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NIAGARA ANGLICAN

A Gathering Place and a Sounding Board for the People of the Diocese of Niagara — Since 1955

A section of the Anglican Journal



MAY 2025

St. Paul's Caledonia *Abuzz*

Over New Beekeeping Project

THE REVEREND JANN BROOKS

Things are positively buzzing around St. Paul's Caledonia as the community celebrates a successful pitch for the Walking on Water (WOW) grant. The Bee Team, dressed in logo tee-shirts and others in full bee costumes, made an impressive presentation on February 8th, and the excitement continued in March when they learned they had secured the grant.

With spring in full swing, the team is collaborating with The Humble Bee company from Hamilton to establish two hives on the property of Doug Gingrich, parishioner and local farmer. The beekeepers are

undergoing training and are eagerly anticipating the arrival of their Queen and her community of bees.

This project is missional in two significant ways. Firstly, it aims to protect the ecosystem, highlighting the crucial role bees play in food production. "One out of every three forkfuls of food we eat is due to the work of bees," said team member Lynn Horlick. St. Paul's is committed to environmental stewardship, growing a garden for the local food bank and tending a mini-forest of 400 trees as part of the Anglican Communion Forest worldwide.

Secondly, the project reaches out to new neighbours in the Avalon estate, inviting them to join in beekeeping, gardening, or

honey harvesting. "We believe that making friends and showing the community that we are friendly, welcoming, and open is the first step for us to show we are missional," said Rector Jann Brooks. The church hopes that this initiative will foster fellowship and eventually lead to worship and study.

St. Paul's is buzzing with excitement as they prepare for the move-in day of their new bee community, embodying their mission to protect the environment and build strong community ties.



Above: Using his antennae Daryl Horlick O.N. tickles Queen Bee the Reverend Jann Brooks into gales of laughter during their WOW grant pitch! They find joy in all they do!

Left: Gail Bell O.N. demonstrates a bee "happy dance" as it gathers nectar, while Lynn Horlick looks on.

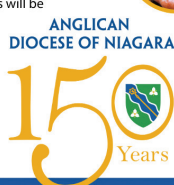
Photos: Contributed by Jann Brooks



ANNIVERSARY PICNIC

Celebrate 150 years of rich diocesan children, youth, and family ministry within the Diocese of Niagara. Join us for fun, games, and food. Hot dogs and vegetarian options will be served for lunch.

Calendar icon Saturday, June 14, 2025
Clock icon 11:00AM - 2:00PM
Location pin icon Canterbury Hills Camp
509 Lions Club Rd, Dundas



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED Contact Sarah Bird: sarah.bird@niagaraanglican.ca

Images: Contributed by Diocese of Niagara/CYFM

It's a Family Picnic

... and You're Invited!

The Diocesan Children, Youth, and Family Ministry Network invites you to join us in celebrating the Diocese of Niagara's 150th anniversary! Join us for a day of fun, games, and fellowship at the beautiful Canterbury Hills Camp. This special event will be a time to create unforgettable memories as we celebrate children, youth, and family ministry, and our rich diocesan history!

Picnic Details

Date: Saturday, June 14th | 11:00 AM – 2:00 PM
Location: Canterbury Hills Camp, Dundas
Food: BBQ hotdogs (vegetarian options available)

If your parish plans to attend or if you're interested in volunteering, please contact Sarah Bird: sarah.bird@niagaraanglican.ca. Volunteer hours are available. We look forward to seeing you there!

Say Yes! to Kids:

Supporting Children and Youth in the Diocese of Niagara

MICHELLE HAUSER

The Say Yes! to Kids campaign, led by the Anglican Foundation of Canada (AFC), has become a transformative force for children and youth ministries across the Diocese of Niagara since its inception in 2021. Over the past four years, this initiative has inspired Anglican communities to support creative, inclusive, and impactful programs that nurture the next generation.

Since the Diocese of Niagara first joined the Say Yes! to Kids movement, local parishes and community ministries have received more than \$43,000 to sustain and expand their youth programs. In 2021, the campaign funded projects like the Kids' Spirit Reboot at Grace Anglican Church in Milton, the youth drop-in program at St. Luke's Anglican Church in Smithville, and the 5G Project led by the

diocesan Children, Youth & Family Ministry Network. More recently, Canterbury Hills Camp received support to replace vital outdoor equipment, and All Saints Anglican Church hosted a Family Fun Day through campaign funding. These grants have made a tangible difference in helping children and youth build confidence, learn new skills, and grow in community.

Looking ahead, the 2025 Say Yes! to Kids campaign will focus on amplifying the impact of community-based programs like Canterbury Hills Camp, which has served young people in the Hamilton area for 65 years. As Canterbury Hills faces rising operational costs, the campaign will help replace aging Adventure Camp equipment—like tents, paddles, and lifejackets—to ensure campers' safety and provide transformative outdoor experiences.

Sarah Bird, Missional Formation Coordinator for the Diocese of Niagara, is passionate about the ongoing collaboration with AFC, stating, "The Say Yes! to Kids campaign has empowered our Diocese to grow our youth ministries and respond to the evolving needs of children and families. This year, we are focusing on equipping the Canterbury Hills Camp with the resources it needs to continue making a difference."

For every \$20 donated to the Niagara campaign, \$4 will support AFC's Kids Helping Kids Fund to benefit national youth ministries, with a special emphasis on national Indigenous youth programs. Your support helps empower young people not only in Niagara but also across Canada. The Say Yes! to Kids movement continues to have a national impact, having provided more than \$755,000 in funding to



over 150 youth-focused initiatives across the Anglican Church of Canada.

To give generously to this year's Say Yes! to Kids campaign in Niagara, please visit www.tinyurl.com/chsaysyes.

For more information or to learn how you can support Canterbury Hills Camp, please

contact Zya Aspden at 905-648-2712 ext. 3 or by email at camp@canterburyhills.ca

Michelle Hauser is the development and communications officer for the Anglican Foundation of Canada.

World Day of Prayer Celebration at Holy Trinity, Fonthill

LYN ADDARIO

Approximately sixty people from eight churches in Fonthill and guests gathered, Friday March 7th at Holy Trinity Anglican Church, Fonthill. In celebration of the World Day of Prayer, they were greeted by the sound of ocean waves and ladies from the parish who were adorned with floral garlands or leis as they are known in the Cook Islands.

Sewing together the blossoms of artificial flowers that were donated by friends and relatives, the ladies of our parish replicated the real flower garlands that the Women of the Cook Islands create to wear for celebrations. Each year WDP committees from different countries around the world write the service used. For this year, the World Day of Prayer Committee of the Cook Islands wrote this lovely service based on the theme "I Made You Wonderful" from Psalm 139 for the Women's Inter Church Council of Canada and shared their written service with parishes. All offerings and donations collected during these services and online, support grants that aid women's needs across Canada and around the world.



Before the service, a group from our parish met for a Bible study discussion on the Psalm 139, "I Made You Wonderful."

The use of centering and connecting exercises, and ocean waves to enhance meditation were found to be relaxing. The personal stories of Cook Island Women and the country background were interesting, and the prayers were peaceful. The hymns, "God Who Knows Us," "Wonderfully Made," and "Spirit, Spirit of Gentleness" were sung accompanied by Dianne Williams and Mike Hughes along with

the World Day of Prayer Lord of the Dance video to conclude the service made for an uplifting afternoon.

On display was a beautiful shell necklace directly from the Cook Islands that Gertrude Cutress from Pelham Community Church shared from when her husband had worked there.

An island decor reception followed which included fruit punch, coffee, tea and goodies all featuring pineapple and coconut along with animated conversation comparing the Cook Islanders problems and needs



Since the World Day of Prayer service was written by the committee from the Cook Islands, the decor and activities of the day were based on the Cook Islands.

Images: Paul Verroche

with our own.

Many thanks must go to all our parishioners who worked together tirelessly to promote and present this spiritual outreach to our community and to Paul Verroche who took photos.

Donations supported World Day of Prayer itself and the WDP grant programs.

A list of 2023/2024 grants can be found at wdpcanada.ca/grant-programs/ for more detailed information.

Next year the World Day of Prayer 2026 in our community will be hosted by the Kirk-on-the-Hill parish on Haist Street in Fonthill.



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Who Do We Say That He Is?

Faith, Art, and the Power of Perception



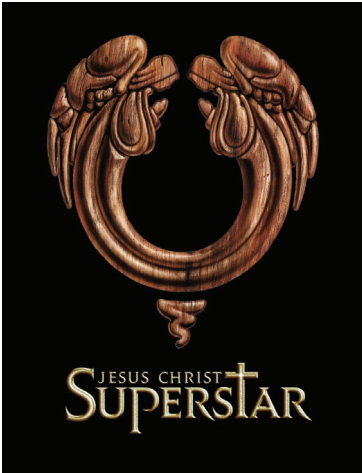
THE REVEREND MICHAEL COREN

These days, the musical *Jesus Christ Superstar* is seen as rather safe. Nothing shocking, nothing to worry about, and there's much more provocative stuff even on mainstream cable television. That certainly wasn't the case back in 1970 when Tim Rice and Andrew Lloyd Webber couldn't find any funding for the production and had to release it as a concept album. But it did extraordinarily and surprisingly well and was quickly turned into a Broadway show. After transferring to London, it held the record for the longest-running musical in the west end. Until *Cats* came along, of course.

More than half a century later, it's become controversial again because it was recently announced that Cynthia Erivo, best-known for playing Elphaba Thropp in the movie *Wicked*, will star in the 2025 Hollywood Bowl production. She's black, a woman, and identifies as queer. This was more than enough to mobilize the conservative Christian media and mob, empowered as they are at the moment by the enthusiastic support of the Trump administration.

Pastor John K. Amanchukwu, for example, said that "With all due respect, and humbly submitted, Cynthia Erivo is too bald, brown, and bi to play Jesus. Casting a woman as Jesus Christ is an intentional form of blasphemy that Hollywood would be fuming over if done to certain other religions." And so on and so on.

Which was all somewhat ironic because the very same sort of people as these were roaring 50 years ago that the musical itself was anti-Christian and an insult to the church. Now, they're defending its sanctity. And it is, remember, merely a musical, a



secular rock opera that's a long way from the Gospels, sympathetically emphasizes the role of Judas, and depicts Jesus as being uncertain and even conflicted. But it does have lots of lovely tunes that we can all remember even if we don't want to!

So, why does it matter if Jesus is played by a gay woman of colour? He was actually a 1st-century Jewish man, likely olive-skinned and with black hair. Or perhaps a redhead, because there's a tradition that both King David and Jesus had red hair, a look still found among Jewish people and likely with origins in the Phoenicians who joined the Mosaic exodus from Egypt. What

he certainly wasn't was a north European, yet that's how he's traditionally been portrayed, and in medieval art, it was usually Judas who was made to appear the most Semitic. If you doubt me, take another look.

Unlike the casting of a musical, this is genuinely problematic in that it led to the expunging of Jesus' Jewishness and allowed Jews to be seen as "the other" and to be treated accordingly, with horrific consequences.

The negative reaction to Erivo's casting obviously contains elements of racism, misogyny, and homophobia, but there's something else, something less directly sinister but deeply disturbing. It's best described as a fundamental misunderstanding of who Jesus was, what he taught, and what he represents. He was an outsider, a disrupter, and a rebel. A man who owned no property, lived with the marginalized, and preached of a world that had to be turned upside down. As a Christian, I also believe him to be the Messiah, the Son of God, but even for those who reject this, the example of Christ is frighteningly provocative and

challenging. This is especially significant in the age of Donald Trump and Christian conservatism and nationalism, with churches throughout the US, and even some here in Canada, lauding the President and his administration as Christian heroes. So, it's a good thing and a God thing that we have this casting of someone who in gender, race, and sexuality reflects not privilege and power but rather some of the many victims of Christianity when it's twisted, exploited, and misunderstood.

It's Mary Magdalene in the musical who sings, "I don't know how to love him", and that question is as profound as it's ever been. We can only properly love Christ if we properly know him, and if people properly knew Jesus, they'd spend less time being angry at shows, movies, and paintings and more at a world that looks so bad but could be so good. Forgive, empathize, listen, reach out, embrace, bring peace, give rather than take, and live by the words of the original superstar. Not great lyrics, but immaculate teaching.

Let's go on a Field Trip!

FELICIA VAN DYK

I first discovered the Ignatius Jesuit Centre after Googling "silent retreats" following an episode of *Fleabag*. I have no shame in sharing this. That search led me to the Ignatius Centre, a place of true quietness, peace, and reflection—a place where you can simply be.

Since then, I've returned many times. I've volunteered on the farm, attended a seedling sale, and participated in a semi-silent retreat. It deepened my understanding of Jesus' divine glory



and grace. I even spent a birthday weekend pulling beets with my best friend! Over time, this space has become special to my family and me.

The Jesuit Centre is truly inspiring, with its interconnected trails, river access, community gardens, farming and St. Loyola

Retreat Centre. The land is carefully sustained by the Jesuits and community members alike. Walking its grounds, you can feel its nourishment and protection. It fills me with both emotion and hope, proof that we can care for the land and each other with divine glory and grace.

Would you like to experience it for yourself?

Join St. John the Evangelist for a special field trip!

Date: Saturday, May 31

(Rain Date: June 7)

Time: 10 AM – 1 PM

Location: Ignatius Jesuit Centre, 5420 Hwy 6, Guelph, ON

Cost: \$15/person or \$40/family (covers event expenses and our visit)

Carpooling available – let me know!

We'll enjoy guided hikes, poetry readings, kid-friendly activities, and a community picnic. You may take part as you wish.

RSVP: Felicia Van Dyk by email at vandyk.felicia@gmail.com

Interested in leading a hike, kids' activity, or poetry reading? Let me know!

Hope to see you there!



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ANGLICAN
DIOCESE OF
NIAGARA

**CALLED to LIFE
COMPELLED to LOVE**

In other words

What C.S. Lewis thought about travel to Mars



JOHN BOWEN

Elon Musk wants to go to Mars. But is that such a good idea? Indeed, should any human being go to Mars? What would we do if we got there? Might we mess up that planet in the ways we are messing up this one? Back in 1997, Carl Sagan wrote in his famous book, *Small Blue Dot*:

“What shall we do with Mars? There are so many examples of human misuse of the Earth that even phrasing the question chills me. If there is life on Mars, I believe we should do nothing with Mars. Mars then belongs to the Martians, even if [they] are only microbes.”

Almost a century ago, C.S. Lewis was already thinking about this issue. The question arose around 1937, when an atheistic student of Lewis’s at Oxford explained that he thought the only hope for the human race

was to colonize other planets. Lewis was already thinking about a story about space travel, and this comment spurred him to write his first work of fiction, *Out of the Silent Planet*.

The story begins with a philologist, Elwin Ransom, suspiciously like Lewis’ friend, Tolkien, also a philologist, who is on a summer hiking tour. (This was an inside joke, because Tolkien hated hiking!) Ransom is kidnapped by two men, named (with rather heavy-handed symbolism) Weston and Devine, who have built a rocket to take them to Mars. We learn that they have already been there once and have come back because they understand the Martians to have demanded a human sacrifice, and so they need a victim.

Once the three men arrive on Mars, the reality turns out to be quite different from the first impression. Ransom escapes from his human captors and is welcomed by some of the inhabitants of Mars, the hrossa, who are animal-like (in human terms) but perfectly friendly. He lives with them, learns their language (his philology training turns out to be very convenient), plays with their children, and even joins in their sports.



Two approaches

The story draws a striking contrast between Ransom’s experience and the way the two scientists view Mars—Malacandra, as the indigenous races call it. Ransom is humble and teachable, and anxious to enter into relationships. Weston and Devine are the opposite. For them, this new world is merely a source of wealth for the human race, and the inhabitants are just an unfortunate obstacle to their greed. The most blatant of their evils is when they shoot Ransom’s closest friend “for pleasure, or in fear, or . . . because they were hungry.”

The climax of the story is when Weston and Devine are brought before the Oyarsa, the archangel who rules Malacandra, to account for their actions. Weston by behaving towards the natives in the tradition of the worst kind

of imperial colonists, treating the Martians as stupid children and offering them beads and other trinkets. Once Ransom has persuaded him to stop making a fool of himself, Weston changes tack and makes a speech, explaining why the human race is superior to other life forms, and why their colonization of other planets and extermination of the indigenous peoples is perfectly justified. However, he does not speak the language. Since Ransom has by now a good working knowledge of the language, he is able to translate—more or less.

Reductio ad absurdum

Unfortunately for Weston—but fortunately for readers who can see the humour—the elaborate and pompous speech is far beyond Ransom’s powers of translation, and he can only translate the speech into the most childlike phrases. Thus, Weston tries to defend human colonization of the universe on the grounds that human beings are more “advanced” than other civilizations. He boasts, for instance, of “our commerce, and our transportation system which is rapidly annihilating space and time.” The best Ransom can do with this is to say that “we exchange many things among

ourselves and can carry heavy weights very quickly a long way.” Thus with every sentence of the translation, Ransom deflates the balloon of Weston’s pretensions. It is significant that Weston (like Uncle Andrew, his equivalent in *The Magician’s Nephew*) is punished with cold water being poured over his head, as if his arrogance has been a form of intoxication—and he needs to be brought to his senses.

Weston’s speech embodies what one author, Shannon Stirone, writing in *The Atlantic* magazine in February 2021, describes here:

“Musk has used the medium of dreaming and exploration to wrap up a package of entitlement, greed, and ego... Musk is no explorer; he is a flag planter.”

Lewis’ novel has become prophetic in recent years. It serves as a sobering reminder that we are merely stewards of this world, not the owners, and that we are responsible to the Creator for what we do with it. As Stirone adds of Musk: “Someone in his position could do so many things on our little blue dot itself to help those in need.” Amen to that.

Denominational jigsaw

DEBORAH BOWEN

It’s funny. People often assume if you’re an Anglican, and especially if you’re a warden, that you’ve been an Anglican for your entire life, and never strayed. Or, never played in any different playground. But my life, and my husband’s life, have been quite different from that. Here’s how.

I grew up in an unchurched family in the south of England. When I was about seven a friend took me to the afternoon Sunday School at her house church, where we learned bible verses and I was given my own bible for “good attendance.” I gave it back: even at seven, I had a strong sense of justice, and I felt my attendance had really not been good enough.

When I was 9 ½ we moved to the country, and my sister and I were sent to the nearest good

school, which was a private girls’ school in the local village, and it happened to be Anglican. I stayed there right through high school and loved it. We had half-days off for Michaelmas and Ascension Day and Whitsun, after we’d all been to the local church in the morning in a crocodile of paired girls. The headmistress wore suits that matched the liturgical colour of the season. There was a service in the chapel once a week, and hymns and scripture at assembly every morning. We learned Bible stories and catechism in class. I got baptized because everyone else had been. I got confirmed four years later because I wanted to be serious about it all. I hoped gold letters would appear on the wall to clarify my faith, but they didn’t.

When I was 18, I went to university. There I met a new kind of Christian: bright, joyful, excited, and serious about faith.

Mainly guys, because in that particular university at that time, the ratio of guys to girls was about 15:1. The Christian group was several hundred strong and very lively: they met weekly for prayer on Saturday mornings, bible teaching on Saturday evenings, and a worship service on Sunday evenings. The group was interdenominational, but the two biggest “student churches” in the area were both evangelical Anglican churches. Encouraged by some of my new friends, I got stuck in.

It was in that group that I met John, my future husband. When I visited his home in North Wales, we went to a little Baptist chapel, with lovely people and a terrible organ. When he visited my home in Surrey, we went to a big Baptist church in the local town, with excellent preaching and lots of warm fellowship. But we mar-



ried in the local Anglican church. Once we were married, John went to an Anglican theological college in Bristol for two years and I taught high school; there we attended a Brethren assembly because John felt we shouldn’t

get too Anglican. The Brethren were a lovely group of people, two of whom had an open house for students every Sunday afternoon. But it was a difficult place

Climate Justice Niagara

End-of-Life Matters:

Exploring Greener End-of-Life Options

ROSEMARY ANSTEY

I have been thinking about what should happen to my body after my death. I care deeply about our environment that God has entrusted to us and I have become aware of the impact end-of-life decisions may have on our earth.

Embalming

Embalming is used to treat a body that the family wishes to display for family and friends to view from an open casket and to extend the time for funeral arrangements. Chemicals are pumped into the body, the main preservative being formaldehyde, which is a highly toxic carcinogen—hazardous to human and ecosystem health. As the body and casket decompose, formalin leaches into the soil. Some funeral homes offer glutaraldehyde embalming fluid which is less toxic by a factor of 40 and is not considered to be carcinogenic.

Caskets

Modern caskets can be simple or ornate. Soil samples taken from graveyards reveal elevated concentrations of copper, lead, zinc and iron. Caskets using



Image: Unsplash/Ian Taylor

sustainable materials such as bamboo, seagrass, willow or other fast-growing renewable resources lined with cotton are preferable. Instead of a casket, the body can be wrapped in a biodegradable burial shroud.

Cremation

Cremation is favoured by many as being more ecofriendly than traditional burials. Though less of an environmental impact than burial, the cremation process requires very high heat for about

two hours. The fossil fuel used to maintain the high temperatures for so long produces about one quarter of a tonne (535 pounds) of carbon dioxide. Cremation remains are placed in an urn and may be buried, scattered or placed in a columbarium. Urns are available made of gelatin and sand which rapidly disintegrate when buried. Families may choose to scatter the remains in favourite locations or ashes may be retained.

Aquamation

(alkaline hydrolysis or water cremation)

This process uses water, alkalinity and heat from electricity to decompose the body leaving only bone fragments, which are dried to produce ash similar to cremation, and a nutrient rich sterile fluid which can be returned to the water treatment facility or used in a garden or green space. The ash may be treated in the same way as that from cremation.

Natural burial

A few cemeteries now offer natural burial sites. The cities of Hamilton and Niagara Falls have such sites. Bodies are buried wrapped in a shroud and the body is placed on a platform made of a material, such as wicker, which will decompose fairly rapidly. The platform is designed to be carried by pallbearers for the funeral service. The City of Hamilton calls the burials natural rather than green as a mechanical digger is used to dig the graves. There is no grave marker, instead the names of those buried in an area are on a plaque. The burial site in Hamilton is covered with grass which requires little or no mow-

ing and a colourful mix of flowers making for a very lovely peaceful memorial place.

Donation to Science

Anatomy students are in need of bodies in order to study the structure of the human body. Highly toxic chemicals, more than used for embalming, are used to preserve the cadavers for up to three years. Complimentary cremation is offered when the bodies are no longer needed and these toxic chemicals become air pollution.

Conclusions

My research leads me to favour aquamation. I was very impressed with the natural burial area in Hamilton but am dismayed at the space taken for graveyards and cemeteries. The process of aquamation produces no emissions and the remains don't take up space in the earth.

Informative websites

- <https://aquamationinfo.com>
- <https://davidsuzuki.org/living-green/green-end-of-life-options>
- <https://www.ontario.ca/page/whole-body-donation>

Denominal Jigsaw

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

to be a woman: we were allowed to pray on Wednesday evenings but not to speak in the services on Sundays.

Then John started work with the Universities and Colleges Christian Fellowship (UCCF) in York, and I taught in a teachers' college there. John's work meant he rubbed shoulders constantly with Christians from every denomination you can think of. At home, the most alive church in the city was evangelical Anglican, right next to the famous Minster, so we went there for four years and learned a whack of stuff. It's still the liveliest local church we've ever been part of.

Then we moved to Canada, for John to work with Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship (IVCF) in Toronto. More interaction with Christians from a wide range of denominations. The nearest local

church to our apartment that had a strong student ministry was Knox Presbyterian, so that's where we went. Long sermons, big heart for missions, big choir. Communion only four times a year, and you got visited by an elder before you were deemed ready to take it.

When we moved to Ottawa, the local church was Anglican. We thought it was a good idea that our kids would see some of their classmates on Sundays as well as at school. The church was small and often a bit wayward: the initial Church School leader was a Buddhist, which made for a fascinating and memorable Nativity Pageant in our first year there. Later we became Church School leaders ourselves. I joined a wonderful bible study group for young moms. John was still working with an interdenomina-

tional team, though his D. Min. studies linked him to a Baptist college (McMaster Divinity College) in Hamilton.

In our last year in Ottawa, I was commuting to Montreal to teach at the Université de Montréal. There I developed a strong friendship with a Catholic grad student who went on to become a priest. So, I got to know a whole lot about Catholicism, experienced Catholic services in many different churches and a couple of monasteries, and had many complex discussions with my friend.

And then we moved to Hamilton. We spent a year travelling around on Sundays to churches of many different denominations, to get a sense of what God is up to in this city, but also to make connections with an interdenominational com-

munity. While I got a teaching job at a Reformed Christian university, John started working for an Anglican theological college. And finally, we settled in our local Anglican church, which we can walk to from our house, and where we've now been for 27 years.

It does feel like home. We love liturgy and weekly eucharist, and being connected to a worldwide church with concerned members involved all over the world. We love being in a church that is connected also to its own rich history, as well as to its scriptural roots. We've realized that fundamentally our sympathies and our aesthetic are Anglican. But we are so grateful for the years of experience we've had with other denominations. We've discovered that few Christians ever have this privilege of experiencing the

riches of other denominational traditions, other ways of doing things, and other flavours of brothers and sisters. Baptists and Reformed folk know their Bibles so much better than Anglicans do, and they're better at tithing; Brethren and Pentecostals know more about listening to the Spirit's guidance in worship; Presbyterians are more used to paying attention to teaching in lengthy sermons and adult bible classes; Catholics know about simple liturgical music and racial inclusiveness; Evangelicals of all stripes are stronger in prayer and concern for mission. So, we know we have been deeply blessed, and we try to bring those blessings with us into our Anglican church home.

Equipping the Next Generation

Highlights from the Youth Leadership Training Program 2025

SARAH BIRD, DR. EMILY HILL, DARLA SMITH AND CHRIS HUANG

The Youth Leadership Training Program (YLTP) has just wrapped up an inspiring and transformative week at the beautiful Canterbury Hills in Dundas, and the energy from this year's cohort is still buzzing. With 20 enthusiastic participants (between the ages of 12–15) from across the diocese, we saw the return of an incredible and growing community that is bringing renewed hope to the future of youth ministry.

After the challenges posed by the pandemic, the program is gaining momentum, thanks in no small part to the dedicated team of seven volunteers who worked hard to re-imagine the curriculum to align with the needs of today's younger generation and the diocesan vision to be Christ-centered, hope-filled, and missionally-focused.

This year, youth were invited to reflect on where they fit in God's story, explore the qualities of leadership exemplified by Jesus, and discover the gifts they already possess as well as those they wish to cultivate. Alongside engaging guest speakers and thought-provoking discussions, the program emphasized hands-on spiritual practices, creative and meaningful forms of prayer and worship, and the vital role of compassion in action, particularly in the interest of justice ministries.

As we celebrate the success of this year's YLTP, we honor the dedication of the participants, including two Year 3 graduates who remained steadfast through the challenges following the pandemic. Their commitment not only helped encourage and uplift the younger cohorts but also ensured the continued legacy of the program. Below, they share their reflections on what this experience has meant to them, and we hear from one of their leaders about the impact of this year's training.

Darla Smith (Year 3)

During my time at YLTP I made amazing memories, great friends and have had so much fun. In my first year, I arrived with little leadership knowledge. Now, in year 3, I'm leaving with

so many lessons and new skills. YLTP has helped make me into the person and leader that I am today. I want to thank my year group leaders, Emily Hill and David Anderson, for all the talks and help with understanding my own faith. Our small group discussions were so helpful and have contributed greatly to my faith journey. I also want to thank Sarah and Donna, the coordinators who always make me laugh and are such a great presence, for all their efforts towards the program. Lastly, I want to thank my year group family, who have made a great environment, and I love how much we bonded. We have come such a long way and have grown so well together over our 3 years. If there was one thing, I learned from YLTP I would say it was to be comfortable with being uncomfortable. In life there are going to be situations where you're going to be uncomfortable but you're going to have to learn that in order to grow you have to take a step outside of that comfort zone. Even though I have to say goodbye, which makes me a little sad, I want to say YLTP has and always will be a staple in my life, and I will never forget the friendships, memories, and family I have made during my time. Thank you so much YLTP!

Chris Huang (Year 3)

In my three years of YLTP, the most prominent value I gained was to embrace challenge. From all awkward year group meets where no one spoke, to volunteering in high ropes, all it takes is one person to step up to make a difference. One's actions influence the tone and energy of the rest of the group, putting leadership on full display.

YLTP provided me and many others with the opportunity to step up and lead people through. An example of this is, sometimes when a year group leader would ask a question, there would be a long awkward silence, but it only takes one person to embrace the fear in that moment to illustrate the brilliance in the rest of the group. I am grateful to YLTP for challenging my comfort zone, encouraging me to step out of it, allowing me to embrace the difficult things in life and not to be scared to express myself. Everyone in this space has bril-



Group photo of the 2025 YLTP gathering

Images: Contributed by Sarah Bird

liant ideas, which the wonderful leaders at YLTP brought out of us.

YLTP also taught me how to appreciate things more. This program brought such a beautiful and diverse group of people who bring such positive energy which makes me appreciate the simpler things in life. The vast sky with shining stars, the food which makes my belly stretch to Mars. The silly conversation and TikTok's made, the beautiful prayers bringing tears to my face. All these things I appreciate, YLTP is truly, so great. Special thanks to Emily Hill and David Anderson, as they made YLTP a warm place to be, raising and nurturing our year group to be amazing individuals, and overall being such great help to all of us. Special thanks to Donna for hosting YLTP, keeping us organized and providing opportunities for the kids here to grow spiritually and as leaders. Your efforts are much appreciated.

Thank you to everyone in the YLTP family for making this such a fun experience. I'd be lying if I said I didn't want to leave the parking lot, but I also would be lying if I said I wasn't a little emotional last night, knowing the next morning would be my last day. All that being said, let's give thanks to God, and may he bless us all.

Emily Hill (Cohort Leader)
Three years ago, I was just stepping into my role as Parish Development Missioner for the diocese when I was invited to experience YLTP as a mentor and year group leader. I jumped at the opportunity, believing wholeheartedly that teenagers are at the heart of God's mission

in our churches, neighborhoods, communities, and cities.

Walking alongside the six youth in my cohort as they grew—not only in leadership but in faith and a deep commitment to living that faith in their daily lives—has been one of the greatest joys of my time in the diocese. I am so proud of them: for the care they show to those around them, the hope they carry for a better world, the joy and enthusiasm they bring, and the courage they have to trust in God and follow where God is leading. Their faith is not passive—it is active, lived, and deeply rooted in a desire to make a difference.

God has abundantly blessed the Church with these young leaders and the many others who

are connected to our parishes and missions, and I urge us all to continue investing in their growth and well-being.

We sincerely thank the volunteers and the diocese for their ongoing support and prayers offered to the Youth Leadership Training Program. Your encouragement has been vital in fostering an environment where young leaders can grow in faith and leadership.

To learn more about the program, to donate to the bursary fund, or to register for YLTP 2026, please email Sarah Bird sarah.bird@niagaraanglican.ca. Your continued support is deeply appreciated as we look forward to another year of transformation.



Year 3 participants planned and led worship.

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Welcoming the Stranger:

Lessons in Hospitality from Monastic Life

**THE REVEREND DEACON
STEPHEN LASALLE**

For the last two years, I have spent a week each February staying as a guest at Glenstal Abbey in Ireland. The Benedictine monks who live there follow the Rule of St. Benedict, an ancient way of life based on the organization of the monastic day into regular periods of communal and private prayer, sleep, spiritual reading, and manual labour.

While monastic life is most often associated with quietness, there is much more to the monastic life than silence. There is not only much to gain from spending time living in such a lifestyle, but there is a great deal we can learn to apply in everyday life at home.

At the core of Benedictine life is hospitality and the foundation of Benedictine spirituality. St. Benedict insisted that hospitality be one of the highest values for monasteries, writing: "Let all guests who arrive be received as Christ." Whether they are familiar or strangers, Benedict is clear that all be shown the "courtesy of love". The rules of St. Benedict offer clear guidance on hospitality: extending it with prayer, humility, genuine kindness, and selfless service to all regardless of their faith belief or culture.

In our communities and neighbourhoods, the "guest" may be a stranger, a friend in the making, those in our community who are marginalized, or our closest friends and family. Whomever it may be, the lesson we can learn from St. Benedict is that hospitality includes being truly present to others, becoming aware of their needs and challenges, and respectfully respond-

ing to them as much as one is able. For those closest to us, we must welcome each other over and again, forgiving each other as we grow together or apart, giving each other grace and space as we become closer in our relationship with God.

At the core of Benedictine life is routine. It is a day scheduled around prayer and time in quiet. Both of which are increasingly

with the monks five times each day. The calming sounds of the monks chanting in the quietness of the church provides a sense of calm that are difficult to express in words.

The quietness of the Abbey throughout the day provides the opportunity for guests, like me, to spend time in private prayer, rest, and reading. Many who stay here spend some of their time



Father Christopher, Guest Master, and Brother Oscar, Assistant Guest Master, having a discussion over breakfast.

Photo: Contributed by Stephen LaSalle

important in our daily lives. Starting and ending our day in prayer provides us an opportunity to pause from the busyness of life to give thanks to our God for all that we have received from Him and to listen to the voice of the Holy Spirit in the quietness.

As a guest staying there, we are invited to follow their day of prayer. We attend the daily office

outdoors, walking the Abbey's expansive grounds. For many, one of the highlights of spending time at Glenstal is the sense of community that quickly develops between the guests staying there. Over breakfast during the morning, sitting with a cup of tea together throughout the day, or by the fireplace in the evening, guests

spend time getting to know each other and learning from each other's stories of lived experience. It is a powerful example that we can model within our own communities. However, to do so requires us to allow people to feel welcome for who they are and

It is through this gift of self-love that we will find true happiness. Happiness is not based on "stuff", but rather on extending a helping hand to others. In a society that emphasizes success and wealth, the monks of Glenstal Abbey are a visible example of what it means to live fully in the service of God each day. Through their ministry as Benedictine monks, we can learn to evaluate our own lives to determine what gives us our meaning and purpose. Ask yourself each day, "Is what I am doing today something that benefits and helps others or does it only further or own interests and self-gain?"

In our own communities and neighbourhoods, the "guest" may be a stranger, a friend in the making, those in our community who are marginalized, or our closest friends and family.

Whomever it may be the lesson we can learn from St. Benedict is that hospitality includes being truly present to others, becoming aware of their needs and challenges, and respectfully responding to them as much as one is able. For those closest to us, we must welcome each other over and again, forgiving each other as we grow together or apart, giving each other grace and space as we become closer in our relationship with God.

Perhaps, using St. Benedict as an example, we can strive to live our life more in balance, devoting time each day to work, study, and prayer. Like the monks of Glenstal Abbey, we can use it as opportunity to provide the same "courtesy of love" to others, especially to those living on the margins of our society, striving to share more love towards others in our day.

Lent Book Study at St. John's Ancaster

With 32 people participating (some of whom are pictured), St. John's in Ancaster explored the book recommended by Bishop Susan Bell for Lent called *A New and Ancient Evangelism: Rediscovering How God Calls and Sends*. This engaging book by the Reverend Dr. Judith Paulsen explores biblical stories of conversion and offers encouragement to readers to become bearers of Good News. The sessions were led by the Reverend Canon

Joseph Asselin, and Dr. Jonathan Juilfs from Redeemer University, who is also an active parishioner

at St. John's. Each evening ended with Compline (Night Prayer) in the church.

Photo: Contributed by St. John's, Ancaster



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Voices of Today Breaks New Ground

with All Female Composers at St. Jude’s in Oakville

NANCY J. COOMBS

International Women’s Day arrived a few days early this year at St. Jude’s Anglican Church in Oakville, ON—female composers were featured on Saturday, March 1, in Voices of Today. This ground-breaking all-day vocal workshop drew over 50 singers from Oakville and surrounding areas. For a grand finale, the Voices of Today Mass Choir performed the freshly rehearsed works for the broader community, presided by St. Jude’s Rector, the Rev. Canon Dr. David Anderson.

Most participating singers had previously only sung a limited number of works by female composers, as “classical composition has been male dominated for centuries. By learning and preparing the music of these fine composers, attendees will hopefully enter more fully into the reality that beautiful music transcends gender, race, creed, or any other factor,” states Sebastian Moreno, Director of Music at St. Jude’s. The historic church located in Old Oakville, established in 1839, has a long musical tradition and seeks to elevate a diverse range of musical voices. The ambitious program included

works by composers Elizabeth Coxhead (UK), Maxine Thévenot (Canadian-American), Stephanie Martin (Canadian), and Joanna Forbes L’Estrange (UK).

An award-winning composer and professor, Stephanie Martin—the workshop’s clinician—was pivotal in selecting the music from some of the “leading female choral composers of our time,” according to Moreno. Each piece has “the same qualities, of being singable and well-crafted for all choirs, which composer Joanna Forbes L’Estrange has identified as her mission when composing,” Moreno elaborated. Martin is Associate Professor of Music at York University: her vocal and instrumental compositions have been performed throughout North America and around the world.

Moreno studied with Martin for his undergraduate and master’s degrees: “Her ability to connect and engage with a community has heavily influenced my career” he said, inspiring him to collaborate on events like Voices of Today. Martin commented on the importance of this opportunity for musicians from a variety of choirs and locales to come together, sharing notes and



Image: Contributed by Nancy J. Coombs

creating a sense of community. She expressed her affection to the singers while conducting them in her work, A Prayer for Love.

The Royal Canadian College of Organists Hamilton Centre co-sponsored the workshop, allowing St. Jude’s to highlight four talented organists as they performed on St. Jude’s newly refurbished 1927/2012 pipe organ during the event. St. Jude’s also organized a lunchtime Lenten Organ Recital Series on

Wednesdays from March 12 to April 9.

The Evensong’s final reading was taken from Hildegard of Bingen’s letter to Elizabeth of Schonau (c. 1150)—it concluded with “O my daughter, may God make you a mirror of life. I too cower in the puniness of my mind and am greatly wearied by anxiety and fear. Yet from time to time, I resound a little, like a dim sound of a trumpet from the Living Light. May God help me, therefore, to remain in his

service.” That day, at St. Jude’s, voices resounded more than a little. The “Living Light” was present in this celebration of the music of female composers.

Nancy J. Coombs is Rector’s Warden, St. Jude’s Anglican Church, and author of *The Audition: Poems of Longing, Limbo and Restoration*.



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Christ Church Woodburn Celebrates Restored Bell and Belfry

In the fall of 2024 Christ Church in Woodburn welcomed back their restored church bell into the restored belfry. For the restoration to happen the bell was removed from the belfry to allow for off-site repairs facilitated by Milnattan Mechanical. Then the belfry was repaired. Upon completion, the parish rector Reverend Claire Wade, blessed the bell while it was on the ground. Then the time came. Milnattan Mechanical raised the bell back into the belfry. The moment of truth, Adrian Peters, the official bell ringer, drew on the rope, and the bell responded by giving that blessed, joyful ring! Hallelujah! Thanks to all involved, as it took a strong, supportive congregation to complete this project!



Left: Workers prepare to raise the bell.

Above: The restored bell in place.

Images: Submitted by Christ Church

Coping with Political Stress



Image: Unsplash/Adrian Swancar

JENNIFER BOWEN

I recently heard someone say: "If you're not anxious, you're not paying attention." While political conflict and tension are always present, for many of us this feels different.

This stress is real, and it's essential to find effective ways to ground ourselves and cultivate peace for ourselves and our relationships—tools God has built for us.

Feelings Are Proportionate

Your distress is likely because something important to you is being challenged. If you care deeply about peacemaking, freedom, or kindness, it's painful to see those values violated

in the news. The more you care, the more it hurts when things go wrong — these values are important, and they run deep.

Signs of political stress include:

- Feeling anxious, low, exhausted or helpless about the future and the direction of society.
- Having strained relationships or loss of belonging with friends, family, or colleagues due to polarized viewpoints.

Practical Strategies

1. Limit media exposure

While it is important to stay informed, be kind to yourself by setting boundaries around media consumption. Consider moving your phone out of

arm's reach, choose your news sources carefully, and set time limits for news consumption and social media.

2. Use your spiritual tools

These times of uncertainty are opportunities to dive into our faith—God's Hope in the face of lament. Deepen your spiritual practices by introducing rituals like daily morning prayer, posting favourite passages in your daily routine, or going on a spiritual retreat. Consider how you best meet with God - we need His eternal perspective.

3. Focus on what you can control

Feeling powerless is a major contributor to political stress. While we cannot control everything happening in the world,

we can take meaningful action in our own spheres of influence through activities like volunteering or letter writing.

4. Strengthen relationships and find support

Political differences can strain even the closest relationships. Prioritize connecting over conflict. Seek common ground and shared values where possible. For example, your family may disagree on political parties but agree on universal health care.

5. When possible, laugh

In mental health, there is a long-held value placed on humour in the midst of pain. When we laugh, God built us to feel the benefits of increased oxygen and endorphins, our bodies' painkillers, pulling us out of fight-or-flight mode. Humour is not ignoring the reality of the stressors but resisting being overcome by them.

6. Prioritize self-care

Your body and mind require attention as much as your car needs fuel. Often misunderstood as indulgent, self-care involves activities that ensure your wellness. It needs to be scaled to fit your present stress. Exercise, hobbies, and good sleep become mandatory.

Gathering

We know churches, Christian schools, and organizations are feeling the effects of this crisis, so we designed this spring's Ministry Mental Health Summit as a time to be equipped, encouraged, and inspired. We have invited wise voices to lead us, including Kay Warren, John Swinton, Curt Thompson, Hilary McBride and Dan Whitehead. We'd be honoured to have you join us this May, May 20-22, at Tyndale Seminary in Toronto.

Moving Forward with Hope and Resilience

Though the world may feel increasingly uncertain, we are not easily broken. God has built us with an incredible capacity to cope by leaning on Him, on loved ones, on community, and on self-care. We can navigate through this next chapter together, co-creating Hope in our hearts and in our world.

Jennifer Bowen is the Executive Director at Shalem Mental Health Network. The development of an early draft of this article was supported by AI.



Government Grant Supports New Programs for Older Adults

THE REVEREND DEACON LARRY COLLINSON

In 2024, The Church of The Nativity received a New Horizons for Seniors grant from the Federal Government to develop Older Adult Programs for the surrounding community residents. The Bartonville Seniors Club was born, and the HAVES programs (Health, Active Vibrant, Energetic Seniors) were started. The HAVES programs are fitness programs designed specifically for older adults and include aerobics, chair aerobics (or Sit and Fit), Tia Chi, and Hawaiian dancing. All fitness instructors are certified.

The Hawaiian Dance Group (Hula Wahines) is looking for older adults, ages 55+, with some dance experience to join them. The Hula Wahines perform for various groups and senior homes



Image: Contributed by Larry Collinson

across the greater GTA, and here at the Church of The Nativity, they have entertained us and our community residents a few times. Liz, the instructor, gets the audience involved by teaching a simple dance, and the laughs and smiles of the community are great to see.

These and future activities are offered at no cost to the participants to remove any financial barrier to participating in leisure time programs. We encourage participants to suggest other programs and services they would like to see offered. We also ask if participants would help organize

these new programs and services. This creates our volunteer core and permits us to offer more varied programs and services with the limited staff available. We are hoping to offer chair yoga and carpet bowling in the fall of 2025 and look forward to more programs to come. Remember the only bad idea is the one not expressed!

Schedule of Programs

Mondays 9:30 a.m. — Aerobics
Tuesdays 10:00 a.m. — Tai Chi
Wednesdays 9:30 a.m. — Aerobics
Thursdays 9:30 a.m. — Chair Aerobics

If you have any questions or suggestions, please call Larry 289-962-6354 or email larryharrp@gmail.com.



Our name has changed. Our work stays the same.

PWRDF is now Alongside Hope

After two years of discernment and consultation, PWRDF's members* have approved a new name. Alongside Hope emphasizes themes of partnership, accompaniment, community and teamwork that have always exemplified the way we work.

With its tagline — Anglicans and partners working for change in Canada and around the world — Alongside Hope honours the legacy of PWRDF as an agency of the Anglican Church of Canada, and it will carry us forward into the future.

As we walk alongside our partners and many supporters, listening and sharing with one another, we embrace and embody the hope of a truly just, healthy and peaceful world.

Scan the QR code to view a video about our new name and read our list of Frequently Asked Questions, or visit pwrdf.org/our-new-name.

* The PWRDF Board of Directors, Diocesan Representatives and Youth Council comprise the voting membership.

alongsidehope.org



Eleanor Lancaster: Holy Person Who Lived Among Us

JOHN BACHER

Photos.

It is a challenge to understand the good impact on the earth and the people who live on it, to think of the holy people we know in our daily lives. One who had a great impact upon me, was my teacher in Sunday school at St. Barnabas Church, Eleanor Lancaster. There she drilled into my head the words of the Great Commandment, “Love Thy Neighbor as Thy Self.”

It was appropriate that at Eleanor Lancaster’s funeral I learned through her eulogy, how she was determined to follow the words of the Great Commandment. Her devotion to caring for others was stressed in her eulogy. It was given by another devout Anglican, her equally determined partner in eco-justice activism, Joanne Atkinson.

Lancaster and Atkinson took on the formidable task of protecting the beauty of Niagara’s landscape, protecting it from toxins, and struggling to ensure that its residents are safely housed. They organized affordable housing for victims of domestic violence. One of Eleanor Lancaster’s greatest achievements was to spearhead the Goodwill Niagara Stokes Project. Eleanor served as the Chair of the Board for Goodwill Niagara and the campaign Chair for the stokes project opening Stokes Community Village in 2007, providing affordable housing for seniors ages 55+ in St. Catharines. Aware of the gaps in the social safety net, she would make her own home available for those difficult to house.

Eleanor’s life, in some ways, was typical of a Canadian meritocracy, struggling with her sister to rescue the family farm in Alberta after her mother’s death. Her dedication as a scholar resulted in impressive degrees from McMaster University and becoming a lecturer, at Ryerson Polytechnic (now Toronto Metropolitan University). One of the happy consequences of her coming to St. Catharines was her happy marriage to Harry Hamilton (Bud) Lancaster. This brought Eleanor Lancaster to subsequent lifelong participation in St. Barnabas church.

Bud Lancaster was a descendent, along with his brother, of the founders of St. Barnabas as a Mission Church of St. George’s



Photo: Provided by George Darte Funeral Home, with permission from the Lancaster family

in 1870. Eleanor explained to me how another of the founders, Dr. Lucius Oille created St. Catharines water system, centered on a reservoir protected by a forest. In her campaign literature which resulted in her final and third re-election to Niagara Regional Council, Eleanor Lancaster pledged to protect this system created by Oille. She reminded voters of her determination to see “the upgrading of our water and sewage system.”

Lancaster’s literature in running for provincial parliament was a vivid prophecy of the destructive impact of corrosive populism which weakens democracy around the world. Here she told voters, “If you care about the environment, vote for Eleanor Lancaster, for she can clearly see the trees and the woods, where some party leaders rely purely on inaccurate scare tactics.”

Eleanor Lancaster was able to show the truth behind her campaign literature when the Niagara Region was threatened by a toxic waste incinerator. This incinerator would have buried contaminated fly ash, containing toxic chlorides. While serving on the Regional Council she organized a mock environmental review hearing on the proposed incinerator, exposing the chloride threat. Opponents were stunned complaining, “Why haven’t we come across chlorides in the documents we’ve read?”

After the mock hearing, when the Environmental Review Tribunal several years later rejected the toxic waste

incinerator, it was done on the basis of the threat of chlorides contaminating ground water which Lancaster had exposed. What caused the “shock and outrage” of the participants in the mock hearing was that many of them had spent long hours going through voluminous reports which had no mention of chlorides.

Eleanor Lancaster had an experience similar to those involved, in reading piles of papers to protect the environment from chlorides through another of her passions, the preservation of historic architecture and landscapes. This caused her to review the election finance returns of a municipal council battle in St. Catharines.

During this time Eleanor Lancaster received a visit from a faithful parishioner at St. Barnabas, Alan Spencer. He was stunned to see piles of paper which spoiled the appearance of her normally immaculate home. She explained that what appeared to be a mess was actually copies of financial statements required through the Municipal Election Act.

After she had cleaned up the mess, Eleanor Lancaster filed a request for an audit for the expenses of four candidates for City Council, three of whom were elected. It was filed with the Compliance Audit Committee of the City which rejected it. She then appealed its decision to deny an audit to the Ontario Superior Court of Justice, in a lengthy series of court battles

called Lancaster v. St. Catharines. (City)

At one point in the court battle, I responded to Eleanor Lancaster’s request to be present at what is termed a discovery procedure in a lawyer’s office on King Street in St. Catharines. I was joined by the then rector of St. Barnabas, the Reverend Richelieu Trent Fraser. We watched her successfully stand up to a grilling, recorded through a transcript. The procedure, Father Fraser told me, resembled something out of a Tudor monarchy era, “Court of Star Chamber.”

While initially Lancaster’s appeal was based on excessive corporate donations using shell companies, attempts by her opponents to demand cost awards were defeated through another error found in the mass of papers

she assembled. This revealed an error in leaving out the names of corporate principals. On appeal, Justice J. W. Quinn of the Ontario Superior Court of Justice drew attention to “the importance of Form 4 and the scrupulous care which should be exercised in its completion.”

The life of Eleanor Lancaster shows how great deeds to protect our threatened planet can be achieved through faithful work with those in the Church, as the *Book of Common Prayer* says, “Militant here on Earth.”



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THE VENERABLE BILL MOUS

Among the questions we receive in the lead up to Synod or around vestry meetings, a fair number relate to our Diocesan Mission and Ministry Assessment (DM&M). What is it? Why do we send funds to the diocesan office? How does it support the work of the Church?

The simplest explanation is that it's a way we share the resources entrusted to our care to support God's mission throughout the world.

You see, deep within our Christian identity is a call to work collaboratively as the Body of Christ to live out God's mission of compassion, justice, healing and hospitality. As Anglicans in the Diocese of Niagara, for more than a hundred and fifty years, we have been, and indeed continue to be, steadfast in our commitment to God's mission of love.

This commitment is embedded in our mission statement: Ignited by the irresistible love of Jesus and renewed by the Holy Spirit, we partner with God to deepen faith, join God's mission, and care for God's world.

All of us—each in our own way—seek to come alongside God to help transform lives as we serve people: people who are hungry, people who are seeking meaning, people who are mourning, people who are in need of refuge, to say a few of the many needs of our neighbours.

We equip ourselves for these essential ministries to which Jesus calls and sends us by generously sharing our time, talents, and resources. It's so inspiring to see the countless ways this happens through our diocese. My heart is full of gratitude with the knowledge that we are such wonderful stewards of the gifts bestowed upon us by the Spirit.

And, moved by our faith, we take part in God's mission



Photo: Contributed by Bill Mous

in ways that go beyond what any one of us can accomplish alone. In many ways, being part of a worldwide communion of churches that has many members is a significant strength that sets us apart from congregational churches. We experienced this strength so potently during the pandemic and it's a beautiful characteristic of our Anglican polity that continues to be so life-giving for the exercise of our common ministry.

As Anglicans, our practice is primarily to support ministry at all levels of the Church through one offering plate. Funds received by local churches are shared with the diocesan, national and international parts of our Church through our Diocesan Mission and Ministry contributions.

We arrive at the amount of these contributions through a formula that was approved by Synod in 2017. Each parish reports their total income in any given year, then eligible ministry expenses, including the costs of clergy stipends, utilities, insurance, and outreach expenses, are deducted for the purposes of calculating the DM&M. This usually results in an assessment of between 15 to 20% of a parish's total income, depending on the deductions applied in any given year.

By tracking with a parish's income, the assessment is also compassionate and responsive, meaning that when revenues are lower, the amount contributed

will also decrease, and vice versa. To this end, we have been seeing encouraging signs of our recovery in that contributions are rebounding from their pandemic low points.

Pooled together, these contributions enable each part of the Church to respond to God's mission in a unique yet concerted way; furthering God's loving purposes in a manner that simply wouldn't be possible for any one of our congregations alone. Perhaps more than ever the Church needs to be responsive to the changing needs of those we serve and this feature of our Anglican identity helps ensure ministry continues to flourish in new and innovative ways.

In our diocese, the gifts shared by parishes enable us to be a diocesan community, support Bishop Susan Bell's episcopal ministry, and ignite our renewed diocesan Mission Action Plan, by calling us to life and compelling us to love in all sorts of amazing ways. The pages of the Niagara Anglican share a snapshot of these stories each month but pull aside our diocesan missionaries Dr. Emily Hill and Canon Ian Mobsby and you'll truly hear how God is working through our diocese in ways that go beyond what anything we can ask or imagine.

Nearly 90% of our diocesan revenue is derived directly from the DM&M contributions of parishes.

These gifts help and

strengthen our local congregations through the expertise, services and programs provided by our dedicated diocesan staff. Through them we also administer clergy benefits and a centralized payroll, provide support for legal, governance, human resources and volunteer management matters, and share in diocesan-wide initiatives related to communications, children, youth and family ministry, outreach and social justice, and stewardship. Our team at Cathedral Place amplifies our ministry capacity, for when our resources are shared, we truly can do more together.

Beyond our diocese, our contributions support churches in the Canadian North, Indigenous ministries and our work towards reconciliation; the development of new worship

resources, national initiatives, and so much more. We're also able to engage God's mission as a global Church through the World Council of Churches, the United Nations, and a whole host of relief, development and human rights organizations. Some 20% of our diocesan income is used to support our national and international witness to the Gospel having been passed along from the diocesan budget to the General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada.

Some parishes worry they're not doing enough in the way of mission. The truth is, just through our DM&M, we're engaging in God's mission locally, nationally, and globally in extraordinary ways.

Each dollar given, each hour volunteered, and each skill shared builds up the Body of Christ. And it is the sharing of these resources in faithful ways that allows this Anglican Church of ours to risk more and thus gain more for the sake of the Gospel of Jesus Christ in our world. Our Diocesan Mission and Ministry contributions are the primary vehicle for this noble, faithful, and magnificent aspiration, binding us together as Anglicans in Niagara, for the love of God.

Niagara Anglican Deadlines and Submission Guidelines

Upcoming Deadlines:

September – July 21
October – August 25
November – September 22

Submissions:

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

Original cartoons or art –

Contact the Editor.

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

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

Questions or information:

Contact the Editor at
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Faithful Advocacy: A Call to Justice in Ontario

DEIRDRE PIKE

As people of faith, we are called to pursue justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with God (Micah 6:8). With Ontario's recent provincial election behind us, our responsibility to advocate for the common good is more urgent than ever. We must engage with our elected officials to ensure policies reflect our Gospel commitment to justice: addressing the climate crisis; reconciling relationships with Indigenous peoples; improving access to equitable healthcare; creating dignity in the social assistance system; ensuring economic fairness; and the pursuit of human rights.

Bishop Susan Bell has emphasized that our call as Anglicans is to seek the well-being of all God's people and creation itself. This means advocating for policies that reflect justice, compassion, and care for the most vulnerable in our society.

Climate Justice: Stop Highway 413

The proposed Highway 413 threatens our environment, carving precious farmland, forests, and wetlands while increasing

carbon emissions. As people of faith, we are stewards of creation and must oppose projects that prioritize profit over the well-being of the planet. It is imperative to cancel Highway 413 and instead invest in sustainable public transit, infrastructure that serves communities while protecting the environment.

Healthcare: Access to Family Doctors

Too many Ontarians struggle to find a family doctor, leaving their healthcare needs unmet. A just society ensures access to primary care for all, especially vulnerable populations. We must continue to advocate for increased investment in recruitment and retention strategies for family physicians, particularly in underserved areas, and an increase to paid sick days for essential workers.

Dignity in Social Assistance

Ontario's social assistance rates remain shamefully low, forcing many to live in deep poverty. With the rising cost of living, people on Ontario Works (OW) and the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) cannot

afford basic necessities. The government should immediately raise social assistance rates to a level that ensures dignity, health, and security for all recipients.

Economic Justice: Supporting Workers and Businesses Amid Tariff Uncertainty

With the possibility of new U.S. tariffs affecting Ontario's economy, workers and small businesses face potential hardship. The government must proactively support those impacted

by trade disputes, ensuring job security and economic stability. We must call for investment in skills training, wage subsidies, and direct support for affected industries to protect Ontario's workers and communities.

Combatting Human Trafficking

Human trafficking is a crisis that exploits and dehumanizes the most vulnerable among us, particularly women and children. While Ontario has taken steps to address this issue, more must be

done. We continue to call on the government to expand funding for survivor support services, enhance law enforcement efforts to dismantle trafficking networks, and invest in education programs that prevent exploitation before it begins.

A Call to Action

Advocacy is a vital expression of our faith. We must hold our elected officials accountable, urging them to align policies with justice, equity, and compassion. Through letters, meetings, petitions, and community organizing, we can influence decisions that shape the lives of our neighbors.

Bishop Susan Bell challenges us: "Our faith is not passive. We are called to be active participants in God's work of justice, ensuring that our province reflects the values of love, fairness, and care for the least among us."

As we navigate this political landscape, let us remain steadfast in our commitment to justice. May we be voices of hope, agents of change, and faithful advocates for a better Ontario.



Sunday Shopping

THE REVEREND CANON DR. SHARYN HALL

About 20 years ago, the issue of Sunday shopping was quite controversial. I remember going to a shopping mall after church one Sunday to buy a birthday card and feeling very uncomfortable because I was still wearing my clergy collar.

To some people, it is purely an economic issue. People who work six days of the week should have goods and services available to them on the seventh day. For other people, Sunday shopping is a religious issue. For many Christians, Sunday is set apart to honour the resurrection of Jesus on the first day of the week, but how we honour that first day has been determined as much by culture as by religion.

Some of you may remember when Sunday was not only a church day, but also an enforced day of quiet. We were not allowed to 'work' on Sunday. We would never hang out laundry on a Sunday because the neighbours

would see that we were not properly observing the Lord's Day. In some homes, Sunday supper was cold leftovers because no-one was allowed to cook. (Later this rule was helped by frozen TV dinners.) In my grandmother's house, we were not allowed to play cards on Sunday. (This was a sacrifice for her because she loved to play euchre and she carried a deck of cards in her apron pocket.)

Sunday was a day of discipline—go to church, stay in your Sunday clothes and be quiet for the rest of the day. Society shaped the Lord's Day according to what was believed acceptable behaviour to honour God. Rules change but often are re-interpretations of the past.

The ancient Hebrew people set aside a day of rest because God rested on the seventh day after creating the world. That day was called the Sabbath which comes from the Hebrew verb "shabbat" meaning 'to cease and desist.' It was a day honouring God in the temple or the synagogue and

offering thanks for all blessings. In ancient writings, the Sabbath was to be a day of rest and a day of compassion – a day of caring for the weak, the destitute, and for strangers in need of help. This was not considered work.

In Luke's gospel, when Jesus cures a disabled woman, a religious leader of the synagogue accuses him of working on the sabbath. Jesus angrily accuses him and the people around him of hypocrisy. You care for your

animals and yet you will not show compassion for another human being. Jesus criticizes the narrowness of religious rules which obscure or hinder the two commandments at the heart of our relationship with God—to love God and to love our neighbour. Jesus challenges the people who would appear to be religious by their outward behaviour but are not listening to God in their hearts. God's call to compassion was and is more important.



Like the Sabbath, Sunday for us can be a day set apart for God. We come together in the morning to pray and to celebrate the eucharist. The Greek word 'liturgy' means the work of and for the people to honour God. After worship, we can make Sunday a day of rest and a day of compassion, by an act of kindness for a neighbour or a stranger, or just by thinking of others which may prompt a phone call, or a letter, or a visit to a friend in need of support.

About 800 years before Jesus, the prophet Micah was very critical of the society around him. To him, religious worship without social justice was without meaning. He spoke boldly in defense of the poor who were being exploited by the rich, but despite his criticism of the ways of the people, he was hopeful. Micah sums up what God wants in our hearts on the Lord's Day and every day. He says, "what does the Lord require of you?—to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God."