in-person services suspended just before Christmas, we enter the new year with questions about the role Church plays in our wider community



LEARNING CHURCH

JUST CHURCH

NEW CHURCH

May Christ Bless this House - Epiphany 2021: Chalking the door at St. Matthew's Church, Florence.
The ancient ritual performed on the feast of the Epiphany took place in rather extraordinary circumstances. See more on page 3

On Stewardship of the Land, and more

VEN. GRAHAM BLAND
When we, settler Christians, talk about Stewardship, we have a lot to learn about relationships. We have a lot to learn, in particular about our relationship with the earth, and with the land we inhabit. This is the case not

least because most settler culture is rootless, cut off from the land of its origin. Many of our settler ancestors were landless peasants in their countries of origin and came to the Americas because they heard of abundant land here. With the Doctrine of

Discovery in play, however, these settlers had little awareness of the fact that the land they regarded as 'empty' had been occupied for millennia by an already settled and sophisticated society, one which had discovered how to live lightly on the earth. **Page 4**

Who will speak if we don't?

IRENE MOORE DAVIS
The last several months have been tumultuous, to say the least, and it has become evident to many people outside black and brown communities that systemic racism remains an unjust structure desper-

ately in need of transformation. Intersectionality, the term coined in 1989 by Kimberlé Crenshaw to describe how race, class, gender, sexuality, ability, and other traits intersect with one another, overlap, and create complex layers

of inequality, has also become front and center. How can we help? Increasingly, it is apparent that as people of faith, we all have a role to play in addressing systemic inequities. Who will speak if we don't? **Page 7**

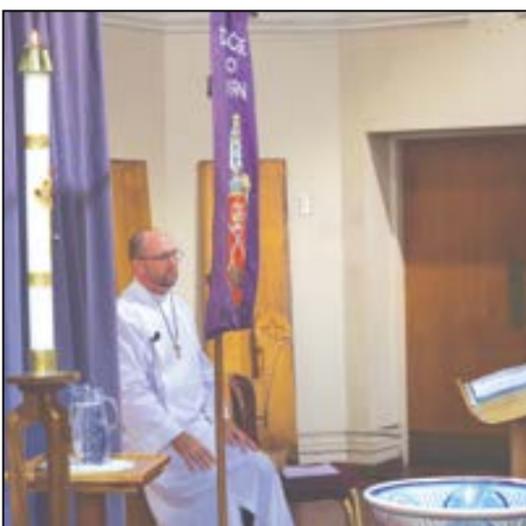
What is the key ingredient in the resiliency of Church?

BISHOP TODD TOWNSHEND
Over the next few years, we can help our larger communities, towns, and cities to become more resilient to the spiritual, physical, social, and eco-

nomical challenges that we all face. There is a lack of trust in our land, a lack of connection to one another. Christians can make a huge difference in this regard when we make it a priority to be healthy,

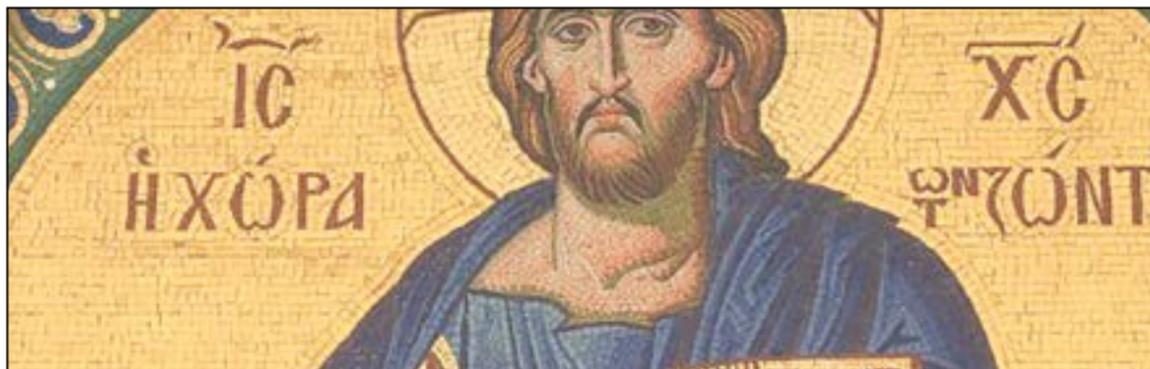
helpful communities within the larger community. We can reach out and increase "social cohesion" in Ontario by intentionally doing what we do best. **Page 2**

A time capsule for posterity... and much, much more



Communion in the Body of Christ

About a year ago, we knew of the novel coronavirus that would cause COVID-19 but we didn't know much about what it would do to life globally. Turns out that it has been a microbe of death, disruption, and disorientation. We continue to mourn the loss of so many beloved people and the loss of many of the patterns and activities so dear to us.



**BISHOP
TODD
TOWNSHEND**

Even while we continue to take extreme care to prevent further transmission of this virus, we are beginning to allow ourselves some hope that the vaccines will gradually bring the infection rates down and that we will all begin to feel some relief.

Among the many things we can learn from this time, two seem particularly clear to me—about how the church can respond in the years to come. We have two strong gifts that will allow us to lead the way forward. We have theological and practical expertise in (a) creating community (social cohesion) and in (b) caring for and advocating for the poor (those who have been exploited

and oppressed). At our best, we are good at bringing people together, and raising people up. These communal gifts come from God; we learned these things from Jesus.

The Spirit of God held us together over the past year, in part, by tightening our community through various new or renewed modes: through all of the phone calls, notes and messages, online offerings, guided home-based spirituality, and so on, we dedicated ourselves to keeping in touch with one another and supporting one another. Some people call the result of this “social cohesion”, we may call it “communion in the body of Christ” but, no matter what we call it, it is a key ingredient in the resiliency of church and society through time. Over the next few years, we can help our larger communities, towns, and cities to become more resilient to the spiritual, physical, social, and economic challenges that we all face. There is a lack of trust

in our land, a lack of connection to one another. Christians can make a huge difference in this regard when we make it a priority to be healthy, helpful, communities within the larger community. We can reach out and increase “social cohesion” in Ontario by intentionally doing what we do best.

Another thing we have learned over the past year is that when things get harder they get hardest on those who are most vulnerable. Often in the church we refer to “the poor” to mean those who have been most disadvantaged by others—sometimes through systems, always because of sin. Yet, “the poor” usually receive nothing but blame for their own situation rather than recognition that whole worlds beyond their control often conspire to make them poor. Jesus, as we say when studying the gospels (especially Luke), surrounded himself with people in these situations and he teaches us that God has a “preferential option”

for the poor. God prefers them! Who did Jesus seek for when he wanted to bring God's healing and reconciliation to the world? The poor, the outcast, the lonely, the disadvantaged, the ones in need. Thankfully, we have all been “in need” of one kind or another which explains why Jesus came along in our lives in the first place. And when he did, and does, his Kingdom, his reign has come near.

This reign of Christ is the thing that provides a balance for a real and serious look at sin in the world. We know that he, even now, reigns in and over all that is, all that was, all that will be. Therefore, we can continue to seek his revelation in our spiritual lives while planning ways to become a more just church. Perhaps, for you, this will include a deeper commitment to building healthy communities and transformative service to the poor. I know it will for me.

+Todd

Psalm of lament: Why do you weep?

By Rev. Carrie Irwin

As we approach the beginning of Lent, a year into the global pandemic of COVID, I find myself pondering again a psalm of lament that I wrote in April of 2020. It speaks of the anguish and the hope that I believe many have and continue to feel in the midst of huge uncertainty.

In this past year, what I have learned is to hold tenderly both my knowing and unknowing, my certainty and uncertainty all the while trusting that God has us securely held in God's hand.

Psalm of Lament - Why do You Weep?

My God, creator of togetherness, of touch, relationship, and community, I cry out to you.

Something is welling up inside me that is fighting to get free.

It burns like acid and chokes my breath,

It is dark, and it is light,
It is wet and it is parched,
It is screaming and it is silent
It is powerful and it is weak.
My grief is rolling and crash-

ANGLICAN FELLOWSHIP OF PRAYER



ing onto the shores of my life, onto the shores of our life.

So much is different, so much is lost, life is so unfamiliar, our security is gone.

If I let it out, will I sink beneath the crashing waves of grief and fear, and be consumed by pain and anguish to simply disappear?

Why do you weep?

Do your tears run down your face or are they poured out on paper?

Do your tears fall on meals prepared for your family and your friends?

Do your tears fall silently behind masks and face shields as you tend the sick?

Do your tears fall from behind plexiglass walls as you serve your community?

Why do you weep?

Jesus, at the tomb of Lazarus, you wept, even knowing what you would do, the swell of tears

still flowed down your cheeks. You know my aching heart.

Jesus, you wept over Jerusalem even as you offered like a mother hen to gather your children in under your wings. You know my mother's heart.

Jesus, you offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears to the One able to save you. You know my hope filled heart.

Why do you weep?

We do not grieve as those without hope. Our hope is in you, our joy comes from knowing that the dawn brings new life, from our assurance that you are with us, and that ultimately this too shall pass, and you will be victorious.

And so I weep, I weep tears not only in anguish, but I weep tears of joy and gratitude. I weep in thankfulness for the sun that rises in the morning, for the possibilities in a new day. I weep

in deep longing to be held again in the arms of my loved ones not within my reach. I weep in gratitude for the bravery and courage of those who are called to tend our sick, serve our community and keep our infrastructures in place and I weep for those who pray for us.

I weep for those who have passed from this world, who find eternal rest now with their savior, and I weep in joy for the thousands who have recovered from this pandemic and for those who will recover yet.

I weep for the joy found in the trust that I have in a God who has promised to be with us forever.

Jesus, you never told us to go it alone, you never told us that we could not weep. Indeed, you called us to love, to care for one another, to trust in God and to pray. And so I offer this, my lament and prayer to you, knowing that you hold us, in the palm of your hand. Amen

Rev. Carrie Irwin AFP Executive, North; Rector of The Regional Ministry of Saugeen Shores, Tara and Chatsworth; and Regional Dean of the Saugeens.

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'You bless some chalk...' Epiphany in pandemic

By Lawrene Denkers

Shall I tell you what it is like to have a congregational coach embedded in your congregation?

It's like this: You just might find yourself outside your own door in January chalking mysterious-looking numbers, letters and symbols on your house!

But let's not blame this only on the coach. There is also the diocesan social media officer, and our own vicar!

It started with a diocesan resource called "A Year in the Church, Advent Through Epiphany Including Candlemas" by Rev. Marty Levesque, BA, MA, M-Div, MVM-310S, social media officer for the Diocese of Huron. Our congregational coach, Shirley Sewell, read it and talked to our vicar, Rev. Dr. Lisa Wang, about it.



What you do is this: You bless some chalk at church, then use it for an ancient epiphany rite that includes prayer at the entrance of the home, then leader/participants making an inscription, then another blessing and the Lord's Prayer.

But there is the small matter of it being a pandemic. You can't bless things in a pandemic. You can't gather leaders and participants.

Not in person you can't, but we're doing everything else online, so...

Next thing you know, we at

20 for the 2000 years, C for Caspar, M for Melchior and B for Balthasar, followed by the 21 years after the 2000. Crosses to represent Christ.

St. Matthew's, Florence, were bringing pieces of chalk to our Feast of the Epiphany Zoom morning prayer service and holding them up to our laptop/tablet cameras to be blessed.

Then, after church, it was out the door to print 20 + C +

M + B + 21 at our entrances like it was 451 AD.

And then to take photos with our phones like it was 2021 AD. 2021 is, in fact, part of the inscription. 20 for the 2000 years, C for Caspar, M for Melchior and B for Balthasar, followed by the 21 years after the 2000. Crosses to represent Christ.

You can read all about it, and so much more, here: <https://diohuron.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Advent-Christmas-and-Epiphany-edited.pdf>

May Christ bless our homes and remain with us throughout this most unusual of New Years.

May we remember the wonderful human, printed and digital resources with which we are blessed in the Diocese of Huron!

Lawrene Denkers is a member of St. Matthew's Florence.

Drive-by visits in Cottam

By Pat Jackson

It is better to give than it is to receive. How many times have we heard that? Well, I'll say it again, "It is better to give than it is to receive".

Like everyone else, the parishioners at Trinity, Cottam were upset with the prospect of not being able to spend Christmas with their church family in our own little church.

An idea was brought forth to do Drive-by visits for those who have been unable to attend church due to health complications. Brain storming and messages back and forth had us distributing poinsettias to every parishioner not just to shut ins.

On Friday, Dec. 18, a parade of decorated vehicles made rounds, we stopped, honked horns, held signs, yelled out greetings and delivered not only poinsettias and cards but, prayer pouches to everyone. Battery operated candles were given to those who cannot use real candles due to oxygen in the house or residential restrictions. The idea and directions were that the battery-operated candles could be used as they follow our Christmas Eve service online or via DVD.

Prayer pouches was an idea that had been brought up some time ago by our music director Ann Dresser and came to fruition before Christmas. Prayers had been selected by members of the church, printed up and laminated before being added to little pouches.

The pouches have been well



Getting ready for drive-by visits for those who have been unable to attend church

received and are now offered to the public as we spread His love.

The visits were a wonderful success, social distancing and masks were in place as we made outdoor stops at each house. Everyone expressed happiness and excitement to receive support and lifted their spirits. Those of us delivering had tears of happiness in our eyes and joy in our hearts.

Our Warming Hands, heads and hearts tree was up and already had hats and gloves on it when we went into shut down. How do we receive donations to give to the clothing cupboard and migrant workers?

Talks among our members brought us to do a Drive-thru, no contact clothing drive and despite giving the community only a few weeks' notice was a huge success.

We had a canopy up in the middle of the parking lot, two large boxes that someone had dropped off and plenty of help. Donors drove in a around the

canopy and threw their donation into the boxes. WOW, what a great day.

The day was chilly, windy but, our hearts were filled with love in knowing that so many people were giving to those less fortunate. One church member wrote, "today as I drove away from that scene in the church yard and yelled Merry Christmas to everyone in ear shot it brought tears to my eyes and still does as I write this. We were wishing the world Merry Christmas; it was such a warm and loving feeling. COVID-19 might keep us apart but doesn't keep us from celebrating the spirit of loving and giving".

Postings were sent out on social media to encourage people to call someone on Blue Christmas, someone lonely or who had suffered a personal loss of a loved one or financial loss.

2020 has been especially difficult but, we can all make a difference by staying connected.

Pat Jackson is a parishioner of Trinity, Cottam.

"Hats for Humanity" and a bit of "dressing down" help London families

By Sarah Chase

Just prior to the Christmas break, a London school reached out to a local Anglican church and explained that there were 24 families (including 47 children) that were struggling this year.

The faculty were personally donating to help out and requesting help from the community. The hope was to provide gift cards, clothing and toys.

Fortunately, a group at St. Michael's and All Angels Anglican Church, called "Hats for Humanity", had just concluded their project of collecting hats, mitts, scarves, gloves and socks, both purchased and handmade. Of the eight totes collected, two large bags were directed to the school so that all 47 children would receive something to keep them warm.

Additional items were given to the school for other children that may need them in the cold winter months. These items were blessed by the parish on December 6.

In addition to these items, the Abundant Living Committee at St. Mike's also arranged for a donation toward the project. The remaining six totes of outerwear were delivered to St. Paul's Social Services for distribution at the food bank and the annual

Fellowship Centre Christmas luncheon, which was a take-out affair this year.

Staff at Huron Church House contribute monthly to an Employee Outreach Fund for the privilege of "dressing down" on Fridays. These funds, and additional donations, are used toward various outreach projects throughout the year, usually in Lent, Advent and the Deacons' Outreach at Synod.

Upon learning of the need at the local school, staff were happy to help with a further donation. A donation was also directed toward the cost of the Christmas luncheon and a couple of staff helped with the preparation and serving of the festive meal.

Even in a pandemic, our community hears the call to "love our neighbour" and continue to do so in various creative and meaningful ways. We are here for each other. This is what we must remember when we reflect on the crazy times of 2020.

In the words of Mother Teresa, "not all of us can do great things but we can do small things with great love."

Sarah Chase is a volunteer in outreach ministry at St. Michael's and All Angels, London and a member of the Huron Church House team.

A new way of ministry for children in St. Thomas

Due to the COVID 19 pandemic and a number of new restrictions on safe ways to gather, St. Thomas Church in St. Thomas has introduced a new way of ministry for children and families.

Our Sunday School has gone virtual! Every Sunday morning at 10 a.m. we gather over zoom with a pre-planned curriculum engaging pre-school children up to high schoolers with an array of activities, singing, stories, videos and conversations. Our Sunday School team of 4 teachers (Cathy Grondin, Sharon Schindhelm, Kathy Edwards and Lindsay Rice) create program material reflective of the Gospel and the broad range of ages we are supporting.

On November 8, in recognition of Remembrance Day, children and parents gathered



Marking Remembrance Day at St. Thomas' Sunday School on November 8, 2020

on the church yard with physical distancing. Children processed into the church at the start of service with physical distancing and COVID masks

to present the Remembrance Day wreath, along with hand crafted stones adorned with poppies each made by the children.

After the service, Sunday School families enjoyed refreshments and distanced fellowship. This was a perfect opportunity with 20 °C weather for an outdoor event. Each family was grateful for the opportunity to see one another and participate in the service. This was a great example of how we can blend remote gatherings with special events at the church.

This new online ministry has opened doors and reduced barriers for families who from time to time struggle to attend church in person. Children are welcome as they are – and so are parents! Some families gather on a couch or around a kitchen table. We often see parents and grandparents involved on screen as well. This online ministry is especially beneficial for children and

youth as they are familiar and comfortable with online technology.

We have found a new way for children and families to connect with their church family and collectively learn about Jesus and his teachings. Depending on the focus each week, materials or craft kits are dropped off at children's homes. Each child will be receiving their own supply tote with materials and items that will assist them week to week with participating in activities. Attendance ranges week to week with on average 20 children and parents in attendance. We have received great feedback from children and parents and look forward to continuing this ministry into 2021.

Lindsay Rice, St. Thomas Anglican Church, St. Thomas

All my relations: Thinking about our Stewardship of the Land

We settlers imposed our own landless European experience on the inhabitants of this land and made them landless in their turn. The oppressed became the oppressors. For our Christian Mission to move forward authentically, it must include a new and profound appreciation for the land we inhabit, and for its peoples.

By Ven. Graham Bland

I am a settler, having come here as a young man, in this land that is now called Canada. Perhaps too slowly, I have become more aware of indigenous culture. One phrase, which represents a philosophy of life, has made a deep impression on me: "All My Relations."

This phrase is spoken at the end of a talk or a dialogue. It signifies the deep interconnectedness of the speaker with all things. This is a core conviction of First Nations, Inuit and Métis worldviews and ways of knowing. As well as interconnectedness, this worldview believes that everyone and everything has a purpose. Moreover, everyone



giving

and everything is worthy of respect and caring, and has its particular and unique place in the Cosmos.

When we settler Christians talk about Stewardship, we have a lot to learn about relationships. We have a lot to learn, in particular, about our relationship with the earth, and with the land we inhabit. This is the case not least because most settler culture is rootless, cut off from the land of its origin. Many of our settler ancestors were landless peasants in their countries of origin and came to the Americas because they heard of abundant land here. With the Doctrine of Discovery in play, however,

these settlers had little awareness of the fact that the land they regarded as 'empty' had been occupied for millennia by an already settled and sophisticated society, one which had discovered how to live lightly on the earth.

The traditional practices of the peoples of the Americas were sustainable, ecologically aware, based on a strong scientific understanding of the earth gained from centuries of observation and interaction with the weather, seasonal patterns, medicines, foods and marine resources, supplemented by careful harvesting of the abundance of nature. Before settlers colonized these shores,

It will not be possible for us to share Good News here if we do not understand and respect this land and its peoples, if we do not seek to understand the complex relationships that hold us in life. Our Stewardship is about our relationships... all of them.

this society lived in harmony with the natural world.

Why am I writing this in a Christian Stewardship article? It is mainly because of how much we settler churches have to learn about relationships. Good stewardship is based on good relationships. We know this. We know the importance of expressing gratitude for the gifts people offer. This and other good habits maintain the healthy relationships that foster fruitful congregations. Churches that are ready to venture out in the Mission of Jesus Christ are churches whose people are in harmony with one another.

Are not Missional churches - if they are churches that have

integrity - also churches whose other relationships are healthy and strong? It will not be possible for us to share Good News here if we do not understand and respect this land and its peoples, if we do not seek to understand the complex relationships that hold us in life. Our Stewardship is about our relationships ... all of them.

Should not our parish Stewardship plans, therefore, include:

- Turning to indigenous wisdom;
- Renewal of our relationship with the land on which we now live;
- Deep respect for the natural world;
- Repentance of our broken relationship with the earth, our Mother;
- Reconciliation with our now fellow-inhabitants of this land?

We settlers imposed our own landless European experience on the inhabitants of this land and made them landless in their turn. The oppressed became the oppressors. For our Christian Mission to move forward authentically, it must include a new and profound appreciation for the land we inhabit, and for its peoples. This is a beautiful and sacred land. It has a history of suffering, inflicted by our settler ancestors, which deserves to be recovered and told, as part of our own journey of repentance, if our Mission is to be true to the Christ who also suffered for this land and its peoples.

Ven. Graham Bland is the chair of the Diocesan Stewardship Committee and Archdeacon of Saugeen.

My Valentine: Freedoms built on the lives of those who came before me

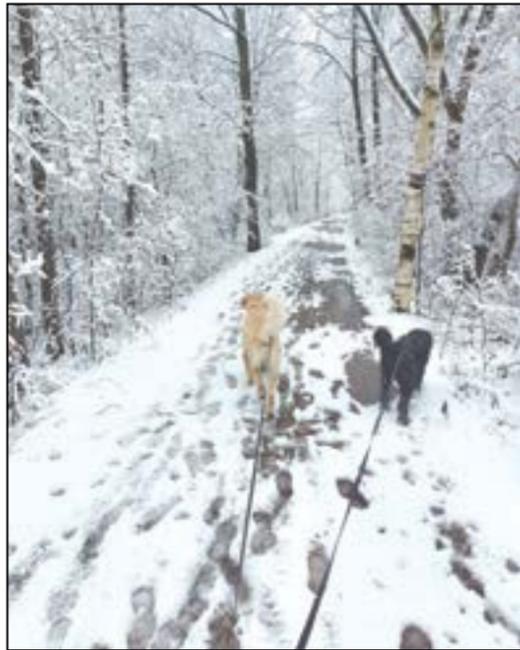
By John-Paul Markides

"Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor: If either of them falls down, one can help the other up. But pity anyone who falls and has no one to help them up. Also, if two lay down together, they will keep warm. But how can one keep warm alone? Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken."
(Ecclesiastes 4: 9-12).

These words are engraved on a Quaich; a Celtic wedding cup that was shared by my husband and I on the day of our wedding. I would like to share my experience with you if you will indulge me ... I believe this to be an excellent example of love in my life.

This morning I got up and, like every morning, I put on the coffee and turned on the news. I made my morning devotions as breakfast perfumed the air with its sweet and spicy aromas. My husband slowly made his way into the kitchen, kissed me gently on the cheek and took the coffee I made for him. His greeting was full-hearted, even if a little groggy.

As we sat down and enjoyed our breakfast, and laughing at posts on social media. We also shared news about our week and the struggle of the COVID pandemic, our studies, and work-life. It was a good morning because we indulged in our shared life, not the fear of being discovered or ridiculed for who we are. No sword of Damocles... just eggs, bacon, and



No sword of Damocles... just eggs, bacon, and enjoying each other's company... And a well-deserved, long walk with our dogs.

enjoying each other's company.

Later in the day, we took our dogs for a well-deserved, long walk. We bundled up tightly and head out on the path arm-in-arm. The glacial air pricked at our ears and noses, the gentle but bright dusting of snow blowing about us, and the sunlight playing in between the branches reminded us we were alive. We laughed as our dogs played with a stick and wrestling. Our eyes caught; a sting of pain as we feel the loss of not having children to share this day with; quickly followed with a gentle squeeze as we held each other, watching our dogs enjoy the life our family was able to provide.

Coming in from the cold, we warmed up with a shower and some hot tea. We snuggled on the couch with our books and simply enjoying each other's company once again. It was a

good day, filled with intimacy and love. That is the gift — the legacy — given to me by those before me who fought valiantly for the rights just to live and love.

This may not seem like an exciting day, or maybe it sounds like the carefree wanderings of the privileged. But after a lifetime of existential worry about the salvation of my soul, fearing the feelings of love and the touch of another, it is Heaven on Earth. I can say without a few exceptions, it's one of the best days of my life, because I was able to share it with someone I love; my soulmate, with no fear or shame. The day's beauty was made from the magnificence of someone loving me for me and me loving them.

February, and more specifically Valentine's Day, can be a time of great excitement; of

new love found, and of romances. Some endure while others don't. I have had my share of all that life has to offer, maybe not all, but enough. I have come to find, in my life with its limited scope, that past all the excitement, the romance, and the bright enticing flames of excitement; I prefer the warm glow of these coals, a hand holding my hand, and the knowledge that I am loved. These are the warmest and most incomprehensible experiences of my life. If this is not a sharing in the life of Christ, I don't know what is. Today was a good day.

I've spent the better part of a month trying to decide how to best describe the experience of Valentine's Day or romance as I have come to see it for myself, as a member of the LGBTQ2S+ community. I need to share how my freedoms to love are built on the lives of those who came before me. How I look at people like Harvey Milk or Marsha P. Johnson, who formed the foundations of my ability to have this day. I look to them and so many others like them, in the same way most people look at war veterans — because in history, they are our freedom fighters. There was a time in very recent history when my kind of love: gay love, was "a love that dare not speak its name".

Today, we speak it out and proudly! We must remember those who came before us, as we stand together in AIDS vigils, Transgender Day of Remembrance ceremonies, and pride parades. We speak

its name by living a life of love, freedom, and solidarity. We speak its name when we declare in the light those things done in the dark. We cannot be anything but horrified at the atrocities committed to members of our own community today, especially people of color and two-spirit individuals. We must also be mindful particularly of the high rates of suicide among LGBTQ2S+ individuals, particularly among youth.

The struggle for the privilege to have a "normal" day like this; for the freedoms of our people are far from over. We are morally bound to those seeking the same basic privileges and rights, including Indigenous siblings and siblings of color, and all those seeking equity and freedom from a patriarchal systemic of oppression. We must work to be out of the decaying shadow of colonial mentalities far past their expiration date. We are stronger together when we speak up for each other and fight for the equity and freedom of all.

Two are better than one. Today was a good day. A day with my husband; it is what others may take for granted. I thank God for all those who helped me to have these rights. I pray that we all may never forget those who are still waiting for such "normal" basic rights, and that together we seek to create a world where everyone is safe, loved, and affirmed.

Brother John-Paul Markides (he/him/his) is a lay representative on the Proud Anglicans of Huron committee.

Announcing a NEW NAME and a NEW LOOK for our beloved camp!



We have been working throughout the past year to consider ways to share our camp story, recruiting new camp families, drawing our circle wider and wider and wider!

If a picture is worth a thousand words here are a few that come to mind as we present our new logo!

Camp Huron - a wondrous place!

Beneath a deep blue starry sky, a wooden cabin sits gently on the land by the wavy waters of Lake Huron, amongst fir trees that seem to whisper, "welcome home".

Peek through its tiny window - just imagine the people, possibilities and adventures waiting for you!

Keep watching for the launch of a new, improved website and updates about our 2021 season!

camphuron.ca



ANGLICAN CHURCH WOMEN

A crown, two swords and a beaver

The story of the diocesan crest

In September 2019, President Bonnie Rees and I were honoured to represent the Diocese of Huron at the President's National Conference at the Star of the North Retreat Center in St. Albert, Alberta.

Prior to attending the conference, we were given a "homework assignment". Each delegate was required to research their coat of arms/diocesan crest. Each diocese representative was called to stand and read the story of each coat of arms.

The history of the Diocese of Huron crest came from "A Light in the Forest: 150 Years of the Diocese of Huron".

The coat of arms of the Diocese of Huron (being based on earlier symbols and used originally by Bishop Cronyn and the Incorporated Synod of Huron) consists of a red shield on which are depicted two crossed swords of silver with gold hilts and pommels above which is placed the Royal Crown, and below a beaver, both in their natural colours.

Red is the colour of love, the greatest gift of the Spirit. The swords were used anciently to represent St. Paul, patron saint of the diocesan cathedral. Paul speaks of the Sword of the Spirit as he was martyred for faith by the sword. A red shield with these swords was used in the 14th century by the ancient English Diocese of London and cathedral city's name sake.

The crown, granted by special permission of Queen Elizabeth, stands for loyalty to the Canadian Crown. Bishop Luxton insisted it should be a Royal Crown to honour the Royal Chapel at Brantford and thereby the native people of the diocese.

The beaver native to Canada is one of its premier symbols and was the emblem of the Huron First Nation.

The picture is without the bishop's mitre as only the bishop is permitted to use that symbol. In the chancel at Church of the Ascension in Windsor, the seat of the bishop's chair has the coat of arms needle-pointed on it with the mitre, and it is beautiful. A lot of work and love went into that chair.

Until we were asked to research the coat of arms, I did not realize that each diocese has one. The history of each of the coat of arms was extremely interesting. Each crest was put on a new altar cloth for the National ACW. Each delegate signed her name by her coat of arms. It will be used for the first time when we can gather again.

May God keep you healthy and free of COVID-19. Praise the Lord for His blessings.

Barbara Jackson

ACW Diocesan President-elect



Diocesan crest in the version to be used in digital media, revised in 2016

ANGLICAN CHURCH WOMEN

Due to the continuing spread of COVID 19, the 24th April 2021 A.C.W. Annual Conference by "ZOOM" (see Huron Church News – dated January 2021 - pg. 6) has been postponed.

The A.C.W. Executive will continue to review the COVID concerns and will consider a need of a further postponement. We thank all the women in our churches for their prayers and consideration in these trying time.

January 8, 2021

In Memory



Essex Deanery

Church of the Ascension,
Windsor

Cindy Low

Dorothy Danby

Maizie Gilbert

PASTORAL PROGRESSIONS

Rest in Peace

Mr. Dave McCullough who died Jan. 10th, was the husband of The Reverend Sue McCullough and father to Cherie, Michael and Patricia. May Dave rest in peace and rise in glory.

Carole Ashleigh Millman died on Monday, December 14. Her parents, the Reverend Canon William (Bill) and Delores Millman and her siblings had a private family funeral. May Carole rest in peace and rise in glory.

The Venerable Archie Skirving died peacefully on Christmas Eve. Archdeacon Skirving was ordained a deacon in December 1957 and priested in December 1958. He served the the parishes of St. Barnabas, Windsor, St. Michael's and All Angels, Windsor, St. Timothy's, London, Church of the Transfiguration, London, St. John's, Preston, Christ Church, Chatham and St. James', Westminster, London. Archdeacon Archie was named a Canon of Cathed-

ral in May 1977, served on numerous diocesan committees and as the Archdeacon of Erie. He retired in 1999. In his retirement, he served for four months as the Interim Director of Administrative Services of the Diocese of Huron. May Archie rest in peace and may light perpetual shine upon him.

Mr. David Doney, husband of the Reverend Shirley Doney died on Monday, November 30. May David rest in peace and rise in glory.



COVID-19 AND CHURCH CLOSURES/REOPENINGS

**THE DIOCESE IS CURRENTLY IN THE RED STAGE
ALL IN-PERSON SERVICES ARE SUSPENDED**

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

Allyship matters: from acute compassion to chronic empathy

By Irene Moore Davis

Let me tell you a story... a favourite of mine.

He encountered him in the cell at the Sandwich jail... a stout, young Black man with light eyes and a face etched with worry. He asked what he could do for the man. Before he knew it, he was transcribing the prisoner's thoughts—writing out a petition to Sir John Colborne, Lieutenant Governor of Upper Canada.

The transcriber was the Reverend William Johnson of St. John's Anglican Church in Sandwich... located just across the street from the Sandwich jail. The man whose words he transcribed was Thornton Blackburn, an Underground Railroad traveler from Kentucky who had found no lawyer willing to represent him.

Thornton and Lucie Blackburn, two people in love, enslaved by different masters in Louisville, had made a perilous journey so that they could be assured of a life together in freedom. They had arrived in Detroit in 1831, and for a time, they had lived there happily as husband and wife. One fateful day in 1833, someone who had known Thornton in Kentucky spotted him on the streets of Detroit. The process of having Thornton arrested as a runaway slave, with the aim of returning him to bondage in Kentucky, was soon underway. Soon thereafter, Lucie was also arrested under the threat of return to slavery.

Friends of the Blackburns and people committed to the cause of abolitionism brought about both Thornton and Lucie's escapes from jail in Detroit: a free Black woman, Mrs. French, secured Lucie's escape by bravely exchanging clothes with Lucie and remaining in the cell while Lucie



walked out undetected. Other sympathizers launched Detroit's first racial uprising, the so-called Blackburn Riots of 1833, during which Thornton also escaped. The uprising and the aftermath are detailed in Karolyn Smardz Frost's Governor General's Award-winning book, *I've Got a Home in Glory Land*.

Both Thornton and Lucie escaped to Sandwich, which is now a district in my hometown of Windsor, Ontario. But their joy was short lived: soon there was an extradition request from the Governor of the Michigan Territory, demanding their return. Officially, they were accused of having started the riot in Detroit, but the true intent of the extradition request was to return them to chattel slavery.

Thornton Blackburn's entreaties survive to this day through the swirls of Johnson's pen on the page. "Your Petitioner is convinced that the object of the Party is to have him and his wife carried back to Hopeless Slavery, where complaints can neither be heard, nor grievances redressed," reads one memorable line out of many.

The petition transcribed by the vicar of St. John's in Sandwich made its way to Lieutenant Governor Colborne at what was then York, on June 27, 1833. It is the only document that exists in Thornton Blackburn's own words, since Thornton remained illiterate throughout his life. It was this document that convinced both Colborne and Attorney General Robert Simpson Jameson to find a way to avoid sending the Blackburns back into slavery. The decision on the Blackburn extradition case was an important precedent which helped to secure the freedom of many Underground Railroad travelers in subsequent years, guaranteeing Canada's status as a safe haven for formerly enslaved people and leading to the presence of many thousands of Underground Railroad descendants in the Canadian cultural mosaic (including me.) Thornton and Lucie Blackburn moved to Toronto and became Underground Railroad operatives in their own right as well as the proprietors of Canada's first taxi company, their trademark red and yellow carriage ubiquitous on the city

streets. The Blackburns are now recognized as Persons of National Historic Significance in Canada.

The stars of this narrative are rightfully the Blackburns, but I often think about the power, the significance, of the petition the Reverend William Johnson transcribed as an act of compassion and allyship. More than 180 years ago, he chose to use his gifts (the privilege of literacy, connections, the ability to be heard) to support the cause of someone far different from himself. During February, Black History Month, the standard practice (as it should be) is to center people of African descent and their stories, but I am using this space today to share some thoughts about allyship. What does it mean to be an ally to a marginalized group? If you want to become a better ally to others but are not quite sure where to start, this is intended for you.

The last several months have been tumultuous, to say the least, and it has become evident to many people outside Black and brown communities that systemic racism remains an unjust structure desperately in need of transformation. Intersectionality, the term coined in 1989 by Kimberlé Crenshaw to describe how race, class, gender, sexuality, ability, and other traits intersect with one another, overlap, and create complex layers of inequality, has also become front and center. Consider, for example, the degree to which LGBTQ2S+ people of colour experience violence in our society. How can we help? Increasingly, it is apparent that as people of faith, we all have a role to play in addressing systemic inequities. Who will speak if we don't?

I read recently, thanks to Sigrid Ellis, that North Americans are really good at acute compassion, but not very good

at chronic empathy. We love to rush to the rescue of others in moments of crisis but are far less interested in addressing the longer-term social inequities that linger. Remember what the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., taught us: "True compassion is more than flinging a coin to a beggar; it comes to see that an edifice which produces beggars needs restructuring."

Allyship involves much more than donating to a cause in a time of crisis. It is an ongoing commitment, a way of life. As allies, we educate ourselves about the issues facing people unlike ourselves. We listen and learn. We acknowledge our privilege and find ways to use it on others' behalf. We speak up in support of members of marginalized communities, but not over them. We practice selflessness, centering the needs of others rather than making ourselves the focus. We commit to acting in solidarity with others, earning their trust, and embracing their struggle.

"And what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?" Micah 6:8

Irene Moore Davis (she/her/hers) is an ally, historian and educator; a member of All Saints' Windsor, and a lay representative on the Proud Anglicans of Huron Committee. She serves on the Dismantling Racism Task Force.



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Basic income for Canadians

Basic Income for Canadians: The key to a healthier, happier, more secure life for all by Dr. Evelyn Forget is the book that Social and Ecological Justice Huron chose for an online Lenten study in 2021.

By Caroline Sharp

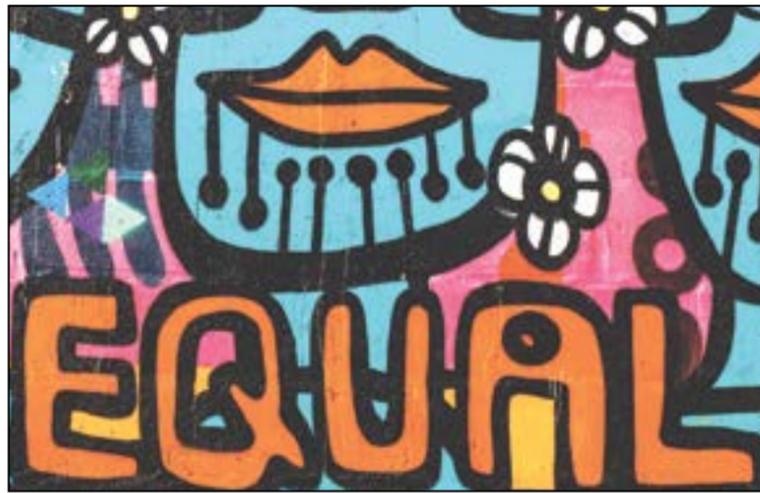
We wanted a book that reflects a conversation series we are running throughout 2021.

The "Conversations with..." series will focus on those hard-to-talk-about conversations on topics such as disability, poverty, people of colour, women's rights, and more in a safe space. Basic Income for Canadians is the web that connects these issues to the many social justice issues we face in North America and forces the reader to look behind the scenes at the underlying causes.

Forget has done her homework on this one and skillfully guides the reader through the various reasons that a Universal Basic Income (UBI) should be employed in Canada. As I mentioned the topic to my husband, the first two things he said were: "Who's going to pay for that?" and "everyone will just stop working." Forget puts those concerns to rest, explaining in quite some detail who may be paying for it and some potential scenarios (it's not as expensive as you might think) as well as why people will not stop working. My gleanings equipped me to at least get my husband to pick up the book and examine it a little closer.

Although "Evelyn Forget is an economist in the School of Medicine at the University of Manitoba" and a scholar, she conveys her message clearly in plain language. I've seen some of her video presentations and they are fine, however, the book allows her the space to give

SOCIAL AND ECOLOGICAL JUSTICE



more precise information and data that she is not able to convey over a shorter video (as opposed to a lecture). Her interest in Basic Income comes from researching "Mincome" which was a three-year basic income experiment in Manitoba during the 1970s. It was Mincome that inspired Ontario's more recent experiment.

After defining basic income and giving the reader a taste of her research, Forget elaborates how employing basic income will alleviate the costs of health care in Canada. She writes:

And yet our hospitals are full of people who are there not because they have bad luck or faulty genes, but because they have spent years living in deteriorating housing, working badly paid and physically demanding jobs, eating inad-

equated diets and living with economic insecurity and the stigma associated with poverty. Their bodies are not injured as much as worn out; chronic conditions such as diabetes, hypertension, arthritis and cardiovascular disease have replaced infectious diseases as the primary causes of hospitalization and death, and chronic conditions even more than infectious diseases are strongly influenced by the broader circumstances of our lives.

Forget suggests that our current efforts to help those living in poverty are helpful but do not resolve the problem at its root. Poverty does not just affect those who are on welfare or disability and the homeless. She stresses that the working poor are one of the largest groups of people that basic income can

Social and Ecological Justice Huron: Lenten Study

BASIC INCOME FOR CANADIANS

February 22: Introduction & Chapter 1

March 1: Chapters 2 & 4

March 8: Chapters 3 & 5

March 15: Chapters 6 & 7

March 22: Chapters 8, 9 & 10

March 29: Chapter 11

help. This information is used as a springboard by Forget for us to consider other social justice issues beyond poverty to women's rights, people of colour, and everyone's right as a human being to live with dignity. She forecasts the future of work and how this will change as more jobs are replaced with machinery. Then to ensure that the reader has well understood her, she clarifies what basic income is and isn't by dispelling some myths like: basic income being an "attack on the social welfare system," or that good jobs in small communities will disappear, or the loss of low-wage jobs will reduce the number of people working and shift those jobs abroad, etc.

Forget concludes with a few potential models for a basic income in Canada and how we might reach these targets. She reminds us that anyone can hit a bump in the road and get tangled in the weeds. It is our job as a community to help everyone through rough patches because we will all experience

ups and downs in our lives and everyone deserves a second chance. Evelyn Forget shows compassion for the underdog and a desire for their success in life. Her final words are motivational - that basic income is possible and that by examining our values, we can prioritize basic income as a way forward. Although Forget does not bring faith into the equation, her plight screams social justice and it isn't hard to imagine Jesus or the good Samaritan in her words.

Forget has since added information to her 2018 edition in regard to COVID-19 and how that has impacted us. Those who read along and wish to participate in the Lenten study can read either version as it will make for some interesting conversation. Join us on Zoom on Mondays during Lent at 7pm! Email us at sejh@diohuron.org to register.

Caroline Sharp is a member of the diocesan Social and Ecological Justice Committee.

Supporting our reflexivity and openness

By Rev. Canon Val Kenyon

My sheep hear my voice. I know them, and they follow me.
John 10:27

I have always loved this verse from the Gospel of John for it contains what at first glance seems a simple, forthright approach to being a disciple of Jesus.

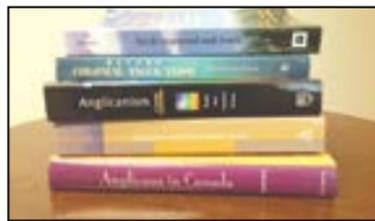
We hear the Shepherd's voice, we are known by the Shepherd, and consequently we have the good sense to follow. While all this seems straightforward enough it can, from time to time, also be somewhat more complicated.

Some months ago, when actively engaged in my studies, I was introduced to the term reflexivity. When being reflexive we are being asked to examine



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.

our feelings, our reactions, our perspectives and our motives as these all have influence on what we are doing or in what we are thinking about a certain situation. As humans we are all complicated and carry that complexity around with us in all that we do, think and speak. Who we are is in a very real way the result of all the experiences we have had in our lives.



These experiences have formed and shaped us. While exactly how all these experiences then interact with the "voice of the shepherd" referenced in John above, is as varied as we are, and yet the fact that they do influence us is undeniable. At some level we all know this, but there are moments we forget this. How then, as those wishing to follow the shepherd, do

we acknowledge those things in our lives that predispose us in one direction or another and that ultimately may hinder our hearing that voice of the Shepherd?

Of course, awareness of these influences is usually the best place to begin, but beyond that lies the place, or perhaps better, the path of vulnerability, that way where we dare openness to God's Spirit. Being vulnerable takes courage, and trust, in both the voice of the Shepherd and in those with whom we journey. Within the Education for Ministry gatherings, the aim is always to create a safe space for regular theological reflection that can play a role in supporting reflexivity and openness.

As we continue in the days of COVID, sorting out as we

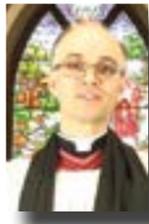
go what it is to be church in these days, and what it is to be a follower of Jesus in an ever-changing landscape, now more than ever we strain to hear the Shepherd's voice. Through all of this, we find both our comfort in being fully known by that same Shepherd and the grace to be open to all that is next.

If you are interested in learning more about the art of theological reflection as presented within Education for Ministry, or to explore the role it plays in our ongoing growth and development, please contact Libi Clifford, the Diocese of Huron EfM Coordinator or myself Val Kenyon at: EFM@huron.anglican.ca

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

What keeps you coming back?

It has been my experience in ministry that often the sharing of stories of “successful” congregations can elicit feelings of grumpiness in some, eyerolling in others and even skepticism on the part of those who may not have shared in the same ministry experiences.



**GROWING
BEYOND THE
DOORS**
**REV. GRAYHAME
BOWCOTT**

Sometimes these responses are followed with comments such as: “right, that’s the ‘trendy’ church” or “if only we had their resources” or even “well, don’t they think highly of themselves.”

Comments such as these reveal an underlying trend of congregationalism and competitiveness amongst the parishes in our Diocese. When one neighbour looks to another with growing resentment at the contrast between the perceived blessings of one church and experienced hardships found in another. Sometimes this is described as “the grass is greener effect,” – greener for them, not us.

I have also struggled to understand why feelings of resentment can be so prevalent in the Anglican Church. What is wrong with celebrating the places where ministry is flourishing? Surely the definition of a “successful” congregation or parish differs according to various contexts and scales of ministry? Instead of fixating on the jealousy found in thinking “the grass is greener” for others, shouldn’t struggling congregations



ask the question: “I wonder what type of fertilizer they might be using?”

All of these questions were front of mind for me when designing a survey that would be filled out by 1044 participants from twelve Anglican congregations (six in Huron, six in Toronto) identified as having grown numerically over a ten-year span of time. I wanted to further explore how congregations that had been identified according to one single element of “success”, this being their numeric growth of membership, reported their reasons for their vibrancy. Getting to the very heart of the debate about what makes for a growing church was to ask those in the pews: “what keeps you coming back here?”

Before diving into the results of the survey, let me say that over the years I have heard lots of opinions on this topic. I’ve heard arguments that certain styles of church are more attractive than others. Others have suggested that church politics play a large role. There have also been studies published that focus solely on clergy leaders, many of them concluding that the charismat-

ic gifts of our clergy are what make or break a congregation. It is also very important to state that numeric growth is not the sole indicator of a healthy faith community, but only one indicator of congregational vitality. But what did the folks in the pews have to say?

Just under 500 respondents in the Diocese of Huron reported the following: 58.67% of them shared that they keep coming back to their church of choice because they believe their congregation to be welcoming and supportive. When asked to further expand on this statement, participants described their welcoming church in various ways: “it feels like a family for me,” “I belong here,” “when I am missing, others notice,” “as a newcomer I felt included,” and my favourite comment: “personal relationships really matter in my congregation!”

The second most reported reason for coming back to church, at 33.53% of respondents in Huron, was that they like their priest. When asked to further explain what they like about their priest, the vast majority of responses described the pastoral side of ministry:

“our minister remembered my name on the second visit,” “Fr. X actually came to visit me in the hospital,” “she is like an adoptive grandparent to my children,” “our priest is authentic – a real person!” and “she makes me feel like I belong here.”

The third and fourth motivating factors for attending a particular congregation were a preference for Anglican Liturgy (12.4%) and “feeling God’s presence” in connection to that particular church (11%).

Considering these responses in light of the many possible answers that participants in growing Anglican congregations could have offered (like preaching, theology, music ministries etc.) there is a commonality in the top four responses that should be encouraging to each and every Anglican church in our Diocese – they really don’t have anything to do with the “grass is greener” effect.

Any congregation can choose to be welcoming and supportive, if they are intentional about practicing Christian hospitality within their community. Churches don’t need to have vast resources to welcome others and care for their existing members. In fact, sometimes a fixation on resources can become a stumbling block for congregations seeking to be more welcoming.

Likewise, having clergy leaders participate in the welcoming and supporting atmosphere of a congregation can be a goal for any church, if the congregation allows for these individuals to have the time in their routines to do so. (Some of our clergy are so bogged down with administrative tasks that parishioners rarely have a chance

to see them at all outside of Sunday worship!).

I am also deeply encouraged by the feedback that a love of Anglican liturgy and an experience of God’s presence in their congregations are listed as top reasons that draw others to become regular members. I would argue that an absence of these characteristics might suggest the Church was straying from its vocational purpose or missional identity – as being communities where the worship of God leads others to experience God’s presence in their lives.

Lastly, in a time of the year when many congregations reflect on their growth strategies, mission plans and agendas for Vestry, perhaps the timing is ripe (even in a pandemic!) for us to be reflecting on the following questions: Do we, as congregations desire to foster new relationships and grow? If so, how might we become more welcoming of newcomers and supportive of our existing members? How might we free up our clergy in ways that allow for them to be pastoral, personal and more relatable to people in the community?

Being intentional about deliberately fostering congregational relationships isn’t expensive, it isn’t ‘trendy’ and it doesn’t have to be hard work. I encourage you in this 2021 year – to adopt this as a priority in your congregation if you aren’t doing so already!

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

Building relationships: more than hitting the “like” button

If the pandemic is teaching us one thing, it is the importance of the web-based tools in maintaining relationships.



**MEDIA
BYTES**
**REV. MARTY
LEVESQUE**

This is true with family and friends as we once again are self-isolating through a second lockdown. This is also true for staying in touch with parishioners.

Many parishes have adapted and are making greater uses of Facebook Live, YouTube and



Tithe.ly

Zoom. But to have that personal contact that we are missing from the lack of in-person services and coffee hours, phone trees have sprung to life again and the lost art of writing notes delivered through snail mail is back in vogue.

In short, digital tools must augment our relationships, not replace them with a click of a “like” button. Social media and digital platforms are meant to

bolster relationships.

Tithe.ly Church Management Software is another tool in the modern parishes’ relationship-building toolbox.

It is a robust database that tracks events, groups and even provides a place to store all those minutes taking at each committee meeting. Treasurers can track givings, generate tax receipts and produce monthly reports with ease.

Tithe.ly Church Management Software is a database that tracks events and groups. Treasurers can track givings, generate tax receipts and produce monthly reports with ease. But the most powerful tool for relationship building is the ability of this management software to generate various reports.

But the most powerful tool for relationship building is the ability of the ChMS to generate various reports. Birthday and anniversaries are built-in reports generated each month to enable birthday or anniversary blessings mailed to parishioners. Custom reports for life’s big moments like baptism, weddings and funerals can also be created. The importance of receiving a hand-written note

on the anniversary of the passing of a loved one, the baptism of a child or celebrating that first year of marriage goes so much further in relationship building than hitting the “like” button on Facebook.

Rev. Marty Levesque is the diocesan social media officer and rector of All Saints’ in Waterloo.

martylevesque@diohuron.org

Counting your blessings: the lessons of the pandemic

I was permitted to share the story of one of my congregants. He and his wife go to another country every winter. This year, because of the pandemic, they were grounded.



AS I SEE IT

REV. JIM
INNES

This was a significant shift in lifestyle. Their trip abroad, in the late fall of the year, was a long-standing tradition.

They took it on the chin. And as they settled into their imposed reality, they decided to decorate for Christmas. They hadn't done this for many years. As they went searching through stored boxes of decorations, they soon discovered themselves reminiscing. As they reminisced, they began to experience feelings attached



The other side of COVID can make for us a brighter future. But this requires trust that the process of life can, and will, take us somewhere great. Otherwise, we can, and will, get trapped in quicksand.

The pandemic is breaking down those self-reassuring hallmarks. And as an ice flow stretching itself over land, the pandemic is grinding out new touchstones, new ideas about what we hold as tradition.

Consequently, and whether we wish it or not, all of creation will never be the same.

My intent is to be optimistic. And I'd like to share a poem written by Kitty O'Meara (a retired teacher and chaplain).

And the people stayed home. And read books, and listened, and rested, and exercised, and made art, and played games, and learned new ways of being, and were still. And listened more deeply. Some meditated, some prayed, some danced. Some met their shadows. And the people began to think differently.

And the people healed. And, in the absence of people living in ignorant, dangerous, mindless, and heartless ways, the earth began to heal.

And when the danger passed, and the people joined together again, they grieved their losses, and made new choices, and dreamed new images, and created new ways to live and heal the earth fully, as they had been healed.

The other side of COVID can make for us a brighter future. But this requires trust that the process of life can, and will, take us somewhere great. Otherwise, we can, and will, get trapped in quicksand.

As I see it, to find a brighter future, we must look for ways to remain connected to our pandemic experience. And by that, I don't just mean connecting to the highs and lows of our inner life. I also suggest not getting lost in some grief trap in which we wiggle and squirm in a vain attempt to be free of it. But instead to surrender to what is inevitable, to what we, together as a community, are experiencing.

As the poem suggests, and without taking away from any suffering, this pandemic experience can be powerfully liberating. When the clouds drift away and the sun shines on our backs again, life will be different. The only question is, will that new day (which will come) be a blessing filled with grace, or will we (and the earth) be more deeply wounded than it was before?

Rev. Jim Innes is the rector of the Regional Ministry of South Huron.

jiminnes@diohuron.org

The shrine of the martyrs and the footsteps of pilgrims

In the midst of all the experiences, both bad and good in 2020, there has been the opportunity to journey each day to the gardens around Canterbury Cathedral for Morning Prayer with the Dean.



A VIEW FROM
THE BACK PEW

REV. CANON
CHRISTOPHER
B. J. PRATT

He attracted media attention around the world when a videographer captured the image of the cat, who has joined the Dean each morning, strolling in between his legs, and disappearing under his cassock! As Dean Willis offered Morning Prayer from the Gardens on the cold and frosty morning of December 29th, he reminded his viewers of the significance of the Fifth day of the Christmas Season for the Canterbury Cathedral community and all who are part of the worldwide Anglican Communion.

Five days after Christmas in the year 1170, several knights entered Canterbury Cathedral during the Vespers Service and murdered Archbishop Thomas Becket. The knights believed they were carrying out their mission on behalf of King Henry II, who they had heard challenge his courtiers, saying, "Who will rid me of this troublesome priest?"



Unsplash

As a boy of nine, travelling with my parents, we were part of a pilgrimage tour through the Cathedral. The Resident Canon, who was our guide, engaged members of our group (including me!) to take the roles of the knights as we stood at the exact place where the Archbishop was killed. As you may gather, this generated a vivid memory which has stayed with me through the years.

Early in my ministry, along with Bishop David Ragg, I had the opportunity of participating in a Summer School programme offered in Canterbury. After meeting with the Dean, I received an invitation to celebrate and preach on the Feast of St James. That special moment took place in the Corona Chapel of the Cathedral. The Chapel had been built to create a space where pilgrims who came to the Cathedral would be able to offer prayers in the presence of the Archbishop's relics and Shrine. It was an amazing

experience as the Celebrant for that Eucharist to stand with my back to the East wall of the Cathedral, pausing to look past the former site of the Shrine, past St Augustine's Chair, past the Choir, through the Nave to the Great West Doors and think about the all those who had been within those walls over the centuries. Another profound memory, indelibly etched into my mind.

Years later, as the representative of the Diocese of Huron on the National Board of the Canadian Compass Rose Society, my wife Carolyn and I were able to join Bishop Bennett and other Canadians as we participated in the Annual Meeting of the International Compass Rose Society with Archbishop Rowan Williams, in Canterbury. As a part of our experience, Dean Willis led us on an Evening Candlelight Pilgrimage through the Cathedral. I encourage you to connect up with the Canterbury Cathed-

dral website, where you will be able to follow in the footsteps of pilgrims, who, through the years, have made the journey to Canterbury and who visit the site of Becket's Martyrdom.

The Altar of the Corona Chapel has a frontal with words taken from T.S. Eliot's play, "Murder in the Cathedral", which was written for the Cathedral community in 1935.

*The Blood of the Martyrs and Saints
Shall Enrich the Earth
Shall Create the Holy Places*

No longer exclusively designated as a place to remember a martyred Archbishop of the 12th century, the Corona Chapel is now being claimed as a place in which to remember Modern Day Martyrs. We begin to observe Lent 2021 on Ash Wednesday, February 17th, a day which, in some parts of the Anglican Communion is a day also given to commemorate the martyrdom of Archbishop Janani Luwum of Uganda, who was shot to death on the orders of President Idi Amin in 1977. The swords of the 12th century have been turned into the bullets of the 20th century and the bombs of the 21st century. All too often our news is saturated with the suffering which surrounds us, as people of faith seek to be faithful and then must deal with the consequences of their faithful witness.

Archbishops Becket and Luwum spoke Truth to Power. As people of faith, we seek to follow their example... not to seek out martyrdom... but to stand

for what we believe to be right and not what may be perceived to be convenient. The journey through life is reflective of the act of Pilgrimage.

The journey towards a Holy place is not always easy. These days, the option of a physical journey anywhere is limited. We may simply have to settle, for the moment, with a video link that takes us to another part of our global village. The journey of the soul is a life-long pilgrimage, yet one which may be set within the framework of the Season of Lent.

I hope that this Pilgrim's Prayer from the Canterbury Cathedral community will help to guide you through the Season of Lent 2021.

*O God, Be for us our Companion on our walk,
Our Guide at the crossroads
Our Breath in our weariness
Our Protection in danger
Our Refuge on the way
Our Shade in the heat
Our Light in the darkness
Our Consolation in our discouragements*

Our Strength in our intentions
So that with your guidance, we may arrive safe and sound at the end of the road enriched with grace and virtue.

May we return safely to our homes filled with joy, in the Name of Jesus Christ the Lord.

Rev. Canon Christopher B. J. Pratt has retired from full time parish ministry, but continues to offer priestly ministry in the Diocese of Huron.

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Look for someone who has found a ray of sunshine

February's column is always the hardest to write. With vacation days around the Christmas season, I can be writing up to six weeks before you might read my words.



**MOSTLY ABOUT
RELIGION**
**REV. CANON
KEITH
NETHERY**



The subject of this column is life. Live it! To the fullest! Look for hidden gems on the toughest days! Never let dull and drab be the words you use to describe a day in which God loves you.

Today, for me, is December 22. What could I possibly write about today that would have any hope of being insightful in early February? I can't rehash Christmas, cause it will be old news by the time you cozy up with the paper or your tablet to read the happenings of Huron. Just two days until the lockdown begins as I write, God please tell me it's over when this is published. Nothing that I can write about on that subject that won't be blissfully useless when you read.

And this is the time of year that I'm always tired. Even this year, the stress and strain of Christmas planning has been draining: is it off, is it on? How many people can come or what can't we do? It has been just as exhausting as trying to figure out how to pry several hundred

people into St. James on Christmas Eve and enliven the spirits of all of them.

Writing for February is simply a drag. I never get the chance to tell you about how successful Vestry is (or wasn't). The chance to share all those big dreams that are imparted at an annual meeting, runs the risk of those dreams being voted down and I've just shared them with the entire Diocese. I can't brag about how my team is about to win its second straight Superbowl, even though I believe to the core of my being they will be there in Tampa in just a day or two (or a day or two ago if you didn't get around to reading this right away.) I suppose I could pick on the Toronto Maple Leafs as I am oft want to do, but that just doesn't seem right. Besides, who knows if the season has

even started when this lands in your inbox. Good Lord, they might be in first place, or last place! Man, it's a tough time when you can't even pick on the blue and white. This February column is really a problem child. New Year's resolutions. I'll have made, rewritten, reworked, broken, and failed again to keep any number of resolutions over the days between writing and reading. Well, I usually do make the same resolution each year – to not make any resolutions. Now there is a spark of an idea! But who can write an entire column on not making any resolutions?

I'm also facing a bit of writer's fatigue. Way back in March of 2020, we started writing frequent Spiritual Reflections for the good people at St. James Westminster. Sometimes I would write three or more

reflections in a week. That takes a lot of creativity. There are only so many ways to write that God still loves us even in the midst of a pandemic. There were a few brilliant ideas, well at least one or two along the way. But most days it was, oh, oh, I haven't written tomorrow's reflection, so what is it going to be about? I managed to pull it off each time, but trust me finding words was rather distant at times.

I like to think that this column is creative! I like to think that I make you think! But sometimes, it seems there is a conspiracy against me. This might just be one of those days!

So, everything is against me in writing this column. My advice is that you stop reading now. What a desperate person creates when all seems hopeless, can sometimes be rather,

well, dull, boring, silly, and I'm sure I could come up with a few more adjectives if I had felt the need to fill a little more space.

So, the subject of this column is life. Live it! To the fullest! Look for hidden gems on the toughest days! Never let dull and drab be the words you use to describe a day in which God loves you. Life is never easy. Challenges are good for us. That's how we learn, grow, mature, create new skills. It is easy to say that life isn't fair. It's more helpful to look for the silver lining and the way to make life more than it was yesterday.

And you know: maybe this is the perfect column to share during a pandemic. Everything that I have written, really describes feelings of the nearly yearlong battle with COVID. Constant change, tired, frustrated, missing normal and the list goes on. We need to continue to prop each other up; on good days make others feel better. When days are tough, look for someone who has found a ray of sunshine. Together, we can always get through!

Not sure about you, but I suddenly feel much better about this column.

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Groundhogs and hearts

What do you get when you put a groundhog and a heart together? Well you get February!



**LAUREL
PATTENDEN**



What do you get when you put a groundhog and a heart together? A movie called Groundhog Day!

Hopefully, you have seen this movie. If you haven't, please take the opportunity to watch it. The main character is Phil who is a very self-centered weatherman. He travels, with his crew, to a small town called Punxsutawney. His assignment is to do a newscast covering the local Groundhog Day festival. Two things you need to know about Phil.

First, he meets a young woman named Rita. She is not at all impressed with him but he is very attracted to her. Secondly, when Phil arrives in Punxsutawney he is quite a jerk.

Phil has to spend an extra night in a small inn because of a snowstorm. He wakes up only to find that it is not a new day but the same day, Groundhog Day. He relives this same day over and over leading him through different scenarios despite the consequences, because he knows that he gets to relive the day again anyways.

So, his one day, Groundhog Day, drifts by repeatedly until he realizes the emptiness of his lifestyle. Phil was living with a locked-down, shutdown heart. He knows he needs to change in order to win the heart of the young lady, Rita and to enjoy his life. Phil starts to change his behaviour. He slowly learns poetry to recite to Rita and to play the piano for her. He becomes kinder and more thoughtful of her and others. With each day, his life is brighter and he grows closer to Rita. He was committed to change. In the end Phil finds life and love with Rita.

Writing this column in the early days of the second lockdown (January 2) I feel a little like Phil. Day after day in the house. Retired life during a lockdown. Everyday day starting to feel like a repeat of the day before. I can sleep in. I can stay up late. I can overeat or not, exercise or not. Each day feeling more and more the same. A tad aimless and not much drive. The same people walk by, at the same time of day, with the same dog. You would think they could at least amuse me by changing dogs! But alas, they do not. However, for me, unlike

Phil, time is passing, and I do face the consequences of my choices!

We have read that this is the day the Lord hath made. We are to rejoice and be glad in it. As my lockdown days stack up my rejoicing and gladness seem to be disappearing. My commitment to having enriching days is waning. I am wasting my gifted days. Are you feeling this too? Can I learn or relearn this gladness in the coming days. What can I slowly change in my lockdown, shutdown heart?

I am thinking February is a great month for change. It is for the groundhog. As the sun gets stronger and the days get longer the groundhog can feel the draw of this light. Just like the groundhog we too are looking for light, especially this year. So I am going to schedule some rejoicing and gladness. Unlike the groundhog we don't have to leave our burrow to feel it or see it. It shines through our windows!

This February maybe I can learn by example from Phil. Have our mouths also become shutdown to speak sweet words? Do we need to unlock our ears to the sweet sound of

poetry. It certainly is a time for sweet words. I need to hear some sweet words. How about you? My hands have stopped making beautiful things. Phil learned to make beautiful music with his hands. Are you making beautiful things? It certainly is a time for making beauty. Phil knew it was time and we know it is time, too.

I need to commit to the gift of a new day. Perhaps you feel the same way. It wasn't easy for Phil but he did overcome being a total jerk. He committed to thoughtfulness and kindness and received joy and gladness.

We can commit to the new day. We can find joy and gladness. We can reopen our locked-down, shutdown hearts. It will not be easy because of the pandemic. However, it will be a lot easier for us than for Phil. Why? We are not starting out as total jerks!

What do you get when you put a groundhog and a heart together? A day that the Lord has made. Rejoice and be glad in it! Have a good February.

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

