

Commissioned Lay Missioners

A new vocation in the diocese

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NIAGARA ANGLICAN

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

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Focusing on God's

Abundance

THE REVEREND ANDREW RAMPTON

Everywhere we go, we are surrounded by news of the world around us. Televisions, radios, podcasts, the computer we use at work, the phone in our pocket, and even a few newspapers in the stand near the checkout at the grocery store all want to tell us what's happened in the last few minutes. It can be easy to feel overwhelmed and dragged down by all of this news, especially when so much of it is unpleasant. Psychological research shows that we are more likely to stay engaged with and consume more of news that upsets us compared to news that makes us happy. Presenting the ugly stuff is a smart sales tactic on the part of those who want to keep our eyes trained on their product. That is the motto of our modern economy, after all: Consume more of everything at all times.

Occasions to buck this trend and intentionally focus our thoughts and attention on what is good are such an important antidote to this barrage of attention-seeking, consumption-driving information. We set aside the latest soundbites, quiet the constant shouting, take a deep breath, and sit in contentment and gratitude for a while. Our annual Harvest Thanksgiving

celebrations in October are on such occasion.

These celebrations are important for us, not only as a recognition that there is still plenty of good in this world, but as a reminder of where that good comes from. It is easy, in a world that we have so successfully conformed to our own will in so many ways, to forget the source of all the good things that surround us. It would be so simple to begin to think that it was us humans who, somehow, made the seeds grow into the bounty that we harvest each autumn. We know that this is not true, that God is the source of everything good in creation. Even though we may be the ones to scatter the seed and reap the harvest, the growing and maturing of the grain is not our doing. (Mark 4:26-29)

The tendency for humans to separate themselves from the world around them, to lose track of the natural cycles and the rhythms of creation instituted by God may be especially obvious today, but it is not new. Many generations ago, in ancient Israel, a similar conversation was taking place. Strongly worded reminders from God's prophets to the chosen people that, even when their flocks increase and they are wealthy

See *ABUNDANCE* Page 8



Photo: Craig Fairley

Annual Synod to be Held Online in November

THE VENERABLE BILL MOUS

"Take my life and let it be consecrated, Lord, to thee" is the theme for the 151st Synod of the Diocese of Niagara, as chosen by

Bishop Susan Bell.

It's a theme, inspired by a classic hymn, that evokes important diocesan priorities regarding vocations, leadership, and faith formation. All of which

are articulated in our renewed diocesan Mission Action Plan, which continues to focus us on the many opportunities God is calling us to life and compelling us to love. It's also an especially

fitting theme for a Synod that will take place on the Feast of All Saints, November 1.

As is our recent custom, our Synod will convene virtually this year, having met in-person last

year to celebrate the diocese's 150th anniversary. Members will gather via Zoom to consider essential matters during the

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Mentor Today, Inspire Tomorrow— *Be a YLTP 2026 Volunteer!*

SARAH BIRD

We’re looking for passionate volunteers to join our team and make a difference.

Are you looking for a meaningful way to invest in the next generation of leaders? The Youth Leadership Training Program (YLTP), our flagship diocesan youth initiative, is returning in March 2026—and we’re inviting YOU to join the volunteer leadership team!

Each year, YLTP gathers youth from across the diocese for a transformative four-day residential experience of leadership development, community building, and faith formation. The program is deeply shaped by our diocesan Mission

Action Plan (MAP), which calls us to be Christ-centred, hope-filled, and missionally focused as we follow God’s lead into the future. In the spirit of our diocesan vision—Called to Life, Compelled to Love—YLTP equips young people to grow in faith, discover their gifts, and live out God’s mission in their communities.

Volunteers play a vital role in supporting youth who are already stepping up as leaders, walking alongside them as mentors, role models, and guides. Whether you’re passionate about leading discussions, sharing your expertise, offering hospitality, or simply being present with youth, there’s a place for you on the team.

Volunteer opportunities include full-time or one-day

volunteers, workshop leaders, part-time supervision, overnight cabin leaders, and on-call support roles.

Program Dates: Sunday, March 15, 2026 (arrival 2:00 PM) – Wednesday, March 18, 2026 (departure 5:00 PM)

Location: Canterbury Hills Camp, Dundas

All volunteers are required to fill out the online application form and provide an up-to-date Vulnerable Sector Police Record Check (PRC) dated within the last three years. Applications will be reviewed by the volunteer recruitment committee, with selection announcements sent in early December 2025.

For more information, contact Sarah Bird, Missional Formation



Bishop Susan with YLTP youth and volunteers

Photo: Niagara Anglican files

Coordinator, Anglican Diocese of Niagara at: sarah.bird@niagaraanglican.ca

Join us for a fun and rewarding ministry experience

and walk alongside the amazing young leaders who are already making a difference in our diocese.

Climate Justice Niagara

The Good, The Bad and The Ugly or, Why I Bought a Heat Pump

GARY BOWRON

Acknowledging the ugly. It’s right there, staring us down, this belligerent and seemingly unstoppable climate crisis. Its aggressive hostilities increasingly wreak havoc with God’s creation with impunity.

Recognizing the bad.

It doesn’t seem to matter how much the planet and its inhabitants swelter in oppressive heat, that our life support systems are rapidly deteriorating, that glaciers are melting away, that the oceans are becoming more acidic, that forests are being clear-cut or burning out of control, or that biodiversity is in drastic decline. It doesn’t seem to trouble others that our air is becoming increasingly toxic, that there are more violent and destructive storms, and that there is flooding and severe drought. There are those who don’t worry that millions of people are forced to migrate in search of relief and that acute hunger and suffering are intensifying everywhere. Why else would we allow things to remain the way they are in this mind-blowing ‘Climate Silence’ where business just continues as usual? Are we stuck with a

doomerism that comes from political frustration and from believing that people who have power are just happy to burn the world down?

Embracing the good.

I can’t be the only one who feels it—righteous anger at the way things are. Anger pushes us out of complacency. We need to shout, “Enough!” Together we must confront this climate crisis with spiritual audacity and bold action. Yes, we can try to elect and then support politicians who might forge a path toward the transformation of the world, but we can’t leave it up to them.

First, and foremost, we must transform ourselves by being faithful to God, faithful to Christ, and faithful to the Gospel that is calling all of us beyond ourselves. We must fall in love with our planet and do everything possible to protect and sustain it. We need people who have a bigger vision and who choose to live life another way—people who are ready to live with positive belief and who are not only clear about what they are against, but what they are for. “I can see a bold new path led by a vision of the sacred goodness of humankind and the abundance of the

planet’s resources ... You and I are the ones we’ve been waiting for to create better lives for ourselves and our communities and to build a better world—together. All we need is the courage to imagine, and the will to make it be so.” (Rev. Dr. Jacqui Lewis, 2025).

Connecting with God’s creation.

“Spending time in nature increases happiness, adds a sense of meaning to life and reduces the symptoms of anxiety and depression. Devoting just two hours a week in nature has been linked to better mood, focus, and mental health.” (*Toronto Star*, June 21, 2025). Be inspired by those things that bring you joy and then work to nurture them. Be more engaged. Take a stand and become a stronger advocate for our planet. Become a ‘Holy Disruptor’ (Pastor Janelle Bruce) if you must, to walk in the radical nature of Christ. Resist fossil fuel consumption. Perhaps invest in solar panels and a heat pump. From May to mid-July, I kept 1,320 kg of CO₂ emissions out of the atmosphere—the equivalent of planting 40 trees.

Instead of being bitter, you could be living more simply, in harmony with creation.



Photo: Unsplash/Alpha Innotec

Perchance you’ll even find yourself whistling an old tune, “Live, love, laugh and be happy.” (from ‘When the Red, Red Robin Comes Bob, Bob, Bobbin’ Along’, Harry Woods, 1926).

Gary Bowren is a member of Climate Justice Niagara. For Resources and Information visit <https://niagaraanglican.ca/climatejustice/partners-and-resources>



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Seeking the Living God:

Mary Magdalene, Sister Marguerite Mae, and the Faithful Witness of The Community of the Sisters of the Church

THE REVEREND CANON SUE-ANN WARD

On July 19, The Church of the Incarnation rejoiced in two intertwined moments of grace: the Feast of Saint Mary Magdalene and the 40th anniversary of Sister Marguerite Mae's life profession in The Community of the Sisters of the Church. Together, they invite us into the story of a life spent seeking—and being found by—the Living God.

Let us begin with Mary of Magdala. Mary is mentioned in the New Testament over a dozen times - more than any other woman except Jesus' mother, Mary. She was present at the cross, at the tomb, and in the garden. When others abandoned Jesus, she remained. When the tomb was found empty, she lingered. She stayed even when there was nothing left to do but weep. And it was in that act of faithful presence that she became the first to see and hear her name called by the risen Christ. And it was to her that he entrusted the first proclamation of resurrection. She was the apostle to the apostles.

One would think, then, that she would be regarded by the Church with the greatest reverence and respect. And yet, over the centuries, Mary Magdalene's image has been obscured by error and invention. Contrary to what many have heard, there is no biblical evidence that she was a prostitute or a public sinner of any kind. Not that it would be terrible if there was, but there simply isn't.

The confusion began in the year 591, when Pope Gregory the Great conflated Mary Magdalene with the unnamed "sinful woman" who anointed



Members of the Community of the Sisters of the Church celebrate Sister Marguerite Mae's 40th anniversary.

Photo: contributed by Sue-Ann Ward

Jesus' feet in Luke 7 and with Mary of Bethany. He stated, "She whom Luke calls the sinful woman, whom John calls Mary, we believe to be the Mary from whom seven devils were ejected. And what did these seven devils signify, if not all the vices? It is clear, brothers, that the woman previously used the unguent to perfume her flesh in forbidden acts..." By making those three women into one Mary Magdalene, Gregory turned Mary from a sick woman who was healed by Jesus into a sinful woman, who was, of course, also healed by Jesus.

Few ascribe malicious intent to Gregory, who likely wanted to use the story to assure potential converts that their sins, of all manner, would be forgiven. But, from there, art, literature, and tradition cemented the image of Mary Magdalene as the penitent harlot, a compelling but utterly unfounded depiction. And, it seems clear that, over the centuries, some have intentionally sullied Mary

Magdalene's reputation to suppress women's leadership in the church.

Our scriptures treat Mary with nothing but respect. When the Gospel writers provide a list of names, Mary's name is given primacy by being listed first. She is never identified by her relationship to a man as other women are. She is not said to be someone's wife, or sister, or mother. She is Mary of Magdala, likely a woman of means and standing, from a thriving fishing town on the Sea of Galilee. The Gospels suggest she was among a group of independent women who not only followed Jesus but helped finance his ministry. When Jesus was arrested and crucified, these women, led by Mary, remained faithful.

Mary's courage and constancy offer us a vision of what faithful discipleship looks like. Her seeking was not passive or sentimental; it was active, open, attentive, responsive, and ultimately rewarded. As Pope Gregory—yes, the same Pope

Gregory—later reflected: "Mary then immediately recognizes her Creator and calls him 'Rabboni,' that is 'Teacher,' for he whom she sought without was within her, teaching her to seek." That line invites us to recognize the mystery of the spiritual life: the One we seek is already within us. Already whispering our name. Already shaping our desire to seek.

This is the same mystery that animates the life of The Community of the Sisters of the Church. While their patron is Michael and All Angels, their mission statement reflects Mary Magdalene's vocation. It reads... "By our worship, ministry, and life in community, we desire to be channels of the reconciling love and acceptance of Christ, to acknowledge the dignity of every person, and to enable others to encounter the living God whom we seek."

This year, we give particular thanks for the life and witness of Sister Marguerite Mae, CSC, who professed her vows 40 years ago and has spent her life embodying that call to seek God through prayer, community, and service.

She has served in parishes, homes for children, hospitals, archives, and libraries, always helping others find dignity, meaning, and beauty. She volunteered for ten years at Mildmay Hospital, ministering to children infected with HIV and AIDS, at a time when fear and stigma often eclipsed compassion.

In 2003, Sister Marguerite Mae returned to Canada from England and served two terms as Sister Provincial, offering leadership, care, and prayerful guidance to her fellow Sisters.

In 2010, when she thought she was on sabbatical, she was asked to fill in as chaplain to the

staff at Westminster Abbey—an unexpected, holy appointment, placing her pastoral presence at the heart of one of Anglicanism's most iconic worshipping communities.

And in 2018, she was elected Mother Superior of the Community of the Sisters of the Church, an affirmation not only of her wisdom and faithfulness, but of the way her life has quietly borne the fruits of the Spirit.

Like Mary Magdalene, she has stood beside those in pain. She has offered presence when there was nothing else to offer. She has listened. She has remembered. She has prayed. And in doing so, she has helped others recognize the voice of Christ calling them by name.

In the Community's present-day ministries—offering hospitality, spiritual direction, parish work, education, chaplaincy, and accompaniment of those who are marginalized or wounded (including prostitutes)—the legacy of Mary Magdalene continues. It is a ministry of seeking and of helping others to seek, of proclaiming good news with lives quietly shaped by grace.

So let us give thanks:

For Mary Magdalene, the Apostle to the Apostles, sometimes misunderstood and misremembered, yet always faithful.

For Sister Marguerite Mae, who has mirrored that faithfulness in her own quiet and prayerful way.

For the Community of the Sisters of the Church, who balance adoration and action, tradition and transformation, silence and service.

And for the One who calls us all by name, who is already within us, teaching us how to seek. Thanks be to God.



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CALLED to LIFE
COMPELLED to LOVE

Commissioned Lay Missioners: A New Lay Vocation for a Mixed Ecology Church

THE REVEREND CANON DR. IAN MOBSBY

The Anglican Diocese of Niagara is boldly embracing a future rooted in both tradition and innovation. As part of our commitment to becoming a mixed ecology Diocese—where inherited and emerging forms of church flourish side by side—we are proud to introduce a new expression of lay vocation: Commissioned Lay Missioners (CLMs).

This development arises from a growing recognition that the Holy Spirit is calling the Church to reach beyond our walls—to listen deeply and respond creatively to the spiritual and practical needs of those in our neighbourhoods who have little or no connection to the Church. Many in our now post-secular society identify as “spiritual but not religious” (SBNR) or have been hurt or alienated by religious institutions in the past. In this changing landscape, the Church is called to cultivate new forms of presence and community that engage meaningfully with the de-churched and unchurched. This is the vocation of the missioner.

Commissioned Lay Missioners are the newest of three expressions of this ministry in the Diocese, complementing the existing roles of Licensed Lay Missioners and Ordained Missioners. These are faithful Christians who have been deeply involved in Anglican parish or diocesan life and have discerned a vocation to contextual mission—forming new ecclesial communities out of contextual mission rooted in prayer, justice, hospitality, and presence. Their call is not to “fix” the Church, but to grow and evolve something new, alongside and from within it, in response to God’s movement in the neighbourhood.

After a careful process of vocational discernment, we are delighted to begin the process of commissioning nine pioneering individuals into this ministry. Please pray for Ellick, Felicia, Frank, Jing, Margaret, Marla, Margaret, Nicole, and Roberta, as they begin a two-year apprenticeship in contextual

mission and lay formation. This journey includes hands-on local practice and theological learning through the Certificate in Mission Practice Course, offered through the Niagara School for Missional Leadership (NSML).

These CLMs are being placed in a variety of innovative missional contexts across the Diocese, each offering a unique opportunity to explore how new ecclesial communities might emerge through relationships, listening, and discernment in context.

Three of our CLMs—Ellick, Frank, and Jing—are serving with The Mission in Acts Mission (MIAM), which has recently become an official Diocesan Mission under Canon 4.9. With the leadership of The Reverend Canon Garfield Adams, MIAM is currently rooted at the parish of St. Luke’s Palermo, with some missional activity operating out of St. Cuthbert’s Oakville. Looking ahead, the team is discerning the planting of a new Mandarin-speaking worshipping community into a further local parish where there is also a significant “new to Canada” Mandarin-speaking population. This work is already bearing fruit as it gently nurtures connection, belonging, and Christian formation among newcomers.

Nicole is already involved in the Hamilton Well Mission Project that operates under the direction of the Licensed Lay Missioner, Susie Kim. Based out of Christ’s Church Cathedral and other venues in James Street North in Hamilton, this mission seeks to use meditation, dialogue, book-reading and socials with a focus on contemplation and well-being to engage with those who are spiritually seeking but do not trust Christians or the Church.

Roberta will serve at Our Saviour the Redeemer, Stoney Creek, working with The Reverend Canon Bahman Kalantari to develop fresh mission initiatives within the parish and wider community. With a particular sensitivity to cross-cultural ministry and local outreach, this partnership holds promise for new expressions of ministry that will reflect the diversity of the neighbourhood.

In Hamilton, Felicia and

Margaret will be part of the emerging mission ministry team at St. John the Evangelist, Locke Street, where they will work alongside The Reverend Dena Thomas under the leadership of The Reverend Andrew Rampton. Their mission is to engage with spiritual seekers in the area, many of whom would never walk through the church doors uninvited. Through intentional relationship-building, spiritual dialogue and contemplative practices, and creative forms of presence, they hope to cultivate missional spaces for the building of trust, spiritual exploration, and invitation.

Also in Hamilton, Marla will serve under the direction of the Reverend Nicola Zhang at the parish of St. Michael’s to support the development of new missional initiatives. This parish, located in a diverse and evolving part of the city, offers fertile ground for listening to and engaging with neighbours who are seeking deeper meaning and connection in their lives.

Each Commissioned Lay Missioner is stepping into a

role that is both ancient and profoundly contemporary. Like the first disciples sent out in pairs, they go not with fixed agendas, but with open hearts, listening ears, and a deep trust in the Spirit’s leading. This work is not about quick results or filling pews or managing decline—it is about faithfulness to Jesus and therefore seeking to develop an incarnational presence, deep hospitality, and the planting of seeds of the Gospel in unlikely places. It is rooted in the theology of the mixed ecology—a vision of the church where both inherited and emerging forms of Christian community are valued and nurtured in mutual relationship.

This initiative represents a significant step forward for the Diocese of Niagara in cultivating lay leadership for the future Church. Commissioned Lay

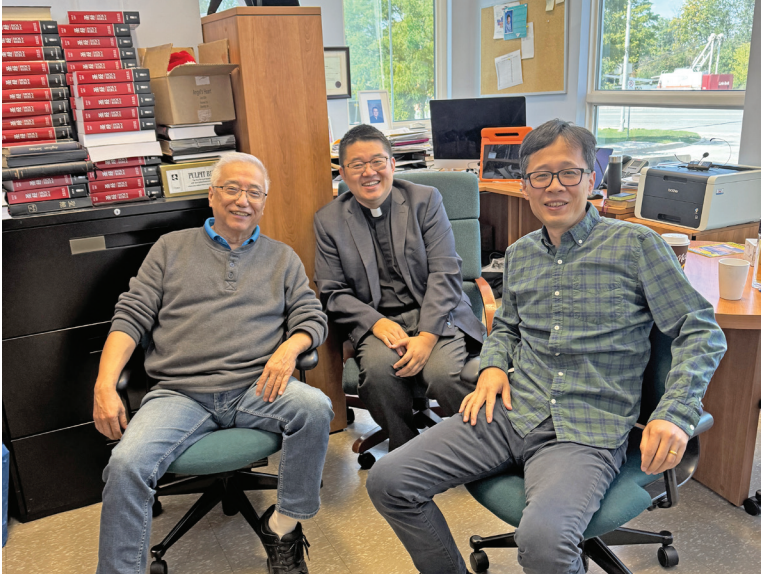
Missioners are not substitutes for clergy, nor are they “volunteers” in the traditional sense. They represent a new vocational pathway—lay people with a particular charism, training, and commission to serve the Church through mission on the edge of culture and faith.

We celebrate these nine new CLMs as courageous pioneers. They are helping us to pilot a new and necessary lay vocation that is deeply rooted in the Anglican tradition, yet alive to the Spirit’s new work in the world. As our communities continue to change, and the Spirit continues to stir, may these missioners help us reimagine a Church that is ever more hospitable, creative, and faithful to God’s mission in the world.

Right: The Reverend Canon Garfield Adams (centre) with Ellick Wong and Frank Gu of the Mission in Acts Mission.

Below: Ellick spends time with the children at a recent service.

Photos: Contributed by Garfield Adams



In other words

Draw the (Ministry) Circle Wider



JOHN BOWEN

My friend had just started work as the pastor of a big Presbyterian church in a Canadian city. “When I was interviewed,” he told me, “I told the committee that, if they appointed me, I would want one day a week—not my day off—in which I could engage in ministry outside the walls of the church and outside the existing church community.” The committee were a little surprised, never having heard such a request before, but agreed. I was impressed by my friend’s commitment to ministry outside the walls—the sort of thing we would now call missional.

I then didn’t see him for six months. When we next met, one of my first questions was, “So how is that one day a week going?” His answer stunned me: “What one day a week?” I reminded him of our previous conversation. He shook his head sadly: “But there is so much to do inside the church.”

Looking back, of course, he was right. His ordination was to a ministry of word and sacrament, teaching and pastoring—not evangelism and mission. And, of course, when you think about it, the New Testament does describe the gifts of pastor and evangelist as different things, ministries exercised by different people. We see this kind of distinction being made early in the Book of Acts, when the apostles decide they should not be involved in the distribution of food in the community, and appoint deacons to do it instead. It’s all to do with the diversity of the Body of Christ.

Ministry after Christendom

There was a period of several centuries when Christianity was dominant in Western societies. Monarchs were crowned in cathedrals by archbishops, British bishops sat (as they still do) in the House of Lords, and the parish church was at the heart of every community. That’s Christendom.

Those days are past, and there is much to celebrate about its passing—as well as some things to grieve. But the way our ministry leadership is structured has not kept up with that reality. The Letter to the Ephesians lists the range of leadership gifts in the early church as “apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors,

and teachers.” A view common in the 16th century, a view that influenced the founders of the Anglican Church, was that the first three—apostles, prophets, and evangelists—were needed only in the first centuries of the Christian era, to spread the Gospel and plant churches. But by the 1500s, Christian faith was well-established across Europe, and all that was needed were pastors and teachers to “tend the flock.” Those other ministries could be forgotten.

As a result, right up until the present day, the leadership gifts we honour most—with careful selection, professional training, episcopal ordination, and (usually) salaried employment—are priests who fulfil the role of “pastors and teachers.” And 90% of what seminaries do is to prepare people for that particular kind of traditional leadership. Of course, we still need pastors and teachers—and the church always will—but those are not the only leaders we need.

Must the church “keep up with the times”?

I don’t subscribe to the belief that the church has to be trendy and cool. Jesus was nothing of the kind! Indeed, it’s more accurate to say he was counter-cultural. Some witty person has said, “If the church is wedded to the culture of a particular age,

she will be a widow in the next.” So, I’m not saying, “We must move with the times.”

Nevertheless, it is true that, as the needs of the world change, the church’s response has to change if we are to continue to show the love of God in meaningful ways. And that means we will have to dig into our tradition to discover resources that have been neglected. In a post-Christendom age, those resources include the three leadership gifts neglected during the heyday of Christendom—those that involve preaching the Gospel where it is unknown and starting churches where there are none. In other words, ministry outside the existing church community and outside the four walls of the church building.

Commissioned Lay Missioners

The Church of England has more experience than we do here in Canada of shaping specialized ministries in response to post-Christendom realities, and this diocese—wisely, in my opinion—is seeking to adopt some of those new “missional” structures. One of these is the category of Commissioned Lay Missioner. (If you Google “Diocese of Niagara Missioners,” you will find more information.)

This category is for people who are not specially gifted as

“pastors and teachers” and would find it difficult or impossible to fulfill a priestly role. (It is not uncommon for such people to be turned down when they apply for ordination.) But what they are good at is ministry outside the church—a ministry to the “dechurched” (those who used to be in church but are so no longer) and the “unchurched” (the growing number who have never been part of any church). In general, such ministries have not been particularly valued in the church—we give more honour to those working within the existing church community—and certainly have not been officially recognized. But now that is changing.

People who have a heart—and gifts—for this kind of ministry will be (a) commended by their parish priest, (b) interviewed by a selection panel, and (c) receive two years of specialized training. They will then be commissioned by the bishop for their new role—hence the Commissioned Lay Missioner.

It’s an exciting new development, and other dioceses are already enquiring about it. Once again, the Diocese of Niagara is showing itself to be progressive as it pivots to respond to the needs of a post-Christian culture.

Synod to be Held Online

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

half-day session.

At the outset of the Synod, Bishop Susan Bell will share her charge to members, reflecting on the theme and casting a vision for our collective ministries over the coming year. Members of synod will also hear how, through our Mission Action Plan, we are fostering opportunities to ignite faith, strengthening our missional culture, and prioritizing God’s justice.

While Synods have a business component to them, they are first and foremost a spiritual gathering. In gathering Anglicans from Mount Forest to Fort Erie and all points in

between, we seek to build up God’s Church through prayer, story-sharing, relationship-building, discernment, and decision-making.

The budget will share how the diocese continues to responsibly steward God’s gifts for our common ministries. Our recovery from the pandemic era continues as expected, and there will be lots of good news to share as we look ahead to 2026 and beyond with faith and hope for the ongoing renewal of God’s mission in Niagara.

The business parts of the Synod will also include receiving the 2024 auditor’s report, as well


as a few housekeeping changes to the canons. The election of regional representatives to Synod Council will be conducted using an online voting platform and reported during the Synod.

All the reports and resolutions for the Synod will be posted at <https://niagaraanglican.ca/synod/2025>.

In the coming weeks, please also hold the members of synod in your prayers as they discern how our diocese – and all its parishes and missions – will respond to God’s persistent call, consecrating our lives and service to our beloved Church.



Archdeacon Bill Mous serves as the Executive Officer and Secretary of Synod.



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Ecumenical Chaplaincy at Brock University

THE REVEREND KRISTA HILTON

I serve as the ecumenical chaplain at Brock University, located in St. Catharines, in the lovely Niagara region of Ontario. The Faith and Life Centre has one of the prime locations on campus, as it is nestled into the Niagara Escarpment, and the large windows of the Centre look onto the wooded area.

As I anticipate the coming school year, I am excited for the establishment of a Student Christian Movement chapter at Brock University. The Student Christian Movement (SCM) of Canada is a student-led grass-roots network passionate about social justice, community in diversity, and radical faith in action. The SCM website states, “As a radical ecumenical movement, we welcome all at our table, regardless of belief, sexual orientation, faith tradition, and age. Together, we take action for social justice, engage in progressive spiritual and faith activism, and seek to foster community in diversity.” [<https://scmcanada.org/about-us>]



The Reverend Krista Hilton

Photo: contributed by Krista Hilton

Two Brock students, Ava Cattran and Em Schilling, are the new local coordinators for the chapter, and I’m working with them to create this new expression of faith on campus. Back in May, the three of us attended a conference sponsored by SCM. The plenary sessions provided many opportunities to consider topics we may wish to offer, such as “Recovering from Religious

Trauma,” “Entering into Trans Solidarity,” and “Faithful Climate Conversations.” Reflecting on the future establishment of SCM, Brock student Ava said, “I’m excited for this new gathering of people who wish to use their diverse experiences and knowledge to gain a new understanding of the teachings of Jesus and our role as Christians within the context of our complicated world. I look forward to applying our gifts in faithful service of those in need within our SCM chapter community, our student community at Brock, and our greater Niagara community.”

Other chaplaincy initiatives include addressing food insecurity and providing winter clothing. Food security is a concern for many university students. I coordinate a frozen meal service for which volunteers from local churches make meals, freeze them, and bring them to their church; I then pick them up, store them at the Faith and Life Centre, and distribute them to students upon request. We also host a community dinner once a month so that students can



Alphie's Trough, the home of Brock's ecumenical chaplaincy.

Photo: contributed by Krista Hilton

enjoy a home-cooked meal and fellowship. These are always well attended. In the late fall, we host a winter clothing drive where students can receive a free winter coat and accessories. There are ways for members of parishes to become involved in the various ministries offered at Brock University. I invite prayerful consideration of the following: 1) contribute to the Frozen Meals ministry; 2) help host a monthly Community Dinner; 3)

collect items for the November Winter Clothing Drive; 4) make a financial donation to the Ecumenical Chaplaincy. All of these are ways to support the faith development of students at Brock University, and all contributions of support and prayers are deeply appreciated.

For more information, please contact Chaplain Krista at nb_khilton@brocku.ca.

A New Archbishop for Wales Met with Both Love and Resistance



THE REVEREND MICHAEL COREN

Earlier this year, The Reverend Cherry Vann was elected archbishop of Wales, becoming the church’s 15th archbishop and the first woman and the first openly gay person to serve in that role. It also makes her the first woman archbishop serving in the United Kingdom. This led to celebration and gratitude for many in the church, but certainly not for all. This was, said Dr Laurent Mbanda, chair of the Gafcon Primates Council, “another painful nail in the coffin of Anglican orthodoxy”. He was, alas, far from alone. It’s essential, and simply

Christian, to listen to other opinions with respect and empathy, especially when they come from brothers and sisters in Christ, many of whom have faced difficulties and dangers that we can only imagine. But that does not and must not prevent firm opposition and a forthright response. I urge you to read *Lower Than the Angels: A History of Sex and Christianity* by my friend Diarmaid MacCulloch for the best response to all this.

The Bible can be as gentle as a watercolour and as powerful as a thunderstorm. It can be taken literally or taken seriously, but not always both. It’s a library written over centuries, containing poetry and metaphor as well as history and biography, and without discernment, it doesn’t always make sense. It has to be, must be, read through the prism of human experience, the filter of love, and an embrace of the human condition.

The thing is, the Bible hardly mentions homosexuality, which is, of course, a word not coined

until the late 19th century. The so-called “gotcha” verses from the Old Testament are specific to ancient customs and are often misunderstood. The Sodom story, for example, wasn’t interpreted as referring to homosexuality until the 11th century. Lot—the hero of the text—offers his virgin daughters to the mob in place of his guests, so it can’t exactly be used as a compelling morality tale!

Ezekiel in the Hebrew Scriptures says, “This was the guilt of your sister Sodom: she and her daughters had pride, excess of food, and prosperous ease, but did not aid the poor and needy. They were haughty, and did abominable things before me” (Ezekiel 16:49-50).

The Old Testament never speaks of lesbianism, and its mentions of sex are more about procreation and the preservation of the tribe than simple romance. It also has some rather disturbing things to say about slavery in Genesis and in Paul’s letter to the Ephesians, about ethnic cleansing in

Deuteronomy, and even killing children in First Samuel. So, a precise guide to modern manners it’s certainly not. Jesus doesn’t mention the issue, and St. Paul’s comments, mainly in his letters to the Romans, are more about men using young male prostitutes in pagan initiation rites than about loving, consenting same-sex relationships. There is, however, one possible discussion of same-sex relationships in the New Testament. It’s when Jesus is approached by a centurion whose beloved male servant is dying. Will Jesus cure him? Of course, and Jesus then praises the Roman for his faith. The Greek word used to describe the relationship between the Roman and his “beloved” servant indicates something far deeper than mere platonic affection. Then there’s the love of David and Jonathan, Jesus refusing to judge and the pristine beauty of grace and justice that informs the Gospels. Most of all, there’s the permanent revolution of love that Jesus didn’t request but

demand. His central teaching, remember, is to love God and love our neighbours as ourselves. We’re told this in three of the four Gospels—Matthew (22:35-40), Mark (12:28-34) and Luke (10:27). It’s a transformational moment for Christians, to know that only by loving others can we properly know and love God. I’m a mere journalist, a very ordinary priest, and all I can do is to try in a limited way to influence the conversation and state what I am convinced is the authentic Christian argument. But I’m also someone who, until 12 years ago, would likely have opposed the election of Archbishop Vann, but now I rejoice in it. Please remember, there are no enemies in the Christian body, simply friends whom we haven’t yet met. That friendship can only develop and blossom with an open hand, not with a clenched fist.

Sharing Christ’s Love at McMaster:

Ecumenical Chaplaincy a Welcoming Presence on Campus

THE REVEREND MARLICE SIMON

At the heart of McMaster University, the Ecumenical Chaplaincy Centre is a place of compassion, spiritual care, and belonging. As campus life has returned to full vibrancy, the Chaplaincy has adapted to meet students’ evolving needs, offering a sanctuary for rest, connection, and holistic well-being.

Ministry Rooted in Community

Rooted in the Anglican tradition and ecumenical in spirit, the Chaplaincy Centre welcomes students from all backgrounds and faiths. Its mission is to walk alongside young adults as they navigate university life, providing spiritual and pastoral care, fostering relationships, and creating a safe space for exploration and growth.

Every cup of soup served, every conversation held, and every event hosted is an act of love—an embodiment of the diocesan mission, “Called to Life – Compelled to Love.” The Chaplaincy’s work is a living example of faith in action.

Programs That Make a Difference

- **Soup and Spirit:** A cornerstone

outreach, serving over 2,800 cups of soup last year. This weekly program nourishes students and offers a moment to pause, connect, and seek guidance. Seasonal treats and creative activities, like Valentine’s cookie decorating, have made it a beloved fixture.

- **Exam Hospitality:** During stressful exam periods, the Chaplaincy provides a warm welcome, homemade cookies, and a quiet space to decompress. With over 1,800 student drop-ins the last school year, this volunteer-driven initiative is a lifeline for many, supported by local churches and businesses.
- **Chaplaincy Wellness Week:** A new initiative focusing on holistic well-being—faith, friends, family, fitness, food, fun, and future. Collaborative events, from meal prep to creative workshops, help students build resilience and community.
- **Art in the Hallways:** Launched during Black History Month, this annual event transforms the Chaplaincy’s hallways into a vibrant gallery, celebrating Black artists and interfaith dialogue, and reflecting the Centre’s commitment to inclusivity and cultural

- awareness.
- **Meditation Mondays** (Launching 2025/26): A new program to cultivate self-awareness and compassion, providing a dedicated space for reflection amidst the busyness of campus life.

Building for the Future

With McMaster’s student body growing in size and diversity, the need for faith-based mental health support and culturally sensitive spiritual care is rising. The Chaplaincy aims to expand its programs—serving over 5,000 cups of soup and increasing exam hospitality outreach—while introducing new initiatives that intersect with all aspects of student life.

The return of the Reverend Charles Meeks as Ecumenical Chaplain promises renewed collaboration with local Anglican churches, especially St. Paul’s in Westdale, strengthening the Chaplaincy’s Anglican roots and ecumenical partnerships.

Why Your Support Matters

The Chaplaincy’s impact is made possible by the generosity of Anglican, United, and Presbyterian partners, as well as individual donors. However, personal contributions have declined in recent years. In



Students making upcycled totes as part of wellness week..

Photo: contributed by Marlice Simon

this era, where there is global economic vulnerability and an increase in housing and food insecurities, continuous support of the Chaplaincy is pivotal for all students at McMaster, particularly the most vulnerable.

Every donation is an investment in the spiritual, emotional, and mental well-being of McMaster students. Your generosity enables:

- Holistic care through diverse programming
- Community building and belonging

- Faith development and spiritual exploration
- Outreach and inclusion for all backgrounds

Join Us in Ministry

As Anglicans, we are called to bear witness to Christ’s love in every corner of our communities. The Chaplaincy Centre at McMaster is a living example—serving, listening, and loving in tangible ways. Your prayers, presence, and financial gifts make this ministry possible.



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:

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

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



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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The Untold Stories of Women in Church Leadership:

Bearing Witness to God’s Work



THE REVEREND CANON MARTHA TATARNIC

Bishop Rose Hudson Wilkin describes feeling a call to ordained ministry as a fourteen-year-old girl growing up in Jamaica. The Anglican church in that time and place didn’t ordain women, and so when she asked her bishop why women couldn’t be priests, he told her, “Rose, we are Anglicans. We don’t do that.” Rose didn’t walk away from that conversation feeling like she hit a dead end. Instead, she describes greeting this “no” with a smile. “You might not do this,” she thought to herself. “And the church might not do this. But I know that God does.” Rose went on to be among the first women ordained in the Church of England as a priest and then to become the first Black woman

bishop. I got to read her memoir, *The Girl from Montego Bay*, for my Future Christian podcast. It’s part of an ongoing conversation that we are having on the pod around female leadership in our church. Earlier this summer, I interviewed Margo Guernsey, producer and director of *The Philadelphia Eleven*—a documentary on the first ordination of women in the Episcopal Church in 1974. In August, my co-host, Loren Richmond Jr., facilitated a round table episode with me and several other well-known Niagara priests on our current experience of serving in leadership in our church as women. These are important conversations that I want us to have. I want our churches to hear these stories. I want people to watch *The Philadelphia Eleven* and talk about the bravery and vision it took these women and their supporters to chart this new course. I want Bishop Rose’s faithfulness in being able to trust God to lay a path that church authorities could not yet see to be a story that is well-known in faith circles. I want this for a few reasons.

I grew up in a church where women have been ordained longer than I have been alive. I grew up in a time and place that assured me that things like access to education, the ability to vote, and limitless options on what I could do with my life were guaranteed. I am grateful for this. It’s because of women like Bishop Rose and the *Philadelphia Eleven*, and the trailblazers in the Anglican Church of Canada. It’s because of my mother and grandmother and women who don’t have documentaries made about them, but who bore witness to the fullness of what women could do and be. I want to be more intentional about this gratitude. I want to be less ignorant about just how precarious these precious rights really are and how recently in our history women’s opportunities have actually been. In contrast to me, my daughter is growing up in a world where she regularly receives the message that her freedoms are contested. She hears the loud voices, always at the ready to take away what we have, arguing that the advancement of women has been the diminishment of men.

Here’s the other reason why I want these stories to be front and centre in our communities. I want a more realistic and holistic picture of our church of who God works through and how God nudges the people of faith along. The idea that it has ever just been men shaping this church is fiction. At every point in the history of the church, women are found midwifing the power and newness of God and shaping the church, even if their positions have been relegated to the sidelines and their stories have been largely undocumented. Just because we haven’t been good at noticing doesn’t mean they aren’t there. Bishop Rose describes at various points in her memoir the burden of trying to be the sole representative at the front of any given church of what female leadership or Black leadership looks like. Because she is seen as the “only one,” she has lived with the tremendous responsibility of making sure that the experience people have of her is one which opens them, rather than closes them, to the others that will follow the path that she and the Holy Spirit have blazed. I respect and understand her

conscientiousness. Even after fifty years of ordaining women in our church, I am often the first experience people will have of women in the pulpit or at the altar. Our bishop carries the mantle of being the first female bishop of this diocese and no doubt lives with the responsibility of being the one and only standard by which others will judge the validity of women as a whole in the church’s highest offices. It’s an unfair weight to carry. If God isn’t done with us yet, it’s because God’s MO is in working with material that is rife with flaws. As my daughter regularly points out, it is never suggested that maybe a man who trips up invalidates the whole project of male leadership, but the spectre of “oh, we tried that and didn’t work” hangs over our heads continually. I want these women’s stories told in our churches because every story that we tell widens our imagination of what is possible for all of us, how limitless God’s work really is, and also how committed God is to working not with perfect people, but with us. All of us.

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Abundance of God Celebrated

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

beyond their grandparents’ dreams, they must not forget the covenant that made this possible. (Deuteronomy 8:11-18) Of course, God’s expectations for those who have more than they need include care for those who go without. For our God, thanksgiving for an abundant harvest means sharing generously. (Deuteronomy 10:17-19; Matthew 25:35-40) I think many of us lose sight of the kind of abundance that surrounds us every day. Not only the incredible diversity of crops and fertile soil in Niagara, but the miracles that modern transportation technology has made possible. Even in the dead of a brutal Canadian winter, many of us can travel to a super-market full of food, including fresh produce from the other side of the planet. It is challeng-

ing to remember that, until very recently, a good autumn harvest was critical to surviving the coming winter. We have so much to be grateful for and so much abundance to share. The Christian sensibility around gratitude and thanksgiving is a powerfully counter-cultural one. To set aside time to focus on what is good, to be grateful for what we have, and to share with those who go without is a strong statement. In a world that idolizes The Economy—a rapacious beast that demands infinite growth in every season, constant production, and the hoarding of wealth and goods for their own sake—to make space for contentment, gratitude, and sharing is truly a sign of another way of life. When we are willing to make sacrifices for the sake

of our neighbour in need, to set aside times of rest when we could be “productive”, when we choose gratitude over gluttony, we show that it is possible to live with hearts focused on heaven and treasures stored up accordingly. (Matthew 6:19-21) Imagine how the world would change if contentment and thanksgiving were practised widely as Christians are called to practice them. How much would the climate crisis be slowed if one day in every seven were given to rest instead of extraction and production? How would the wellbeing of workers increase if the profits of their labour were shared equitably? How much better would the news be if thanksgiving, not consumption, were the central value of our economy?

Make a Joyful Noise Unto the Lord

**THE REVEREND DEACON
SHEILA PLANT**

As I begin to write this article, I am sitting on the terrace of the Elim Conference Centre nestled in the Malvern Hills in rural Worcestershire. The sun is shining, the sky is a cerulean blue, and the surrounding area is dotted with sheep on the hillside. I should also mention that the strains of *The Angel Carol* by Sir John Rutter are going through my head.

This is my third year taking part in the Church of England Guild of Vergers' annual conference, and it has never disappointed. The theme of this year's conference is The Ministry of Music. Our keynote speaker has been the world-renowned Sir Dr. John Rutter. We had three other guest speakers, including David Waters, the executive director of BBC's "Songs of Praise", but I wanted to focus on Sir John.

Sir John began by telling us that his talk that he was giving was called "Confessions of a Composer". He did not choose composition as a way of life, but rather, it chose him. He began

making up little “ditties,” as he called them, when he was just seven years old. He claimed that he was a terrible pianist, but his teacher encouraged him to sing and make up tunes. When he was just 14 years old, he and his good friend, John Tavornor, composed the new Nigerian African Anthem.

He told us that the Lady Chapel in Ely Cathedral had the finest acoustics anywhere for recording, and this is where he made his first recording. He said that the EMI recording studio in Cambridge was too noisy.

No one before had recorded the Cambridge Singers, and he directed them when his friend Thomas Tallis wrote the Tallis Canon. He said the places where you record music are very important, and recording in churches and cathedrals gives the music a sacredness. It is about the history as well, and not just about the acoustics.

When he was 16 years old and still in school, he wrote “The Shepherd’s Pipe Carol” (also known as On the Way to Bethlehem). This was performed at the Royal Albert Hall for a



Left: (l to r) Ritchard Taylor, Sheila Plant and Sir John Rutter at the Vergers' Conference in England. Right: Sir John Ritter speaking. Photos: contributed by Sheila Plant



Sir John has composed many beautiful pieces over the years, too numerous to mention. Notably, he was commissioned by the Dean of Westminster Abbey to compose a piece for the now Prince and Princess of Wales on their wedding day. It was based on Psalm 118, verse 24: "This is the day that the Lord hath made, rejoice and be glad."

We took pieces of sheet music with us to the conference, and Sir John was more than happy to sign them for us. Mine was “The Angel Carol” and will hold pride of place in my office.

Sir John is an extremely humble person. During his presentation, he talked about his relationships with other people throughout his life, and always took the focus away from himself. He also has a terrific sense of humour.

He closed his talk by telling us that singing releases the same endorphins as eating chocolate!

“A church without a choir is like a body without a soul.”

—Sir Dr. John Rutter

Passing the Baton—Or the Bells: A Family Legacy Rings On

LAURA KELLER

Thirteen-year-old Desmond Hamilton is learning to play the Carillon bells at St. George's Anglican Church in Guelph, guided by his grandfather, Don Hamilton.

The Hamiltons are long-time members of the parish. In fact, Don was baptized at St. George's in 1948 by Canon Brownlee. He attended Sunday School as a child, going on to be a teacher and even the superintendent for a time. Don's musical path began unexpectedly one Easter morning in 1987:

"I was invited to 'come up to the bells' as the saying went back then. Earl Hunt had been the carillonneur for about five years. He was preparing to spend the summer at his cottage and winter in Florida. Earl and I shared similar backgrounds: Scouting, Masonic and Scottish Rite membership, and playing bagpipes with the Guelph Pipe Band. He figured I might enjoy the carillon, and he was right! It came as quite a surprise, but I



Carillonneur Don Hamilton and his grandson Desmond.

Photo: contributed by Laura Keller

took it on.”

Located 56 steps above ground level, the St. George's Carillon was originally a gift from local businessman Arthur Cutten in 1925. It's home to 36 carillon bells and is one of only 9 working carillons in Canada - the tolling bell alone weighs nearly 4000 lbs. Tunes are played by striking baton-like keys which are connected to the bells in a 3-octave

natural bell carillon.

Over time, Don's passion for the bells became a family affair. His daughter Cathy played for a time before high school, and his son Duncan also took a turn at the keyboard before heading off to college. Photos from around 2015 capture visits to the bell tower by grandsons Daniel, David, and Desmond - little moments that planted the seeds for a new generation.

Now, decades later, the musical tradition continues. Don still plays the bagpipes, after more than 60 years. Grandson David has followed suit, piping with the 121 Red Arrows Air Cadets in Guelph since 2023.

Desmond, meanwhile, is embracing music on multiple fronts. Since spring 2023, he has been learning acoustic and electric guitar, but it's the carillon bells that have truly captured his heart. He gravitates toward classic Anglican hymns - favourites include I Vow to Thee, My Country, traditional Scottish airs, and stirring naval tunes. As a Navy Cadet himself, Desmond

has a deep respect for those who serve, often choosing to play The Maple Leaf Forever in tribute.

Desmond will begin high school in September 2025, joining

his brothers for a special year when all three will be at the same school—a fitting note in this continuing harmony of family, music, and faith.

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In Conversation ...

Meet Peter Ciallella

Editor Dani Leitis chats with the new missionary for the Migrant Farmworkers Project

"Hoi!" I hear as I walk down the steps at the back of St. Alban's in Beamsville. I'm greeted by the delicious smell of food and the volunteers behind the kitchen counter.

It's my first time visiting the Migrant Farmworkers Project at the St. Alban's hub.

Everyone is so friendly and welcoming. Both the volunteers and the farmworkers. I was there to meet the Reverend Peter Ciallella, the new ordained missionary for the Migrant Farmworkers Project. Ciallella is sitting at a table by the door, a perfect spot to welcome in the workers and engage with the volunteers.

Everyone seems very happy, and I am surprised to learn that some of the volunteers only speak English. Still, I watch as they communicate with the Spanish-speaking workers they are there to support, grateful for the work they provide for our communities. I can see the relationships that they have built despite the language barrier—proof of God at work.

There were freshly made, pre-packaged meals lined up on the counter so workers could choose to eat in the café, outside, or take them to go. Many showed up in groups and preferred to stay and enjoy the community.

After touring the hub, speaking with the volunteers and meeting some of the migrant farmworkers, I had the opportunity to speak with Ciallella to learn more about his role and the work of the Migrant Farmworkers Project.

Dani: Peter, for those who haven't met you yet, can you introduce yourself?

Peter: Sure, my name is Peter Ciallella. I was born and raised in Hamilton, Ontario. My parents immigrated to Canada from Italy in 1966. I became the missionary for the Migrant Farmworkers project on April 1st, 2025.

D: For those who haven't heard about the Migrant Farmworkers Project, can you share what it is?

P: The Migrant Farmworkers Project is a mission of the Anglican Diocese of Niagara that has existed for approximately 13 years. It is a response to the



Peter Ciallella and his wife Sandra
Photo: contributed by Peter Ciallella

growing needs of the migrant farmworkers in the Niagara region. Through collaboration with other non-profit agencies, we provide a space of welcome and service for the specific needs of the migrant workers, such as hospitality, clothing, bicycles, medical clinic, translation services, ESL, education and workshops on a range of topics such as migrant workers' rights and health and safety. We also give spiritual support and counselling to many as they strive to make a livelihood for themselves and their families back home, despite the moments of loneliness and mental strain they are forced to endure.

D: Can you elaborate on some of the programs that run for the farmworkers?

P: Each week on Thursday, we open the hub at St. Alban in Beamsville. We also run a separate hub once a month on Tuesday from the public library in Fenwick. The workers come to socialize while we provide snacks, refreshments and a light meal. We give them access to Wi-Fi. They receive a welcome bag at the beginning of the season (March/April). Twice a month, there is a medical clinic on-site that provides primary care, referral, bloodwork, etc. A translator is available to facilitate communication between the patient and the medical provider. There is a series of workshops on different topics such as income tax, migrant workers' rights, health and safety. We provide ESL tutoring for those inclined to improve their English. We

have an online educational program for adults that was designed in Mexico and is available to the workers. We have donated clothing on site, and we sell donated bicycles at a modest cost (\$40) to cover the cost of servicing the bikes.

I also visit the workers on the farms, especially those who are unable to attend our weekly gatherings. I engage in a conversation with the workers and provide spiritual service. We also have Eucharist both at St. Alban's Church in Beamsville and St. John's in Jordan.

At times, I have been asked to assist with translation or help with transportation so that a worker can attend to their medical appointments.

D: So, Peter, how did you get involved in this project? What was the experience that made this role a good fit for you?

P: I've been a long-time missionary for migrants in various roles. I've always held a special place in my heart for them. Most likely from my own background in an immigrant family. I see what migrants must endure while adapting to a new culture and society. I personally began ministering to migrant farmworkers in 2010. I continued to serve them while I was a rector in various parishes within the region.

D: What has your experience so far been like with the project?

P: I have come to appreciate and value very much the work that has been ongoing in terms of service and support for our migrant workers. So, I would say the experience has been very positive. My wife, Sandra, is also fully committed as a volunteer in the project.

Speaking of the volunteers, I truly admire the dedication and care of the volunteers at St. Alban in Beamsville and the wider community. They provide so much support for the mission.

I am also grateful to the leadership of the diocese, beginning with Bishop Susan and the Reverend Ian Mobsby, the community missionary, for their

ongoing support, guidance and encouragement.

D: What are the goals for the future of the Migrant Farmworkers Project?

P: In addition to providing the ongoing support and services to our migrant farmworkers, the other goals include the following:

1. Establishing a community for newcomers to Canada from Latin America and connecting that community with our migrant Farmworkers.
2. Build up the spiritual dimension of the mission through worship, retreats, and formation
3. In the past the Project largely depended on the vision and direction of the Missioner. We want to use a collaborative, team approach that includes the input from the leadership of the Diocese to the local leaders in the parishes. Therefore, soon we will establish an Advisory Board to give the Missioner the support he or she needs to implement the vision of the mission in line with the Mission Action Plan of the Diocese.

New underwear and socks were items that were also something of great need.

When I left, I was encouraged

to take a meal, and the workers left behind a basket of pears as a symbol of gratitude. I was humbled at the long hours these workers put in to harvest the food we often take for granted in our regional grocery stores. Yet here they are thanking me for sharing about the work done at the Migrant Farmworkers project.

Ciallella later said he and his wife, Sandra, had also begun to connect with more women workers. During his time here, he and Sandra had found that there was a need to make sure that women knew that this was a safe place for them as well and identified that a community was needed to support the women who were here working seasonally also.

The hub often accepts donations to ensure it can support enough of the workers consistently. At the time, I was visiting, personal hygiene products were scarce. This can include things such as pads, tampons, shampoo, body wash, skin care products, etc. They also accept donations of seasonal clothing, and new underwear and socks were items that were also of great need.

You can contact the Reverend Peter Ciallella to learn more about what donations are needed or how you can support and volunteer at the Migrant Farmworkers project by emailing migrantfarmworkers@niagaraanglican.ca.



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Peace Garden Opens at St. Cuthbert's

LORI KENNEDY

On June 22, St Cuthbert's Church and Community Centre blossomed into a vibrant new space as it officially opened its long-anticipated Peace Garden. With the sun shining brightly, Venerable Jeff Ward welcomed all attendees to this special occasion, highlighting the garden's role not only as a sanctuary of peace but also as a hub for connection, creativity, and community.

The event was marked by a palpable sense of the Holy Spirit working in the garden and among those in attendance, which included devoted members of the St Cuthbert's community and special guests. Among them was Elizabeth Chalmers, representing Hon. Anita Anand, who was abroad attending to government matters. In her speech, Elizabeth conveyed the heartfelt congratulations of MP Anita Anand, emphasizing St Cuthbert's commitment to being a pillar of the Oakville community for more than 60 years. This spirit of inclusivity and warm welcome was a recurrent theme throughout the gathering, reflecting the church's dedication to enriching the lives of its members and the wider community.

Councillor Janet Haslett-Theall further praised St Cuthbert's for embracing community initiatives. She noted not only the installation of a permeable walkway that enhances environmental sustainability, but also the church's efforts to extend branches of hope to all who seek connection.

The Peace Garden is designed as a place to nurture relationships and inspire creativity. Visitors can expect to find contemplative corners, spaces for dialogue, and perhaps even unexpected artistic expressions emerging from this tranquil

haven.

Here are some key features of the new Peace Garden:

Permeable Walkway: Crafted to facilitate both drainage and accessibility, the walkway encourages visitors to connect with the earth beneath them while promoting environmental sustainability.

Diverse Plant Life: The native gardens include a variety of plants that not only beautify the space but also attract local fauna, enhancing biodiversity in the area.

Community Gathering Spaces: With benches and shaded areas, the garden invites visitors to sit, talk, and forge new relationships.

Future Programs: Plans are underway to offer programs and workshops in the Peace Garden, ensuring that it will be a dynamic space open to everyone in the community.

The Peace Garden wouldn't have been possible without the generous support from various sources. Significant contributions came from the Diocese of Niagara, TD Friends of the Environment, and GiveOakville, alongside numerous donations from parishioners and community members. Their kindness not only financed the project but



also underscored the strength of community bonds.

This collaborative effort truly exemplifies how a community can come together to create something beautiful and meaningful. The Peace Garden stands as a testament to the power of shared goals and the collective spirit of the St Cuthbert's community.

To mark the opening, a festive BBQ was held, inviting everyone to commemorate this landmark

achievement in a jubilant atmosphere. Friends and families gathered to share laughter, stories, and delicious food, reinforcing the very essence of community that the Peace Garden aims to cultivate.

As the Peace Garden officially opens its space, it symbolizes more than just an expansion of green space; it embodies the hope that gardens inspire connection, creativity, and peace within the community.

St Cuthbert's Church and Community Centre has firmly rooted its place in Oakville over the last 60 years, demonstrating that community thrives through inclusivity and compassion.

As we look towards the future, let's hold onto the spirit of togetherness that the Peace Garden promotes. May it grow to be a beacon of hope, inviting all to explore, connect, and cultivate lasting friendships in the heart of Oakville.



Opening of the peace garden.

Photos: contributed by Lori Kennedy

Niagara Anglican Deadlines and Submission Guidelines

Upcoming Deadlines:

- December – October 20
- January – November 17
- February – December 12

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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Spiritual Renewal: A Pathway to Deeper Relationship with God



THE REVEREND MONICA ROMIG GREEN

In my work as a Faith Formation Coordinator with churches across the diocese, I have been assisting in the process of spiritual renewal. It is a concept that is welcomed with great enthusiasm—everyone seems to want it for their church.

However, as we explore it more directly, I have found that while many have ideas about what spiritual renewal might look like, there is little shared clarity about what it actually is. For some, it is seen as more new people attending Sunday services. Others picture established parishioners becoming more active. Some focus on the Holy Spirit’s role in emotional or physical healing, while others long for a return to the days

when churches were full of young families. While these may be signs of renewal, I believe there is something deeper and more essential that can guide communities toward genuine spiritual renewal.

At its core, spiritual renewal is the revitalizing of our relationship with the Triune God. Like any relationship in need of renewal, it requires recommitment, intentional connection, active listening, honest communication, and a growing love. This relational restoration begins with individuals, deepens in community, and overflows into our neighbourhoods.

Spiritual Renewal in Our Personal Lives

As a priest, I often work with couples preparing for marriage, and no matter the state of their relationship, we always emphasize the importance of healthy communication. The same principle applies to our relationship with God. The starting point for spiritual renewal is prayer—spending intentional time with God, expressing our hopes and longings, and listening

attentively for God’s responses.

Because God is spirit, this listening involves our whole being—mind, heart, body, and soul. God speaks through various means: Scripture, circumstances, people, sacraments, beauty, silence, and more. Through open and honest prayer, and by paying attention to how God responds, we can rekindle a deep and consistent connection with God—one that gives meaning and direction to our lives.

Spiritual Renewal in Our Churches

Our faith is not meant to be lived in isolation, and neither is spiritual renewal. When prayerful individuals come together—whether in worship or small groups—corporate spiritual renewal begins to take shape.

The first step is remembering that God is truly present whenever we gather in Christ’s name. Acknowledging God’s presence allows us to collectively share our hopes and begin to listen for God’s response. This process, known as group discernment, involves seeking God’s direction together and paying attention to where

God is already at work in our congregation.

Rather than relying on our own agendas or efforts, group discernment invites us to align with God’s intentions. It encourages us to notice small sparks of growth or passion and support them, trusting that God provides the increase. This process helps deepen our communal trust in God and usually requires us to let go of comfortable patterns in order to receive something new. The biblical story shows us that walking with God often requires courage as we step into unfamiliar territory, keeping our eyes fixed on the One who calls us.

Spiritual Renewal in Our Neighbourhoods

A church that is praying, listening, and following God’s lead will naturally begin to radiate signs of spiritual life. God’s love is always expansive—reaching wider, deeper, and farther than we expect. Even though church attendance may no longer be culturally expected, people still long for meaning and connection, and God is always moving in their lives.

A spiritually renewed

church learns to pay attention to how God is already active in the community. Through prayerful observation and group discernment, the church can discover how to join in with God’s work among its neighbours. In this way, missional and social justice initiatives become expressions of a deep, living relationship with God—not just good deeds, but Spirit-filled action.

How to Begin

If spiritual renewal sounds appealing to you and your church, why not begin today? The process starts with a desire to deepen your relationship with God. All it takes is the willingness to be open and intentional in prayer—sharing your desires, hopes, and fears with God.

Start personally, then gather with others who share the same longing. As you take that first step toward the God who is already running toward you, may you be met in ways that delight, surprise, challenge, and enliven both your heart and your church.

Community Supports Community in Rockwood

DAWN RAYNARD

Since its launch in July 2023, the Rockwood Lions Community Pantry has been quietly transforming lives in our town, one bag of food at a time. The pantry began serving food at Waterside Park, owned by the Rockwood Lions, down by the river, a beautiful spot but not suitable for colder weather.

Founded on the principle of dignity and accessibility, the pantry operates with a simple but powerful motto: “Take what you need, no questions asked.

The pantry offers a safe, stigma-free place for individuals and families to access nutritious food. Every week, it supports approximately 40–50 people, thanks to the dedication of volunteers and the overwhelming generosity of the community.

A core aspect of the program is its commitment to rescuing food that would otherwise go to waste. Much of the food is



Left to right: Pamela Adamson (Warden), Fr. Michael (St. John’s Anglican Church), Dawn Raynard (Rockwood Lions), Chris White (Mayor of Guelph/Eramosa), Doug Smith (President, South Wellington Community Lions), Dianna Hewitt (Secretary, Rockwood Lions), Kevin March (Incoming President, Rockwood Lions), Barbara Reed (Warden), Anita Ertel (South Wellington Community Lions)

Photos: Contributed by Dawn Raynard

donated by Rockwood Foodland and The Seed in Guelph, ensuring that good, edible items find a home instead of ending up in landfills. These rescued goods are supplemented by generous donations from local farmers

such as The Bushel Barn and Red Rabbit Gardens, just to name a few, and by generous community members, making the pantry’s offerings as diverse as they are sustainable.

In October 2023, the program

reached a new chapter when St. John’s Anglican Church in Rockwood graciously opened its doors to provide a warm, indoor space. Established in the 19th century, St. John’s has long stood as a pillar of faith and service in Rockwood. Known for its striking Gothic architecture and its inclusive, community-focused mission, the church continues to serve as more than just a place of worship; it’s a hub for compassion in action.

With the pantry now operating out of a dedicated, permanent room within the church, this partnership marks a meaningful blend of spiritual care and social support. Fr. Michael, along with wardens Pamela Adamson and Barbara Reed, have supported the initiative from day one, making the church not just a host but an active partner in addressing food insecurity in the community.

On Sunday, May 18th, a celebration was held to mark this milestone. In attendance

were members of the Rockwood & District Lions Club, South Wellington Community Lions Club, leaders from St. John’s Anglican Church, Guelph/ Eramosa Mayor Chris White, and dedicated volunteers who make the pantry possible.

The pantry has also benefited from multiple food drives organized by local groups and caring individuals, most recently a dedicated scout member- Ainsley Morse, further proof of Rockwood’s deep-rooted spirit of giving.

The Rockwood Lions Community Pantry stands as a testament to what’s possible when people come together with compassion, purpose, and a shared belief that no one in our community should go hungry. Thanks to the support of organizations like St. John’s Anglican Church and our dedicated Lions Clubs, this mission continues to grow stronger every day.