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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



JUNE 2025



Happy Pentecost!

This is, as you know, the celebration of the birth of the church; a celebration of the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. And although 2,000 years have passed from that time to this, we share many similarities with the early Church.

Like the first Christians so blessed and changed by Pentecost that they could speak Christ in new languages and to new cultures, we too are learning new ways to communicate the Gospel, using new words and images to preach Christ and him crucified, risen and on the loose redeeming with love and grace in our world.

It is for this reason, I think that we are profoundly blessed to be Anglican Christians on mission in this moment. It's exciting if not easy. And when we speak about mission, what we are actually speaking about is God's mission. This is what we listen and discern for. The early Christians were very conscious of that fact. It's always been the only path for the holy church of God: past, present, and future.

In those days when they were searching for God's will after the Resurrection, they knew this: their lives were altered – but charged with the power of God and ready to be put to new use in God's renewed, redeemed, and changed creation. Because of the Resurrection, everything is changed – “in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye.”

So, at this present moment, when we are celebrating the church and the future that God has called us to, that is the one thing I think we must remember. As Archbishop Rowan Williams once said in a beautiful Easter sermon: we are “Eastered” people and so we do this death and resurrection thing. We do it consciously with the help of the Holy Spirit showing us how it goes.

The Helper, the Advocate, helps us to hear God's word, not our own. God has called us to be instruments of his love to each other and to all people. How we do this is the discernment piece. But what we do know, without a shadow of a doubt is that the God who has called us, has also given us the power of the Holy Spirit to come alongside us to accomplish God's will – wherever that takes us.

And so I pray God's richest blessings on you all as you continue this journey.

+ Susan

*The Right Reverend Dr. Susan J.A. Bell
Bishop of Niagara*

Holy Spirit window, St. Peter's Basilica

Photo: Unsplash/Serge Taeymans

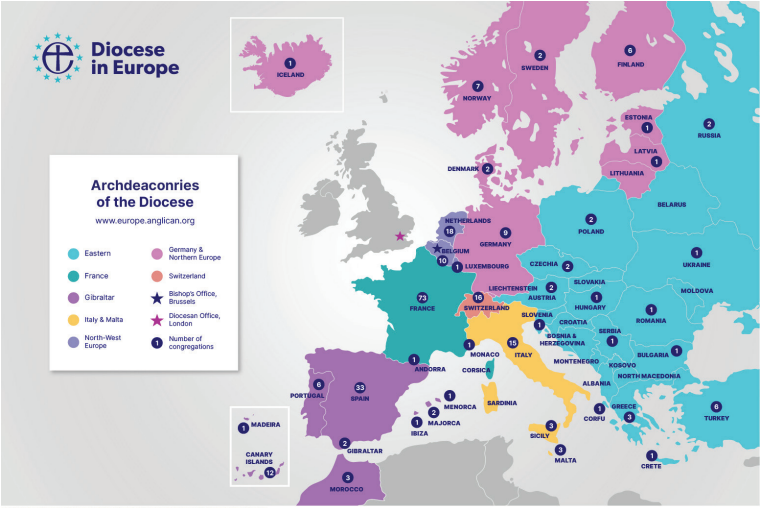
Anglicans abroad? Check out a Chaplaincy!

THE REVEREND ALAN COOK

Canadians are changing their minds about taking a vacation in the USA this summer; many are heading to Europe. Canadian Anglicans might like to know that you can still attend an Anglican Church while you're in continental Europe. In fact, the Anglican Diocese in Europe has over 250 English-speaking congregations in cities and resorts in 30 countries, from Moscow to Morocco, from Iceland to Istanbul.

Last February, I found myself in Canterbury Cathedral, witnessing the consecration of the new Suffragan (assistant) Bishop of Europe, the Right Reverend Andrew Norman, an old friend from university days. When I told people about this trip, many Anglicans reacted with "A diocese in Europe? I didn't know we had such a thing!" Well, yes, we have, and it's a wonderful gift of the Church of England to the English-speaking communities over there.

My first encounter with the diocese was back in 1980, when, as a teenager on a gap-year adventure, I cycled from my home in England through Europe. After three weeks of being a 'foreigner' and encountering the overwhelmingly Roman Catholic cultures of



France, Spain, and Italy, it was a visceral relief to be able to recite Book of Common Prayer Mattins in the Anglican Chapel in Venice and talk in English again! More recently, when visiting my son, who is a professional dancer in Europe, I have worshipped at the chaplaincies in Vienna, Prague, and Palma, Mallorca.

Not only do I find it spiritually nourishing to worship in English, but it's a delight to find fellowship with the congregations. Apart from other tourists, you will meet expats who now reside in these places from all around the English-speaking world: retirees, businesspeople, diplomats, and folks who work in international agencies, and their families. They are welcoming, helpful, and encouraging. At the very least, they can tell you a good place to go for lunch!

Of course, Diocese of Niagara has had strong connections with the Diocese in Europe: Bishop Andrew's predecessor was the now-retired Right Reverend David Hamid, who served as a priest here from 1980 to 1996. Other Niagara clergy who have served in Europe include Reverend Stephen Murray (Belgium) and Father Haynes Hubbard (Portugal).

Chaplaincies function as a regular parish: they have wardens and parish councils, choirs and organists, Sunday schools and youth groups, altar guilds and outreach committees. Like any parish, the pastoral ministry includes funerals (plenty of English retirees end up in the cemetery in Palma!), weddings (especially marriages of people from different nationalities and faith-traditions), and bap-



Above: Bishop Andrew Norman of the Diocese in Europe

Below: Bishop Norman with the Reverend Alan Cook.



tisms – both of the offspring of ex-pats and converts to Anglican Christianity. Bible study, Alpha,

prayer, and fellowship groups abound to fill out what is often a vibrant parish life.

Chaplaincies can also be a place of pastoral support when trouble arises. Father Haynes hit the headlines when, in 2009, 4-year-old Maddie McCann, the daughter of an English couple on holiday in the Portuguese resort town where he was the chaplain, disappeared while the parents were briefly out of their room. The congregation and Father Haynes continue to support the McCanns all these years later.

Bishop Andrew is particularly committed to mission and evangelism: while chaplains are keen not to be 'sheep-stealers' from local congregations, chaplaincies can really help spiritual seekers who want to search outside the dominant local religious (or atheistic) culture. So, too, with English-speakers who are exploring Christianity whilst living abroad.

Finally, not only can Chaplaincies help meet your spiritual needs, you can also encourage 'the locals': for a fleeting moment, we as visitors bring our own gifts to the congregation and build up the bonds of affection across the Anglican Communion.

Anglicans abroad? Check out a Chaplaincy by visiting: europe.anglican.org

Afterthoughts

THE REVEREND DEACON ANN VANDER BERG

On February 6, 2025, I joined a Zoom event offered through Trinity Alumni, University of Toronto. It was titled, "Church Outside the Walls: Past, Present and Future." Archbishop Anne Germond, Archbishop Linda Nicholls, and Bishop Victoria Matthews formed a panel of speakers. Each reflected on the church outside the walls through the lens of church leadership. Although I participated to boost my education hours as a deacon, the content of the hour provided me, as a leader within the church, with pearls for thought and prayer. The following are some of my learnings. At the very start of the program, one of the panel members mentioned that in scripture, the walls of a church are protective.

Her comment did not land in the panel as a discussion point, yet it did land within me. I don't know that I ever looked at the church through the lens of it being a place of protection. I am a Christian who experiences a sense of protection within the context of my relationship with God. I generally feel more comfortable outside of the walls of the church. Her simple comment opened a new area of exploration for me.

Throughout the program, I found the humility of each of the panelists very moving. In their distinct way, each expressed their leadership roles, remembering they are (as am I) a child in the Christian faith. I understood these women to be leaders who were willing to be led not only in word but in action and change. I feel this was a true gift given.

In my professional life, I was

a spiritual care provider in a medium-sized teaching hospital. There, I learned about God at the feet of my patients. Church walls did not really exist, or they were porous.

Many years ago, I visited a patient who was nearing the end of their life. Aware of the sacredness of life and death, we were able to create a safe space for authentic conversation. The patient may have been as surprised as I was as they shared their beliefs and values so deeply and openly. Their ethnicity, faith, and experience of life were very different from my own. Whatever walls may have been present tumbled down, and I learned that as much as my faith and beliefs are important to me, that's how important another's are to them. Early the next morning, the patient died. While our conversation may

have helped the patient to die, it has helped me to live. Live more freely.

I remembered this visit as I reflected and prayed about something else I noticed during the Zoom discussion. I was struck by the passion each panel member felt towards the church. Through examples and stories, they demonstrated their strong passion as well as the cost of such passion in some circumstances.

It was so evident to me, and it became like a mirror. When I looked, I did not see myself, as I do not feel passion toward the church. I feel tenderness. I wondered if it mattered and decided to incorporate this information into my prayers while also making a note to reach out to my spiritual director.

Weeks later, I shared some of

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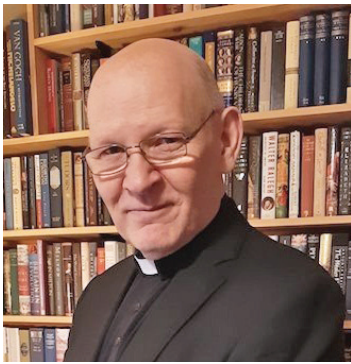


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The Radical Christ: Reclaiming the Heart of Christianity



THE REVEREND MICHAEL COREN

He was the great radical of history, the rebel who sang the world a new and perfect song, the revolutionary who told us that all was possible if we forgave and empathized, understood and loved. Yeshua, Jesus, the Christ. Initially welcomed into Jerusalem, days later he was rejected and disowned, suffering a grotesque execution reserved for slaves and traitors.

It's the centre of the Christian faith of course, and something I reflect on all the time. I have to wonder if Donald Trump and his team do the same, especially as this administration is the most ostentatiously and aggressively Christian in living US history. The term needs qualification of course. These are mainly Christian nationalists (a painful

oxymoron), conspiracy theorists obsessed with the end times, Catholics who condemned the late Pope Francis as being dangerously left-winged, single issue zealots, prosperity preachers, and mere charlatans—Trump himself adopted the mantras of the Christian right only when he first ran for President.

So, what would I as a simple Canadian Anglican priest say to the man and to those around him if he had the chance? I'd quote the figure they all seem to mention so often, and how he said that "it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God." I'd remind them of the rich young fellow who asked Jesus what he must do to obtain eternal life, and that Jesus replied that he should sell everything and give the money to the poor.

I'd tell of Jesus in the Temple, who found people selling bruised animals for sacrifice and exchanging currency at fraudulent levels, and how he made a whip of cords, drove these exploiters out of the temple, poured their coins onto the ground and overturned their tables.

I'd remind them that when



Jesus spoke of war and peace, he used words that in the original Greek are not passive but demanding and insistent. "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God." No arms trade, no military occupation, no threats to bomb and kill.

I'd speak of community and society, and how the MAGA cult of harsh individualism is antithetical to Gospel values. "How does God's love abide in anyone who has the world's goods and

sees a brother or sister in need and yet refuses help?" said Jesus. "For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me." In this he is reiterating and magnifying the calls of the Hebrew scriptures. "The foreigner residing among you must be treated as your native-

born. Love them as yourself, for you were foreigners in Egypt."

I'd ask them what they say to God in that divine conduit of prayer. In those intimate, emotionally naked moments do they genuinely listen, do they open themselves up, ask for guidance, and question their bombast and abuse? Or do they use religion, rather than faith, as a justification for malice and division? It isn't the first time this has happened but some of us had hoped we'd embraced history's lessons.

I'd ask if they wondered how Jesus would have reacted to a hard-working mother being arrested and deported even though all she wanted was a better life for her children. Ask them if admiring force rather than reason was the message of the beatitudes. Ask whether the Son of God told us to lie. Ask why they were so opposed to women's choice when Jesus never mentions abortion. Ask why they were so intimidated by society's fringes when that was precisely where Jesus found his natural home.

Ask them, plead with them, to embrace the truth of the heart set free. And tell them that I'll pray for them.

Afterthoughts

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

my afterthoughts with her. We talked about the walls of the church as protection and what that might look like if we looked at the church through that lens. We talked about the tension of how the strength of my relationship with God, yet discomfort with the church, led me to a vocation primarily expressed outside of church walls. Whereas as a spiritual care provider, I felt passion every day (almost), and at times I felt the weight of passion too.

I told my spiritual director that

I felt tenderness towards the church. Not passion. Through her long arc of knowing me, she did not judge, only affirmed and understood. And then, in her subtle yet bold way, she asserted my freedom.

Through our fulsome conversation, an idea formed. An idea to create an opportunity for parishioners to gather after church to share how that Sunday's liturgy impacted them, whether it be through the music, readings, homily, prayers, or Eucharist. As we brainstormed, the purpose of



Photo: Unsplash/Priscilla Du Preez

the gathering came together: to support awareness of our spiritual lives and continued growth by sharing personal reflections

and listening to the reflections of others.

I met with my parish priest, who fully supported this idea, and after a few more weeks, we met with my spiritual director to formulate a framework. We decided the name of this new gathering would be "Afterthoughts." Although the intent would not be pastoral care, elements of pastoral care would likely surface as this initiative parallels the current fragility of our world order. As the parish deacon, I will be the

facilitator. In the next six to eight months or so, God willing, I will write an update sharing our evolving framework, process, and experiences.

I am grateful to Trinity Alumni for hosting this Zoom event in February. Thank you to the panel members, their facilitator, my spiritual director, and the priest of my parish for their gifts given.

Deacon Ann Vander Berg serves at St. James, Dundas.



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**CALLED to LIFE
COMPELLED to LOVE**

In other words

Euchre and the Meaning of Life



JOHN BOWEN

I have a collection of photos of silly church signs. I know that sounds strange but, over the years, I found them a useful tool for teaching about being an inclusive and accessible church. The word “silly” covers a wide range of foolishness. There are some which are merely spelling mistakes, like the church that advertised its CHRISTMAS BIZARRE AND LUNCH. Another invited people to their ORSHIP—whatever that may be—and the sign stayed like that for several months. Others seem unaware of quite what they are offering, like the church which boasted one Advent, CHRIST WILL COME, SATURDAY 6PM. Then there is a whole category of signs which only make sense to insiders. Would you be attracted to a church by a sign that advertised a sermon entitled, *Zaccheus And The Reformation?* Or another whose sermon title was *Flying Sola: Sola Fide?* (You may need to ask a Reformed friend who speaks Latin about that one. It was outside a Presbyterian church.)

But to my mind perhaps the worst signs are the trivial. One of the first photos I ever took in this collection was of a church (and I’m afraid it was Anglican) whose sign said: *Progressive Euchre, Monday 7pm And Penny Sale, March 30th. Tickets Are Pre-Cut.* Maybe you know the significance of “pre-cut tickets”—would people stay away if the tickets were already cut? Is this really all the church has to announce to the world? Is that the main reason someone would venture through the doors? Why don’t people come to church? There are many reasons. One simple reason is that they don’t see the point of it. “They have nothing to offer that I would be interested in. It’s weird religious stuff for weird religious people. I have more important

things on my mind.” So what are the serious issues that people outside the church worry about? Here are a few that spring to mind:

- Can I stop feeling lonely?
- Is there any hope for this world?
- How can I make a difference in the world?
- Where can I explore my spirituality?
- Does anything happen when I pray?
- How do I know right and wrong?
- How can I be the real me?
- Is there a God and what are they like?
- Am I doing the right things with my life?
- Does life have any real meaning?

Here is my question: does the church have anything to say about this kind of issue? Surely the Good News of Jesus addresses all the biggest issues of human existence, including everyone I just listed! So why, oh why, don’t some of these show up on our church signs? Why euchre and not the meaning of life?

Are there any good church signs out there? There are—

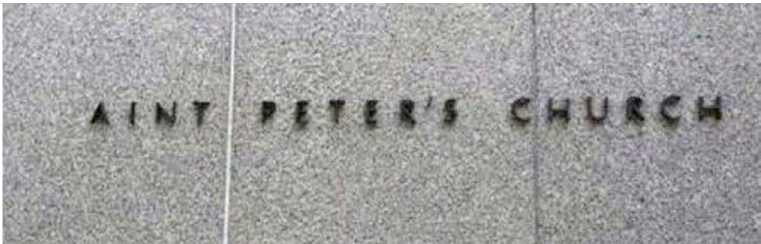


though, sadly, they are in a minority, and not many are Anglican. Here’s a selection—and how I can imagine an outsider responding to them.

- A Baptist church I know says: *Church? Good In A Weird Way, Weird In A Good Way*, over a graphic of a wine bottle and a loaf of bread. (“Wow, so churches have a sense of humour? And they understand that I think they’re weird. Hmmm.”)
- A new church in Toronto advertises that it is a *Church For Sinners, Skeptics And*

Saints. (“A church for skeptics? Now there’s an idea.”)

- I love the one at Brampton United Church, which is pastored by a friend of mine: *Imagine God Building Better Lives, Better Families, Better Brampton: We Do!* (“I could get on board with that kind of vision.”)
- There is one I photographed somewhere in Western Canada, outside an Evangelical Lutheran Church. It advertises that the people who go there are *Learning To Be Better Lovers By Following Jesus.*



Photos: Contributed by John Bowen

(“That’s an interesting idea. Sure, I’m not always good at loving. But what has Jesus to do with that?”)

- Or, more locally, Flamborough Baptist Church, whose sign simply says the church is *For Those Wanting A Change.* (“Goodness, change! That’s what I need. I wonder . . .”)

What makes these so good? Each one is deliberately trying to connect with unchurched passers-by. Obviously, a good experience of church has to go way beyond a clever sign, but people normally come to faith step by step, and this kind of thought-provoking, intriguing sign might just provide a crucial step on the way, a stepping-stone between people’s deepest concerns and what goes on inside a church.

So what about euchre? In case you were feeling defensive about it, there is absolutely nothing wrong with euchre! Or even penny bazaars (whether

the tickets are pre-cut or uncut). But here is what worries me. C.S.Lewis once wrote in a letter: Put first things first and we get second things thrown in: put second things first and we lose both first and second things. In other words, if we keep the “first things” first, then the “second things” will fall into their proper place. On the other hand, if we prioritize the “second things”—and, however passionate you may be about euchre, I suspect you would agree that it is not the most important thing in life (or in church)—the “second things” will swallow up the “first things.” Why not find a witty, wholesome, intriguing way to whet the appetites of passers-by, so that they are curious to know what the Christian message has to say about the “first things” in their lives? That would be healthy for the church—and good news for the world.

Cherishing Creation: Earth Day at Incarnation

**THE REVEREND CANON
SUE-ANN WARD**

At The Church of the Incarnation in Oakville, caring for creation is not simply a program or a passion project—it is a vital expression of our Christian calling. In a world marked by ecological crisis, we recognize that protecting the Earth is not optional for people of faith. It is a sacred responsibility rooted in the understanding that creation is a gift from God, to be cherished, stewarded, and shared across generations. Our theology calls us beyond words into action, and our community’s commitment to justice, compassion, and hope found joyful expression this Earth Day.

On Saturday, April 26, The Church of the Incarnation partnered with the Super Ability Crew, Oakville Ready, and the Town of Oakville to host an “Earth Day at Incarnation” event. Together, we created a space of learning, creativity, and celebration that welcomed neighbours of all ages and abilities. At its heart, the event was about connection—with the land, with each other, and with the sacredness that pulses through all life.

The grounds and building of Incarnation were alive with activity. A vibrant seed exchange allowed gardeners, young and old, to bring seeds from their own collections and trade for new treasures, fostering both biodiversity and community

spirit. In the spirit of creative care, participants joined a community “petal painting” project, adding bright colours and beautiful floral designs to a growing mural. Children and adults alike delighted in building birdfeeders and painting cheerful rocks, sharing their love for creation in hands-on, tangible ways.

Participants learned about “living arrangements” and small-scale edible gardens, practical and inspiring models for sustainable living. An art journaling workshop taught the beautiful practice of repurposing old books into creative spaces for reflection and gratitude. The South Peel Naturalists shared their expertise about local species and ecosystems, reminding us how deeply rooted we are in the natural world around us.

Interactive booths by Oakville Ready and the Town of Oakville provided education, games, and contests, offering practical tips for building resilient communities in the face of climate change.



The Bike Rodeo offered children the opportunity to learn proper hand signals, bicycle etiquette, and safety tips, gaining confidence and new skills that will help them care for both themselves and the planet.

This event was a true partnership of gifts and energy, and we give thanks for our wonderful collaborators. The Super Ability Crew brought their trademark creativity and enthusiasm, helping to ensure that every activity was accessible, inclusive, and joy-filled. Oakville Ready inspired attendees with their practical, community-centered approach to climate resilience. The Town of Oakville’s enthusiastic support and presence demonstrated how local government and faith communities can work hand-in-hand for the common good. Together, we lived out a powerful truth: when diverse partners come together around shared values, hope grows.

And how beautiful the gathering was! Toddlers with paint-smeared hands sat beside grandparents exchanging seeds. Teens quietly crafted art journals from beloved old books and enjoyed delicious baked goods. Laughter rang through the air, seeds and ideas alike were exchanged, and conversations blossomed—about gardens, about resilience, about the kind of world we long to build together.

At The Church of the Incarnation, we believe that every act of care for the Earth is an act of worship. This Earth Day, our community chose to worship with our hands, our creativity, and our love for this precious world. In doing so, we caught a glimpse of the Kingdom of God—one where every creature and every person is honoured and beloved. We pray that the seeds planted at “Earth Day at Incarnation” will continue to grow in hearts and gardens across Oakville in the days and seasons to come.

Left top: Volunteers present community information.
Left bottom: painting petals as part of a larger mural.
Right top: Art journaling: repurposing old books into creative space for reflection.
Right bottom: Sue-Ann Ward contributes to the mural.

Photos: contributed by Sue-Ann Ward



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Forming Faith Across the Diocese

Meet Monica Romig Green our New Faith Formation Coordinator

**IN CONVERSATION WITH
DANI LEITIS**

In February Bishop Susan announced the appointment of a new Faith Formation Coordinator for the diocese. The Reverend Monica Romig Green began this new role on March 1st and immediately began working on her plans to support the formation of faith across the diocese.

Dani: Monica, you've become a familiar face around the Synod office and at diocesan services but for those who haven't had the pleasure of meeting you yet, could you introduce yourself?

Monica: My name is Monica Romig Green, and I am honoured to fill the two half-time roles of Priest Associate at Christ's Church Cathedral and Faith Formation Coordinator for the Diocese of Niagara. I started in these positions at the beginning of March this year.

D: Where are you coming from? Can you share a little bit about your background?

M: I am originally from Southern California, where all my extended family still lives. When I tell people that I am truly a "California girl," a lot of people ask me how I have ended up in Hamilton. In 2010, my husband, who is also American, decided to do PhD studies at the Toronto School of Theology. That brought us to Toronto for four years. We moved back to the States afterwards, grateful to have had a lovely Canadian adventure together. Little did we know how much we would both miss living in Canada! So, when I discerned a call to ordained ministry, we both wanted to come back to Southern Ontario, so I applied to the Diocese of Niagara. We moved to Hamilton in 2021, while I finished my MDiv studies at Trinity College, and we have been here ever since. We are both applying for permanent residency with the hopes of staying this time as long as we can.

Prior to my call to ordained ministry, I had a series of careers, including a stint as a child actor in Hollywood. You probably wouldn't recognize me in any-



thing, but I did do a Canadian Sprite commercial in the late 70s, flying a kite with other kids! After university, I worked in the professional theatre as a company manager, writing and managing budgets and contracts for play development programs and arranging travel and housing for artists.

D: Can you share a little bit about your spiritual and/or vocational journey? I know you mentioned, you have experience in faith formation.

M: Sure! I was raised in a Christian home and in a Protestant evangelical church, where I received a deep and solid foundation for my faith. I received my first "grown-up" Bible when I was ten and poured over it every night before going to bed.

My faith really came alive when I was bullied in middle school, and prayer became a deep source of solace for me. I explored various Protestant churches in my teens and twenties, but it was my divorce at thirty when I really wrestled with my faith, with God, and with myself.

I went to seminary in California and was in the first class of a master's degree program at the Institute for Spiritual Formation, where I studied how people grow in their

faith and was trained in the ministry of spiritual direction. It was during this time that I discovered the Episcopal Church, where the liturgy just caught hold of my heart and mind and never let me go!

After I graduated with a masters in Spiritual Formation and Soul Care (the coolest title for a theological degree in my humble opinion), I worked at the Institute, where I taught spiritual formation and supervised spiritual directors.

When my husband and I moved to Toronto, I began working for a Christian non-profit, where I co-wrote faith formation resources for churches and created and led a network for Christian spiritual directors. I have continued to offer spiritual direction for the last twenty years.

After discerning a call to ordained ministry, I did internship placements at Church of the Nativity and St. Mildred's-Lightbourn School and my curacy at Christ's Church Cathedral. I graduated with my MDiv in 2024 and was ordained to the priesthood last September.

D: So, it sounds like it's safe to say you are an expert on this particular topic! Can you explain what faith formation actually is?

M: Faith formation is a term

that addresses how we grow in our relationships with God, ourselves, others, and the world as followers of Christ. The language of formation comes from Paul's letter to the Galatians in which he says he is labouring as if in childbirth for Christ to be formed in them. Therefore, faith formation encompasses Christian education, learning about God and the Christian faith, but it also involves a lot more than that. It considers how people grow and change as Christians in ways that holistically involve our minds, our emotions, and our actions. It includes intentional practices and experiences that engage the heart, mind, and body to help shape how we live our lives and who we become as Christ followers. Because God is gracious, faith formation involves our participation to partner with God's transformative work inside ourselves and in our lives.

D: Who is faith formation for?

M: Faith formation is for everyone, though my work will be focused on adult faith formation. It is for people just learning about the Christian faith, those who have been following Jesus all their lives, and everyone in between.

Philosopher and theologian Dallas Willard said that everyone is constantly being formed by the beliefs, structures, and forces in the world around us. Christian faith formation is how we intentionally invite God to form us in God's ways to be God's people. Viewed this way, faith formation can be quite radical and countercultural. Additionally, faith formation never ends while we are alive. We never reach a point as Christians when we have fully reached the goal. No matter how briefly or how long one has been following Jesus, there is always

more in us to be formed, to be shaped to be like Christ.

D: What is typically involved in faith formation?

M: Traditionally, faith formation involves classic spiritual practices, like study, prayer, worship, and service. However, since faith formation involves whatever helps us grow in love in our relationships with God, ourselves, others, and the world, there is room for a lot of creativity in how we engage in our faith formation. It can involve quiet and internal practices like contemplation, retreat, silence, and solitude. It can involve relational practices like spiritual direction, intentional community, hospitality, and discernment. It can involve communal practices like stewardship, acts of compassion, creation care, and missional interactions. And it can be playful, too, involving creative ways to pray, interact, and learn with God, others, ourselves, and the world, so long as we are intentional and open to how God might be forming us as we engage in all these experiences.

D: Are there common misconceptions about faith formation?

M: I think one of the most common misconceptions is that faith formation is only for children or people new to Christianity. I think over time, we can become complacent with our faith. We just do what we have been doing for years, or we end up with a "been there/done" that mentality, that we have already engaged in faith formation practices in the past, and there is nothing new under the sun. That can lead to a wistfulness for the excitement of the past and a lack of hope for

Continued on Page 7

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Meet Monica Romig Green

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

the future.
However, we only have to look at the lives of our faith forebearers in Scripture to realize that God continues to call all of us to grow in our faith formation throughout our lives, even to the very end. Sarah and Abraham, Moses and Miriam, Naomi and Boaz: God invited all of them to go deeper in their faith in the latter half of their lives, leading to profound new experiences in their lives with God that ultimately

affected their community and the world.

D: Why is faith formation important to YOU?

M: Faith formation is important to me because it literally changed my life and continues to excite and delight me. I grew up being a very good girl in my faith, but it was when I engaged deeply with God with my questions and my heartbreak that I started to grasp how wide, long,

high, and deep God's love truly is. I realized how every aspect of my life needs to be bathed in and transformed by that love. Faith formation is my part in God's work of transformation for myself and how I engage with the world. Even in the most challenging of circumstances, God's work is full of possibilities, hope, and opportunities that I have yet to discover. As I continue to grow, I am so honoured and excited to get to come alongside

what God has already started in the Diocese of Niagara and help us all to say yes to God's timely invitations to engage more deeply and more richly with God and each other in our faith formation.

Monica's work is to resource clergy and laity with a focus on Christian discipleship. Monica works closely with the diocesan missionaries and assists the diocese to deepen the faith and

engagement of those people already present in our churches, and to engage those who are seeking a safe community in which to ask meaning of life questions. Monica is available for consultation with parish leaders to resource and support faith formation initiatives.

Monica can be contacted at 905-527-1316 Ext. 250 on Mondays or Tuesdays or by email monica.green@niagaraanglican.ca.



Photos: contributed by Diocese of Niagara. Ordination photos: William Pleydon.

150 Years ANNIVERSARY CURACY FUND The Anglican Diocese of Niagara

The Diocese of Niagara is celebrating 150 years! At our 150th Diocesan Synod, Bishop Susan Bell initiated a special anniversary fund to support local curacies throughout the diocese. Equipping right skilled and well-formed spiritual leaders is crucial for the flourishing of ministry like that which has been demonstrated by our new canons.
The vision for this anniversary fund is to better equip newly ordained clergy who would benefit by working alongside seasoned priests allowing for a focused time of apprenticeship.
We invite you to visit our diocesan website to learn more about this special anniversary fund and if moved to do so, make a donation by using the information below:

To donate by cheque:

Make a cheque out to The Diocese of Niagara and include in the memo line "150th Anniversary Curacy Fund." It can be mailed to:
Cathedral Place,
Attn: Finance Team,
252 James St. N,
Hamilton, Ontario L8R 2L3.

To donate online:

visit niagaraanglican.ca or scan the QR Code



Your support of this diocesan initiative will be a blessing to the Church for generations to come.

Giving Thanks for 150 years of Ministry in the Diocese of Niagara

If you desire more information about the 150th Anniversary Curacy Fund, please be in touch with Canon Drew MacDonald at drew.macdonald@niagaraanglican.ca.

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Climate Justice Niagara

Our Power, Our Planet

Earth Day Webinar Inspires Local Climate Action

DEIRDRE PIKE

“Good Earth Day evening!” With those cheerful words, Deirdre Pike welcomed Anglicans from across Niagara and beyond to an Earth Day conversation rooted in faith, community, and a deep commitment to protecting the planet we all share.

Hosted by Climate Justice Niagara on April 22, Our Power, Our Planet combined prayer, education, advocacy, and action in a vibrant online gathering that planted seeds of hope for the future.

Pike, the Justice and Outreach Program Consultant for the Diocese of Niagara, opened the evening by posing two important questions: What do you need to know to use your power for the good of our planet? What tools do you need for action and advocacy?

Climate Action Starts at the Ballot Box

Bruce McKenzie, chair of Climate Justice Niagara, grounded the gathering with a prayer from the late Pope Francis’s Laudato Si, calling for unity with all creation. (The pope

had just died the day before.) A special video message from former federal Minister of Environment and Climate Change Catherine McKenna followed. McKenna stressed the vital role of voting in advancing climate action and urged participants to hold politicians accountable for protecting the Earth. She congratulated Climate Justice Niagara for its work on Zero Emission Churches and encouraged participants to stay hopeful, recognizing the challenging work that is environmental justice.

Mini Forests, Big Impact

Giuliana Casimirri, Executive Director of Green Venture, introduced the idea of mini forests: small, dense plantings of native trees that restore ecosystems faster than conventional methods. Casimirri shared success stories from Hamilton, where mini forests are already cooling neighborhoods, increasing biodiversity, and storing carbon at impressive rates. (See sidebar story on Niagara mini forests.)

Participants were encouraged to consider starting mini forest projects on church grounds or in

their communities, with support available through Green Venture.

Highway 413: Protecting Farmland and Forests

The Honourable Deb Schulte, a former Member of Parliament and passionate advocate for environmental justice, began with an overview of how the climate crisis, biodiversity and habitat loss, and affordability are interconnected. She then zoomed in on the proposed Highway 413, warning that it would destroy vital farmland, wetlands, and increase urban sprawl, all while delivering little in terms of affordability.

“This is not how we solve cli-

mate change,” Schulte said. She urged participants to advocate for better alternatives and to join movements like Stop the 413 Now.

Quoting Margaret Mead, Schulte reminded participants: “Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has.”

From Learning to Action

In small breakout groups, participants reflected on how they could better use their power to advocate for the planet. Ideas shared included tree planting projects, parish-based green

initiatives, and political advocacy efforts.

The Reverend Fran Wallace, a member of the CJN Steering Committee, and Rector of St. Aidan’s, Oakville, closed the evening with a prayer of gratitude and courage, sending participants out renewed for the work ahead.

Calling on the spirit of Pope Francis, the evening concluded with, “Hope is not passive. Hope is action. Together, we have the power to protect our planet—and to do so joyfully, faithfully, and courageously.

Taking Root – Mini Forests and Parish Partnerships



Mini forests are taking root in Niagara with clusters of densely planted native trees planted in two locations so far. Mini forests are proven to accelerate biodiversity, improve soil health, and store more carbon than conventional tree plantings. At St. George’s, Georgetown, where the Rev. Cheryl Barker is rector, volunteers planted the first mini forest in the Credit River Watershed. Thanks to a partnership with Credit Valley Conservation and the Town of Halton Hills, this thriving new forest is helping to cool the area, absorb carbon, and create vital habitat. Meanwhile, at St. Paul’s, Caledonia, led by the Rev. Jann Brooks, parishioners planted a mini forest of 400 native trees last fall. Their project was part of the Diocese of Niagara’s Communion Forest initiative, partnering with Green Venture and Neighbourhoods. Volunteers from St. Paul’s were joined by members of the Rainbow Kings and Queens, a group supporting LGBTQ+ refugees, showing how creation care can also build inclusive, joyful communities.

Want to explore the idea of a mini forest at your parish? Contact Deirdre Pike at deirdre.pike@niagaraanglican.ca to learn how your community can be part of the Communion Forest initiative.

Photos: contributed by Deirdre Pike





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Reconciliation on Easter Sunday

THE REVEREND JANN BROOKS

On Easter Sunday, early in the morning, a significant event of reconciliation took place along the Grand River.

At dawn, Jann Brooks, rector of St. Paul's, Caledonia, gathered at the riverbank with Elaine Burnside, pastoral associate of the Six Nations Anglican parish, to begin the day with the Haudenosaunee "Words Before All Else" thanksgiving. This was followed by a blessing of the water from the Grand River, which flows between the two parishes.

This event marks a notable step towards reconciliation within the Anglican church in the area. Despite being separated only by the river, these communities have been divided by centuries of treaties, culture, and difficult memories.

Brooks has been working



diligently with Burnside and Archdeacon Ros Elm, incumbent of the Six Nations Anglican Parish and Archdeacon of Reconciliation and Indigenous Ministries for the Diocese of Huron, for the past year to create opportunities for reconciliation between the people of these two neighbouring parishes.

Workshops, Bible studies, and healing services are among projects coming forward in 2025.

The living water collected during this ceremony was used for baptisms on Easter Sunday morning, adding an additional measure of hope and joy as the two parishes celebrated the Resurrection.



St. John's Stevensville Successfully Completes Refugee Sponsorship

THE REVEREND DEACON ROD MCDOWELL

The sponsorship of the Ashoor Zada family began in the spring of 2023. Latefia Taheri, a successful refugee claimant and a Canadian citizen, requested help from the diocese to sponsor her brother and Afghan family, trapped and in hiding in Pakistan. St. John's, Stevensville, agreed to be the sponsoring parish, and the paperwork began.

The family arrived on Feb. 24, and the wardens of St. John's

and The Reverend Deacon Rod McDowell met them at the airport. The family became permanent residents on their arrival, but there was a lot of settlement and orientation to do.

The family was legally sponsored by Ms. Taheri and the diocese, but St. John's provided all of the funds from which a monthly allowance was given to the family, similar to what they would receive on social assistance. This amount had to be paid commencing in March of 2024 and ending in February

2025.

As part of the sponsorship, the parish was also expected to assist in the family's settlement. This included, but was not limited to finding accommodation, schools for the children, banking arrangements, and general orientation to life in Canada.

When a nice rental home was found, St. John's held a shower for them in which all three parishes in Fort Erie participated.

Early on, Mr. Ashoor Zada went out for a walk with his son. The young man said to his

father, "Dad, we do not have to be afraid of the police." While the formal sponsorship ended in March, a formal gathering was held on April 27 to celebrate the successful arrival and settlement

of this family in Niagara Falls. McDowell says, "As a retired refugee lawyer, I can certify that if the sponsorship had not occurred, the lives of this family would have been at risk."



Warden Linda Daku, left, the Reverend Deacon Rod McDowell, centre, and warden Alta Near, on the far right, pose for a photo with the family.

Photo: contributed by Roderick McDowell

Farmer Mariluz Suarez of ECLOF, Colombia

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.

Alongside Hope
Anglicans and partners working for change in Canada and around the world

Auprès de l'espoir
Anglicans et partenaires œuvrant pour le changement au Canada et à travers le monde

Why Trinity Sunday Matters:

Being in dynamic relationship with God

THE REVEREND CANON IAN MOBSBY

Trinity Sunday often arrives quietly on the liturgical calendar at the end of the season of Easter—between Pentecost’s fire and the long green season of Ordinary Time. For many, it can feel abstract or obscure, theologically intimidating, or simply liturgical words that, if not understood in some depth, can feel irrelevant. One joke about Trinity Sunday is that it is the ‘Curate preaching graveyard’, where clergy invite others to preach to avoid it themselves. For me, preaching on Trinity Sunday is the opposite of this as one of the highlights of my year, and this time, I look forward to preaching at the Cathedral.

For me, Trinity Sunday is a vital and important moment in the Christian year, because it speaks to the very heart of our identity—not just as believers in God, but as Christians, those who follow Jesus and are drawn into a deep relationship with the life of the Triune God. In my first deployment as an Ordained Missioner with a missional new monastic community called Moot, I felt God teaching me to lean deeply into Trinitarian understandings of the Christian faith. After 12 years of such explorations and experiences, I compiled a book called *God Unknown: The Trinity in contemporary spirituality and mission*. So, an appreciation of God the Trinity is core to my practice as an Ordained Priest and Missioner.



Image: Wikimedia Commons

It is the understanding of God the Trinity that makes us Christians and not a small Messianic Jewish cult. Without the Trinity, Christianity becomes a footnote in Jewish history, a sect centred on a remarkable rabbi. With the Trinity, we proclaim the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, and the outpouring of the Spirit, where the ‘One true God’ is not solitary, but relational; not static, but dynamic; not distant, but deeply present to us and all life.

To say God is Trinity is to say that love is at the heart of reality. The early church’s experience of Jesus and the Spirit forced a reimagining of everything they thought they knew about God. This reimagining was born from experiences of divine encounter, from prayer and contemplation, from being changed. And so, an understanding of the Trinity emerged: God as One, yet three persons—the Father, the Creator; the Son, the Redeemer; and the

Holy Spirit, the Sustainer—eternally bound in mutual love.

The early Greek theologians used the word perichoresis to describe the relationship of the three persons. The term literally means “one-in-multiplicity, or mutual indwelling” and, more evocatively, “a divine dynamic dance.” It is a vision of God not as a hierarchical power (which is why the persons of God must be co-equal), but as a circle of love, where each person of the Holy Trinity gives to and receives from the others in an eternal and joyful dynamic flow.

This image of divine communion is not just an insight into God’s nature—it is also an inspiration for us, for who we are meant to be as human beings, as church, and in mission. If we are made in the image of this God, then we are made for dynamic community – one in multiplicity, mutuality, and shared living. If mission flows from the relationality of God the Trinity, then mission is not some

recruitment strategy to gain new recruits. It is instead, the extension of God’s own self-giving love into the world (kenosis) to encourage those estranged from God to grow ever deeper into a restored relationship to and with God. Mission then is an invitation into the relational dance - to experience and join in with this God of grace.

This is the deep essence of our Trinitarian Christian faith. Prayer becomes joining in with the persons of God who are in constant prayer, and mission becomes catching up with what God is already doing. Our discipleship then is something deeply transformative and dynamic—sustained through the power of the Spirit and in union with Christ and in connection with God the Father.

As someone whose family background draws on Welsh Celtic roots, I am aware of the rich Celtic Christian Trinitarian traditions and Church. The early Celtic saints didn’t approach the Trinity as a cold abstraction, but as a living presence woven into the fabric of creation and daily life. The triskele, the triple spiral seen on ancient stones and illuminated manuscripts, reflects this deep intuition that all life bears the imprint of the Triune God. There was a sense of God’s presence not just in the church building, but in the wind and the waves, the hearth and the field, the stories and songs passed

from generation to generation. Prayers were often Trinitarian to sanctify every corner of life with the reality of God’s love. The Trinity, for Celtic Christians, was not a riddle to be solved, but a mystery to be loved, lived, and trusted.

And this matters deeply for the life of the church today. Trinitarian Christian spirituality and practices can assist unchurched seekers to find faith. For our parishes and missions, the Trinity challenges us to form a deep spiritual community focused on mutuality and shared life. The Trinity challenges us—gently but persistently—to reimagine our life together not as an organisation but more of a living organism, as a community of perichoresis, a living expression of God’s relational being.

What does that look like? It means creating parish worship that is less about performance and more about participation. It means engaging in mission not by “going out to fix” the world, but by relational presence and dwelling in our neighbourhoods as Christ did — listening, loving, and waiting for the Spirit to stir new life.

Trinity Sunday, then, is the capstone of the Christian year — the feast where we glimpse the full mystery into which we are baptised: not just into faith, or into church, but into the very life of God.

A Spirit-Filled Celebration of Confirmation and Reception

On April 27th, Bishop Susan Bell confirmed and received 11 candidates in a spirit-filled service at Christ’s Church Cathedral. It was a vibrant and heartfelt celebration of faith as the confirmed marked the time in their Christian journey, affirming the faith into which they have been baptized and their intention to live a life of committed discipleship. It is this rite by which we express a mature commitment to Christ and receive strength from the Holy Spirit through prayer and the laying on of hands by a Bishop.

The rite of reception is for

those who have been previously baptized and confirmed in another Christian denomination and now wish to be formally received into the Anglican

Church. We pray as the candidates go out into the world, that they be filled with the Spirit of our living God as they seek to serve God’s mission of love.





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SARAH BIRD

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 - Messy Church resources.
 - Labyrinths, puppets, and so much more!

A Closer Look at Some Must-Reads

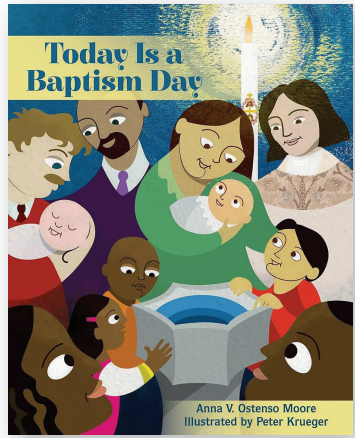
What Is God Like? by Rachel Held Evans and Matthew Paul Turner is a vibrant, beautifully illustrated book that helps children understand the vast and loving nature of God. It's a heartfelt invitation for kids to see

that they are wonderfully made, deeply loved, and encouraged to embrace who they truly are.



Today Is a Baptism Day by Anna V. Ostenson is another gem we highly recommend. It's perfect for families preparing for baptism and for parishes to share with them. This book gently walks through the baptismal

journey, highlighting the roles of family, community, sacred scripture, sacraments, and the



ongoing life of faith. If you're exploring baptism or looking to deepen faith formation, *Today Is a Baptism Day* is a

must-read. And that's just the beginning! Our shelves include stories on biblical teachings, self-identity, confidence, conflict resolution, grief, human connection, and so much more.

We warmly invite you to visit the diocesan offices and browse the library in person (by appointment). Resources can be borrowed for up to three weeks, giving you time to explore them fully in your setting.

To schedule a visit or request more information, please contact Sarah Bird at: sarah.bird@niagaraanglican.ca. Come discover how these incredible resources can enrich your ministry!

Holy Trinity Fonthill Receives Recognition for Butterfly Garden

LINDA ADDARIO

Gary Bowron of Climate Justice of Niagara presented representatives, Sue Law and Jean Yungblut, parishioners of Holy Trinity Anglican Church in Fonthill, for their creation and installation of a pollinator butterfly garden. The garden, planted a year ago, is a response to our mission to work as stewards of our earth by creating a safe haven for bees and butterflies to thrive. Many donated natural indigenous plants from their own gardens. Plans are in the works to expand the garden with perennial herbs as well.



Top: Gary Bowron, left, of Climate Justice Niagara, with Sue Law and Jean Yungblut of Holy Trinity Fonthill. Bottom: Posing with the bench which is part of the garden.

Photos: contributed by Holy Trinity Fonthill



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 editor@niagaraanglican.ca

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Who Do Others Say I am?

THE REVEREND DEACON
STEPHEN LASALLE

In a recent podcast from the show *The Cloister* Father Brendan, a monk at Glenstal Abbey, speaks on the transfiguration. However, rather than looking at the Gospel scene of Jesus on the mountain, Father Brendan speaks of transfiguration and the transformation in our own lives and what that means for each of us as Christians.

As Father Brendan reminds us, we each have a very personal relationship with one another. In this time of increasing division within society, people are feeling less hopeful and more alone. He reminds us that we need to look at our relationship with our with our community and family as a whole, rather than seeing each other as a group of individuals.

Father Brendan provides an example of this from the Acts of the Apostles, when the couple Ananias and Sapphira sell their property and give only part of the proceeds to the community when they have promised to give it all. This action was an offence against the whole community not just an individual.

Unfortunately, this still occurs today yet is often forgotten or overlooked. In this increasingly materialistic world where we are bombarded with messaging that reinforces a sense of self over the collective needs of community. For this reason, Father Brendan reminds us that, “we can easily fall into the trap today of thinking that only personal offences are really offences.”

In this time when so many are struggling, feeling lost and even hopeless, more then ever we need to be reflecting on our own behaviours and asking ourselves the impact they may have on others. After all, the late Pope Francis said once that, “If we want to truly love God, we have to become passionate about humanity, each person—above all, those who live in pain and who are abandoned or discarded.”

To do that we need to reflect on what our personal habits and choices say about what we value in life. We need to ask ourselves what our interactions with family, friends or the community in which we live, say about us.

Remembering too that our personal habits should involve



Photo: glenstal.com



Glenstal Abbey, Cork, Ireland. Photo: Wikimedia Commons/JohnArmagh, Public Domain

both give and take, and not just take. In this time of uncertainty in the world there needs to be a greater recognition of the need to reflect inward, examining our role in our community, our family and church and asking why we act the way we do.

For many like myself, this reflection has drawn us to the teachings of St. Benedict as a guide to helping us understand many of these questions. In the context of today, these steps go against so much of what we, as a society, value as being important today. Recognizing that, there lies an opportunity for us as Christians and the wider community of faith, to reimagine ourselves in the world that we are now facing.

For myself, as a deacon, I see the rules of St. Benedict as a guide to help me better live out my faith, as an example, within the community I lovingly serve. To do so means to live a life of integrity. For St. Benedict it means situational consistency in which we hold ourselves accountable even when no one is watching. Integrity requires to ask ourselves if we respond only when our actions may draw accolades. Following St. Benedict’s instructions, we are also challenged to be responsive

to the needs of others, not only when we have time.

Through St. Benedict’s twelve steps of humility, we are reminded that humility is about participating in the community life of others. It is about being a team player and not only following the rules like everyone

else but also being respectful towards others and their needs.

For example, the ninth step of humility is that a monk controls his tongue and remains silent,



Father Brendan
Photo: screen capture, Youtube via glenstal.com

not speaking unless asked a question. As remains the case today, people often like to hear themselves speak. But we are not as smart or as interesting as we would like to believe. The ninth rule encourages us to spend less time talking and more listening. After all, according to St. Benedict, listening to others is an expression of humility. Listening is a form of hospitality and allows us to make room for others in our busy lives.

After accomplishing all these steps of humility, according to St. Benedict, the monk will quickly

arrive at the perfect love of God which casts out fear. We too can learn from this love, that “all that we once performed with dread, we now begin to observe without effort, as though naturally, from habit no longer out of fear of hell, but out of love for Christ, good habit and delight in virtue.” For me, as a deacon, that is what I strive to accomplish each day in my own ministry, providing that love towards others, especially to those living on the margins of our society.

My time with the Monks of Glenstal Abbey has led me to the teachings of St. Benedict. Through my interactions with the brothers and priests there, I have become more aware of how I can implement the Rules of St. Benedict in my own life, both as a Christian and as a Deacon. My heart has been opened to a deeper love and care for others and a recognition of how I can show that love and appreciation to others in my interactions within the community in which I live and serve.

Archbishop of Wales Visits Canada for Conversation and Reconciliation

JANE WYSE

The Most Reverend Andy John, Archbishop of Wales and Bishop of Bangor, will be the featured guest and speaker at this year's Clergy and Licensed Lay Workers Retreat. The archbishop's talk, titled "Moving Pictures," will explore four images by the artist Caravaggio: The Call of St. Matthew, The Arrest of Jesus, Supper at Emmaus, and The Incredulity of Thomas.

While in Canada, the archbishop - who is deeply concerned about truth and reconciliation and has a strong interest in learning more about the truth-telling process we have undertaken in Canada - will meet with senior leaders of the Anglican



Archbishop Andy John
Photo: contributed by Diocese of Niagara

Church of Canada, tour the Woodland Cultural Centre and Mohawk Chapel in Brantford, and travel to the Diocese of New Westminster for similar conversations, learning opportunities,

and a speaking engagement. The archbishop will also preach at the Cathedral on May 25 and at St. Andrew’s, Grimsby, on June 1.