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A section of the Anglican Journal



# NIAGARA ANGLICAN



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NOVEMBER 2024

## A Church at the Crossroads



Newly installed provincial vice-chancellor, Canon Greg Tweney, is pictured here with Archbishop Anne Germond and Bishop Susan Bell after the Synod's concluding worship service held at St. Luke's Cathedral in Sault St. Marie, Ontario.

### Reflections on Provincial Synod

"A church at the crossroads journeying into a hopeful future is the image that struck me most as I attended my first Provincial Synod," reflected Archdeacon Terry Holub, rector of St. David's, Welland and one of Niagara's eleven delegates in attendance at the Synod. "As I took my seat for the opening session I was filled with both hope and excitement as I watched delegates from around the province gather together for worship, fellowship, and serious discussions."

Delegates from the seven dioceses across the Ecclesiastical Province of Ontario—Algoma, Huron, Moosonee, Niagara, Ottawa, Ontario, and Toronto met in Sault Ste. Marie at the end of September for the 38th Session of the Provincial Synod.

Archbishop Anne Germond, who was re-elected for another term as provincial metropolitan during the Synod chose "Conversations at the Crossroads" to serve as the theme of the Synod, based on Jeremiah 6:16: "Stand at the crossroads and look; ask for the ancient paths, ask where the good way is, and walk in it, and you will find rest for your souls."

In her opening charge to Synod, Archbishop Germond described the Synod as an opportunity to change the course of not only our church but the world as well.

"As a nation and a church there is much work to be done to heal the wounds of the past and to work for justice for all people. With this in mind, it seems almost foolish for us to be gathered here this week to engage what some might regard yet another futile and meaningless exercise in navel gazing. But I believe what we are doing here as we gather at the crossroads is critical in the larger scheme of things... Our destiny is not in the hands of warmongering politicians, or in the nay-sayers about the future of our church. Our destiny is in the hands of our Creator, our Redeemer, and our Sustainer. As we consider the work that has been done since we last gathered let us remember that we have been invited to participate in God's mission and purpose for the world, to share in a mission that is so broad, and wide and high that it

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## Hiding in Plain Sight

**THE REVEREND CANON DR. DREW MACDONALD**

I am no mystery writer but sometimes I wish I was. Over the summer I found myself reading a wonderful mystery novel by British author Jeffrey Archer. The bad guy steals a priceless piece of art—actually a Rubens: *The Descent from the Cross*. No other word than, "priceless" describes what is at stake. We learn the original is

hanging in his New York flat while the forgery is hanging in the art gallery. Of course, it all works out in the end, but it certainly takes some time before the Rubens is brought back to its proper place.

I'm certain that there is a parallel to be observed here when I acknowledge something that I think is hiding in plain sight—the Anglican Church Ministries Foundation, Niagara [ACMF].

As the stewardship and cam-

paign advisor for the diocese, I am profoundly struck that so few are even aware of this 'masterpiece' in the life of the diocese. It is as if the Foundation is hiding in plain sight.

An established foundation can change lives whether it is attending to poverty issues, helping the disadvantaged and marginalized to securing the future of the faith through education and spiritual formation.

In fact, the ACMF has done

exactly that through its 'Survive & Thrive: Education & Training' campaign. With the inspirational giving of Anglicans across this diocese we have raised over 2.5 million dollars directed toward such goals. That endowment provides funds to support education and training initiatives within the diocese, such as the Clergy & Licensed Lay Workers Conference and anti-racism training. Another endowment holds more than one

million dollars called, 'Survive & Thrive: Outreach in the Name of Christ Endowment Fund'. It provides funds to create and strengthen responsible relationships that promote justice, peace and the stewardship of creation. This endowment held within the Foundation also supports local poverty initiatives, and recently funded annual grants to university and seafarer chap-

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# Communion Forest Inventory Results

## More Pruning, Less Planting

**DEIRDRE PIKE**

While many people were enjoying the shade of a tree canopy this summer, members of seven Niagara parishes spent time under the tree canopies on their church properties measuring them and literally hugging their trunks. Many say they will never look at a tree in the same way again.

Using the Neighbourhoods Tree Inventory method in which parish volunteers were trained in early July, teams went out to measure and assess the overall health of the trees on their properties. Planting trees is often top of mind for something with the word “forest” in its name, but in the cases of the participating parishes, many realize they have plenty of trees already, but they are suffering from lack of care or some kind of infestation.

Some have mixed results. For example, St. David’s, Welland, had a great crew of three volunteers out on two different days to complete their inventory of 36 trees. They also have a large, wooded area that belongs to the parish but through an agreement with the city, has a common pathway through connecting to a city-owned park.

Out of the 36 trees, many were in distress or already dead. Plans for taking care of the existing trees became a priority. However, there is also a beautiful lawn space at the front of the church facing the street which is empty and could be a great space for adding to the



Tree inventory volunteers at St. Christopher’s, Burlington. Photos: Deirdre Pike

green canopy of Welland. It is also St. David’s 75th anniversary as a parish so what better way to celebrate than by planting a tree as a gift to the future!

Other parishes that have completed the inventory and are now considering next steps include: St Aidan’s, Oakville; St. Christopher’s, Burlington; St. George’s, Guelph; St. John’s, Nelson; St. Paul’s, Caledonia; and St. Paul’s, Westdale.

St. Christopher’s, Burlington,

worked in collaboration with St. John’s, Nelson. Between the two parishes there were enough volunteers to finish off both locations in three days. Many hands make light work in this project for sure. Parishioners who might like to be involved but have nowhere to plant are highly needed in other parishes that have space to grow but lack volunteers. Every tree that is planted requires adequate watering for two years so com-

mitment is crucial.

Along with Dr. Danijela Puric-Mladenovic from Neighbourhoods and the University of Toronto, the Anglican Foundation grant has also given us the opportunity to partner with Green Venture, a Hamilton environmental education organization. Currently, we are working with Liz Enriquez, green infrastructure program manager, to determine next actions at the seven parishes, from tree removal to planting trees with large root balls or even planting a mini-forest.

The Anglican Foundation provided the diocese with a matching grant for this project to allow for the partner-

ship of Green Venture and Neighbourhoods, and to pay for the tree planting, restoration, or removal. Climate Justice Niagara has also benefitted from two student placements from the environmental management program at Niagara College over the course of the project, with one more expected in January. One of the roles of that student will be data input from the tree inventories into software used by the Neighbourhoods initiative out of U of T.

*If you have any questions about how your parish can get involved in the Communion Forest Initiative, contact Deirdre Pike, [deirdre.pike@niagaraanglican.ca](mailto:deirdre.pike@niagaraanglican.ca).*




Inventoring and assessing the trees at St. David’s Welland.

### Niches available in our new columbarium St. Matthew on-the-Plains Anglican Church, Burlington



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# Requiem Mass Reveals Hidden Treasures

JOHN BACHER

On August 26, 2024, at St. John's Church Jordan, there was a requiem mass for Beverly Carleen Whittingham. It was held at the same Church where Beverly and her husband, the Reverend Keith Whittingham were married 43 years ago.

The music sung at the requiem mass was also performed at the Whittingham's wedding. The music was led by the Avanti Singers directed by Lesley Kingham. Their melodious chants enriched the time in which Canon Wittingham served as rector of St. Barnabas Anglican Church in St. Catharines.

The eulogy was given by a long-time friend of the Wittingham family the Canon Paddy Doran. It revealed the secrets of a faithful life in Christ's service, which were true to the biblical injunction of prayer and piety in private. This was shown in her work in the courthouse, which through her compassionate and careful interventions tempered justice

with mercy.

My appreciation for the requiem mass at St. John's Jordan was enhanced by my walk to the parish from my home in downtown St. Catharines in a beautiful sunny summer morning. This eight-mile pilgrimage trek was through a landscape miraculously protected from pressures for urban sprawl by the only surviving serious land use planning tool in southern Ontario, the Greenbelt.

The lands between Jordan and St. Catharines are the best in the world for a wide variety of nutritious tree fruit and grape crops. One of the happy signs along the way was a vendor of Niagara seedless grapes, a crop which was only being developed on an experimental basis in my youth. The variety of the types of agriculture was astonishing. There is an impressive tract of land for racing horses.

Around 1976, while the urban boundary of St. Catharines was being proposed, a wise suggestion by the planning commissioner of the Niagara Region,



Alan Veale, a lay Anglican active in St. George's Church was put forward. This was that a hydro corridor be used as a buffer between urban and agricultural uses. Along the walk I witnessed how the Greenbelt had firmly enshrined his proposal, as tree fruit crops were growing under the buffering corridor where it crosses near Regional Road 81.

Back then, farm leaders in Niagara battling sprawl conducted a tour to convince politicians that their farms were significant businesses and should as a result, have a well-protected landscape. One of these visionary advocates was an active member of St. John's Jordan, Howard Staff, whose tombstone

is now prominent in the almost two century old graveyard surrounding the historic church. Going through this sacred space I observed how his ancestors were buried there going back to 1807. Among those buried in this cemetery below spectacular trees are Manley Ball, the last of his family to operate the ghost town which he sold to the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority, immediately upon its creation. His family protected the old growth forest which is now the core of the Balls Falls Conservation Area.

From St. Catharines to Jordan the beauty of the landscape is enhanced by the fact that the formerly treeless river valleys are now dominated by a Carolinian survivor species, the Black Walnut. Its revival was encouraged by the appreciation of the farmers of the district (then Louth Township), of the Black Walnut by the Mohawk Chief George Johnson.

Taking heed to his words in 1887 an area farmer J. Honsberger told a meeting of fruit growers that, "The walnut

is a native of my native place, and a few years ago the last one disappeared; and being determined that the place was not to be devoid of walnut trees, I began putting nuts in the ground and I grew some trees."

At the requiem mass I reconnected with the Reverend Kevin Block, author and former rector of St. Barnabas. One of his sermons that I vividly recall is that every day his first thought was the health of the adjacent Twenty Mile Creek near his home. It was appropriate that on the day of the requiem mass this stream usually bone dry in late August, was full of water. I viewed a double-breasted cormorant, happily fishing.

The beauty experienced at St. John's Anglican Church is vividly summarized in the last verse of the great hymn, sung at the requiem mass. It is Guide me, O thou great Redeemer." The verse says, "When I tread, the verge of Jordan, bid my anxious fears subside; death of death, and hell's destruction, land me safe on Canaan's side: song and praises, I will ever give to thee."

## Foundation

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

lainties, and the Migrant Farmer Worker's project.

The ACMF was established back in 1999 and has grown substantially over the last 25 years. Today, with generous donations by Anglicans across the diocese, the Foundation not only supports the initiatives mentioned above, but other creative initiatives that are sometimes just beyond the scope and capability of the local parish. For example, under the steady eye of our Bishop and the financial commitment of Anglicans like you, an endowment called 'The Bishop's Company Fund' provides financial assistance to clergy and others who need some extra 'compassionate' help.

Even I who write this article needed some help on a personal level while serving in a parish early in my ministry. I don't need to share the details other than to say I could not afford certain dental work on a clergy salary. It was the Bishop's Company Fund that allowed the bishop to help me through a particularly difficult time. Until now, no one has ever known my story. All I know is I was grateful, and it serves as an example of how the Foundation is hiding in plain sight.

Whether the Foundation is helping parishes with refugee support [that was the focus of the 140th Diocesan project] or assisting parishes to provide

adequate housing for their clergy, the Foundation is quietly working to ensure that the legacy of our faith tradition is preserved for future generations. In fact, it is difficult to describe how the Church, through its many ministries and services, plays a vital role in building social cohesion and the fostering of a sense of belonging—something more desperately needed today than ever before.

Supporting a diocesan Foundation like the ACMF is not just about meeting immediate needs—it is about ensuring the long-term sustainability of the Church. The work of the ACMF is only limited by our imagination. The work of the Foundation

is ongoing and requires our support and resources—financial, human, and material. By giving to the ACMF donors help sustain the work of the Church, and the essential programs that empower us to proudly call our selves—The People of God. Actually the Foundation holds several parish endowments and with the help of our Foundation board you may want to consider establishing an endowment fund to mark an anniversary or special occasion for your local parish.

The opportunities are as plentiful as our vision. I know Bishop Susan wants to establish something significant to honour the 150th anniversary of our diocese, something that will sup-

port our local parishes and leave a legacy for future generations.

I hope I am wrong that the Anglican Church Ministries Foundation is hiding in plain sight. Maybe it is time I write a novel called *Best Kept Secrets: The Anglican Church Ministries Foundation – Niagara*.

If you or a group within your parish or region are interested in knowing more about the ACMF-Niagara or want to know more about the unique tax advantages and ministry opportunities your financial gift can make, please be in touch with Canon Drew MacDonald at the diocesan office (905) 527-1316 x550 or at [drew.macdonald@niagaraanglican.ca](mailto:drew.macdonald@niagaraanglican.ca)



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## In other words

# Keeping Young People in the Faith: A Surprising Discovery



**JOHN BOWEN**

I was wrong. Embarrassingly so. I had been working with young leaders at a Christian camp for twenty years, and I thought I knew what made Christian young people tick. And I gave the wrong answer to the most basic question of all.

Over the years that followed my time at camp, I ran into people who had been young leaders at the camp. Some were doing well in their life of faith, others not so much. Some had given up the faith altogether, and that was distressing.

During a sabbatical from Wycliffe College, I decided to try and track down as many of those young leaders as I could and find out how they were doing in their faith.

We had worked with some 1,200 young people over the years. With the help of our friend the internet, I tracked down 600 of those and sent them a questionnaire. Over 300 responded. The results produced a book, *Growing Up Christian: Why Young People Stay in Church, Leave Church, and (Sometimes) Come Back to Church*.

### How I embarrassed myself

But I am putting off telling you my embarrassing mistake,

and it is time to confess. If they still considered themselves Christians (and not all did), I asked them what had kept them in the faith. I gave them seventeen possibilities from which they could choose as many as they liked. They were also asked to prioritize their choices.

All researchers have their hunches as to what they will find, but at the same time, they have to be open to having their assumptions overturned. What would be your hunch as to why young people stay in the faith for the long haul? I bet you would choose the same answers that I did: good Christian friends and older Christian mentors. And did I mention I was wrong? Ah yes, I did. And if you guessed those things, you were wrong too. Misery loves company.

So, what was the main factor inspiring people to stay with the faith? Drumroll, please. Number one reason? "My personal relationship with God." Well, duh. I felt pretty stupid that I didn't foresee that. If it makes you feel better, friends and mentors came a close second (83%) and third (82%) choice. But God came first (89%).

### What might that mean for youth ministry?

One friend who read the book was a teacher of the Bible in a Christian school. She took the lesson to heart and introduced into her curriculum such items as "looking for God in everyday life" and "listening for the voice of Jesus." Would you believe that some Christian parents complained, and asked for more Bible instead? One parent actually accused the teacher of teaching New Age practices and

withdrew his child from the school.

So, if I were leading a youth program now, what are some ways I might open doors for them to experience God? Here are just a few:

- In Bible studies, I would spend more time teaching an Ignatian approach (where you imagine yourself as a character in a Bible story) or in *Lectio Divina* (where you simply look for a word or phrase that speaks to you).
- I would explain to them "the divine game of Pinzatski," as author Murray Pura calls it. He describes how, on a camping trip, people would challenge one another as to what something they saw said about God: a golden eagle? God's freedom. A sunset? The peace of God. Ants? That God uses the weak and foolish things. A field of flowers? The extravagance of God. You get the idea.
- I would want them to try the examen, the Ignatian idea that at the end of the day (and perhaps at other times), you pause and review the "consolations" (times when God seemed near) and "desolations" (times when God seemed absent) and ask God what he is trying to say through those things.
- Personally, I love to consider how God is present to me in my interactions with other people. Since God is at work in them, what am I seeing and feeling of God as I talk with them?

There are so many other things. I know, for myself, that I have been helped by journaling, the Eucharist, corporate wor-

ship, seeing answers to prayer, silence, and spiritual direction. And you can probably think of more.

How do young people continue as Christians? Yes, mentors are indispensable. Yes,

friends are crucial. But let's not forget the most important thing of all: learning skills for dwelling in a living relationship with God. Isn't that why Jesus came?



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# MAP to be Refreshed at Upcoming Synod

## THE VENERABLE BILL MOUS

With a thematic focus on the future, the sesquicentennial synod of the Diocese of Niagara will take place at the Burlington Convention Centre on November 2.

'Faith in the Future', the Synod's theme, is inspired by Jeremiah 29:11, "For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope."

As part of the proceedings, members of Synod will hear from Dr. Emily Hill, parish development missionary about the renewal of the diocesan Mission



Action Plan (MAP). Having lived into our MAP for several years, it was time for a review of our goals and objectives and to give thanks to God for the ways we've come alongside the Spirit. At the same time, through a number of consultations, we've sought to prayerfully discern where the Spirit might be calling us to life and compelling us to

love for the coming years.

Helping us to cast our gaze to the horizon and the opportunities to contribute to the wider Anglican Communion, Archbishop Linda Nicholls, 14th primate of the Anglican Church of Canada will be the Synod's special guest.

The business parts of the Synod will include receiving the 2023 auditor's report, consideration of the 2025 diocesan budget, as well as some changes to the canons. We'll also have a chance to hear from the Primate's World Relief and Development Fund, as well as the Anglican Foundation of Canada, and to engage with the work of

the Primate's Commission on Reimagining the Church.

Ahead of Synod, electronic elections will be held for regional representatives to Synod Council as well as delegates for the upcoming General Synod that will be held in London, Ontario next June.

And because it's a special year in the life of our diocese, after the regular Synod proceedings, we are also planning a special anniversary dinner in the evening to celebrate our 150th anniversary. All are welcomed for this ticketed event, which is being generously sponsored by Ecclesiastical Insurance. Through the dinner, we will also

be expressing our faith in the future by raising funds to support curacies across our diocese through a fund designated for this purpose.

Please hold the members of synod in your prayers as they discern how best to equip our diocese – and all our parishes – to put our faith in the future!

To learn more about our 150th Synod, be sure to review the convening circular which includes all Synod reports and resolutions, on our Synod webpage (<https://niagaraanglican.ca/synod/2024>).

# The Bear Who Went To War

## THE REVEREND CANON DR. SHARYN HALL

Cpl. Harry Colebourn enlisted in the Canadian Army Veterinary Corps to treat animals placed in service during WWI. He was stationed in Winnipeg, Manitoba, but on the train going there, he looked out the window and saw a bear cub at the station in White River, Ontario. When the train stopped, he jumped off and asked the man holding her leash about the cub. He said the cub was for sale because he could not care for her. Harry bought the cub for twenty dollars and carried her on the train.

His Captain was concerned, but Harry assured him that he could care for the cub, and she could be the troop's mascot. Harry named her 'Winnipeg' after their company base, but soon her name was shortened to 'Winnie.' Harry's job was caring for the horses needed for the battles in the war and Winnie became his constant assistant. At night she slept under Harry's cot.

As the war in Europe grew worse, the Canadian soldiers and horses were needed, so they boarded the ship for England and Winnie went too. Harry was seasick all the way, but not Winnie. In England, the soldiers, horses, and Winnie were stationed in a new camp, but when the soldiers and horses were transferred to France, Winnie could not go.

Harry contacted the London

Zoo and they were happy to take Winnie because they had just opened a new facility for bears. It was a sad parting for Winnie and Harry, but Harry promised he would return and take her home to Winnipeg. Winnie became friends with the other bears and the children who came to the zoo loved her because she was unusually gentle for a bear.

Harry visited Winnie whenever he could but the war lasted four years. Before returning to Winnipeg in 1919, Harry made the difficult decision that Winnie should stay in the London Zoo; however, that is not the end of the story.

One day when Winnie was eleven years old, a little boy visited her. His name was Christopher Robin, and they became special friends. The boy's father was a well-known author, and he wrote a story about his son and the bear. After that, the real 'Winnie-the-Bear' became famous to children all over the world as 'Winnie-the-Pooh.'

The toll of war extends beyond human suffering to impact countless innocent animals. The devastating effects of warfare on animals often remain overshadowed by more immediate human concerns. There are numerous articles on the internet about the impact of war on animals and the environment. Domestic animals often become strays when homes are destroyed, or people flee their neighbourhoods.

In the wild, habitats are

destroyed, food and shelter become scarce, and death or injury is a constant threat. Livestock on farms suffer without care if their owners are killed or displaced.

Many people are deeply distressed if they witness the suffering or death of their animals but evacuating animals, even domestic pets, adds problems that may require that animals be left behind.

There are various organizations dedicated to rescuing and caring for animals in conflict zones. These organizations often operate in dangerous conditions with limited resources for food, shelter, and medical care. The International Fund for Animal Welfare is one example of a global, non-profit organization working in more than forty countries.

'Ecocide' is a term used by the International Criminal Court to hold those responsible for wilful damage to the environment in conflict situations. Every day we witness the devastating effects of warfare on our televisions.

We continue to pray for the cessation of hostilities in many parts of the globe.

The story of Winnie the Bear can be found in two charming picture books for children. Winnie: The True Story of the Bear Who Inspired Winnie-the-Pooh. Written by Sally M. Walker, Illustrated by Jonathan D. Voss. and Finding Winnie: The True Story of the World's Most Famous Bear, written by Lindsay

Mattick (Harry Colebourn's great-granddaughter), and illustrated by Sophie Blackall. Both books have some reproductions of original photographs. There are numerous books of the stories of Winnie-the-Pooh.



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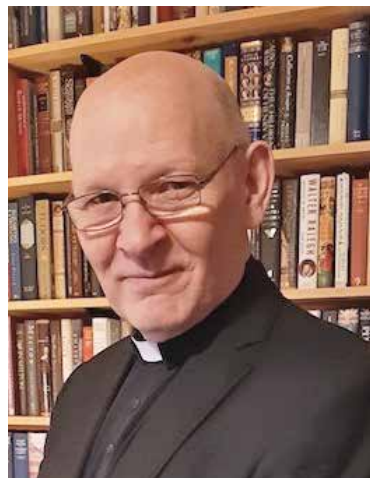
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# The Dangerous Appeal of a Compelling Leader



**THE REVEREND MICHAEL COREN**

Back in September, The Meeting House, one of the largest churches in Canada, announced that it was closing down. "It is with sadness that we are required to bring the public-facing ministry of The Meeting House to an end as of August 29", its leaders stated on the Oakville-based church's website. "Going forward, there will no longer be churches operating programs or doing ministry under the banner of The Meeting House" but "new

missional churches" will be launched.

The decision didn't come as a complete shock. With its numerous plant branches and home churches throughout Ontario the church reached 5,000 people but paused programming earlier this year when it was unable to find abuse liability insurance. The hope was that this was temporary.

Therein lies the central reason for the church's collapse. The man on whom the church was largely built is the deeply charismatic Bruxy Cavey, and in December, 2021 he was placed on leave of absence pending an investigation into allegations of sexual misconduct. Then, in June, 2022, he was charged by Hamilton police with sexual assault. That charge was eventually stayed by the court, and two other charges involving separate incidents dismissed, but the damage had been done. Full disclosure: I know Cavey and have tried to provide some form of counsel since all this began.

It's not for me to comment on

the nature of the charges but Cavey, a husband and father, admits to adultery, and accepted his forced resignation from the church as a consequence. This came, however, after three other church pastors faced charges of sexual abuse or exploitation. Frankly, it's utterly shocking!

I attended the church several times, and saw Cavey take a small community gathering in a school hall to a converted theatre where entire crowds would assemble to worship. I remember him saying to the eager enthusiasts, "If you're here just for me, then please leave now". Then stressed that church was about Jesus rather than the priest or preacher.

Problem is, many of those listening were there precisely because of him, which is why his failing and falling has caused such devastation. This isn't the first time, and won't be the last, that personality-driven churches tumble when leadership is exposed as flawed or even criminal.

In this case there seems to

have been a systemic failure to address an obvious problem, and it's resulted in multi-million-dollar civil lawsuits from women alleging the church's breach of duty of care in earlier situations. In many denominations a church facing so many accusations may well have been closed earlier. The Meeting House is part of a Mennonite group called Be in Christ, the Canadian branch of the Brethren in Christ, but is sufficiently large to have always seemed autonomous.

It also raises the question of why so many Christians, especially younger Christians, feel the need for novel, ostensibly heroic leaders who seem to offer something fresh. In Cavey's case, beyond his undeniable abilities was his persona—long hair, tattoos, jeans and what one of the church members insisted to me was, "Such a different type of guy up there telling us about the Bible. He's cool."

It's to the shame of the mainstream church that we've left a vacuum, created a stereotype or even a caricature of what a

leader looks and sounds like, and made so many people feel that they need an alternative, sometimes any alternative.

But the appeal of the compelling leader is a dangerous phenomenon, whether it be religious or political—European populism, Donald Trump, and 20th-century dictators have proven that. Churches are more vulnerable because with a leap of faith comes a leap of trust, and one of the most painful things I've ever heard was the oft-repeated response of Roman Catholic parents when their children claimed to have been abused. "Father would never do that. He's a priest!" God wept.

I genuinely mourn for everybody involved in the collapse of The Meeting House, and I've been contacted by good, faithful, dedicated people who are broken by what has happened to their church. But for the life of me, and I say this with no relish whatsoever, I'm not especially surprised.

## My Soul Ascends

Sometimes inside my head I hear  
Words whimsical and droll.  
Yet fain would I exchange those words  
For visions of my soul.

Wrapped in a mystery deep inside,  
My soul within me lies.  
'Tis never seen and never heard  
And neither lives nor dies.

If I could once address my soul,  
Would words suffice at all?  
A spirit with no ears to hear  
May never heed my call.

'Tis brief, my journey on this earth  
And soon I shall be gone.  
But at the end, 'tis my belief  
My soul will journey on.

Without a sound my soul ascends  
And soars to heights unknown.  
No earthly being knows to where  
This sacred bird has flown.

**KEITH SPICER** (for Melissa)

Photo: Unsplash/Johannes Plenio

**Christmas Bazaar**  
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# Why study? Why do a PhD?

**THE REVEREND CANON DR. IAN MOBSBY**

On September 20, I had great honor of being invited to the conferment of PhDs at Lambeth Palace London, as part of a scheme for research studies awarded by the Archbishop of Canterbury in a program going back to the mid-1500s through an Act of Parliament. Through this program, I became a Doctor of Philosophy.

I did this not as a natural academic, but more because I valued deep theological reflection and practice in the real world to guide my sense of being an ordained Anglican priest, with a calling to be involved in mission and evangelism in the incredibly complex context of the 21st century.

Some have asked why bother? Why spend six years studying at that depth? Isn't it just a thorough waste of time? Are you trying to escape to the ivory tower of detached academia?

In recent years, I have sensed in the Church in the United Kingdom, Canada, and wider society, an increasing anti-academy and anti-intellectualism sentiment in the belief we need to just focus on activism and practices. That study is a waste of time and money. I could not disagree more. I studied at a PhD level precisely to inform my practice as a Christian. To help me understand and appreciate the complexity of contemporary society. To help me think through and pray deeply about what it means to



Ian Mobsby in conversation with Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby.

Photo: Contributed by Ian Mobsby

choose to be a follower of Jesus Christ and understand what Jesus preached and taught, in the challenge and disconnect of living in a post-secular, post-Christendom and importantly, the post-modern context where much of the societal culture that has sustained the modern world for the last five hundred years, is passing.

I do believe many in and outside of the Church, are addicted to the values of modernity. Secularism, rationalism, capitalism, and colonialization are all deeply connected, and even though the time of

modernity is passing, we find it nigh on impossible to imagine another way of being outside of a culture that impoverishes our imagination, our faith, and our Church. We have focused on the advantages of being in a market society, but we try to avoid or forget the violence, oppression, colonialism, and ecocide to sustain an unsustainable way of life. Studying practical theology, which was the discipline I was involved with, seeks to explore practical questions around ministry and mission. So, in the six years, I spent a lot of time with many non-churched people

who were interested in spirituality but assumed the church had nothing to offer them in their spiritual questing. Up to my starting research in this area, no one had done any comprehensive work on this, so there was a huge area where very little had been engaged concerning mission and this group of unchurched people.

Studying at any level, including at a PhD level helps you to sit back from your strongly held convictions. It helps you to engage with critical thinking, to listen and learn. To engage with subjective and objective truths of different disciplines, that help you to explore the prophetic and the call to be in, and not of, contemporary society.

My PhD course of study was about listening and understanding the worldview of those who identified with being 'spiritual but not religious.' It was about understanding mission theology and practice, to engage with the views and understandings of this social grouping, drawing on the rich Christian contemplative traditions.

The theology and practices I explore in the thesis, based on five years of fieldwork, has radically changed me. It has deepened my faith and helped me to understand and appreciate contemplative and mystical theology, as a resource for contemporary spirituality. Of course, when you study you often learn how much you do not know, as much as what you do, but what I have learnt, has been invaluable for me as a

Christian, and also as the community missionary, so that I can share wisdom with the ordained and licensed lay missionaries I supervise and mentor.

So, I am pleased that I bothered. I have found it deeply rewarding to be able to work on research for six years, and that it most certainly, in my opinion, was not a waste of time. And no, I have not started to 'climb an ivory tower of detached irrelevance.' To the contrary, this learning has helped me to be more effective, to understand the concepts and understandings of those who consider themselves to be 'spiritual but not religious', so that I can be an informed and in touch Anglican Christian missionary in how to respond to their missional needs.

In a world of increasing Christian fundamentalism, uninformed political populism, and ill-considered social action, Christian study and research has its place to deepen, and inform. It can enable the Church to have the tools and resources it needs through us, to be equipped for the complexity of being the Church and being missional in the 21st century.

*If you are interested in engaging more with Ian's PhD research, the book *The Seeking Heart: A Contemplative Approach to Mission and Pioneering* is being published by SCM Press or consider enrolling in the intensive course 'The Seeking Heart' with the Niagara School for Missional Leadership in November.*

## The Power of the "Little Brown Jug"

Each Sunday, parishioners at The Church of Our Saviour The Redeemer pass by a "Little Brown Jug" on their way to communion. The money raised through "The Little Brown Jug"

is designated monthly for various outreach initiatives.

One of our outreach initiatives through the "Little Brown Jug" was in support of Sleeping Children Around the World, a

global community of volunteers and supporters giving hope and joy to children in need by providing bed kits for a good night's sleep. We are thrilled that one of our parishioners, Norma Rookwood, went to Dar Es Salaam in Tanzania helping to distribute these bed kits. This is not Norma's first-time distributing kits and she assures us it will not be her last.

We are so grateful for the generosity of our parish in making contributions through the "Little Brown Jug". One of our parishioners, Connie Hamilton, also sold Christmas ornaments to raise funds. Through the



Norma with some of the children that will receive bed kits etc. from donations to the "Little Brown Jug."

Photo: contributed by Bev Groombridge

"Little Brown Jug" we have been able to contribute to other outreach efforts such as The Bishop's Company, Operation Smile, The Fistula Foundation,

St. Matthew's House, the Diocese of the Arctic. Together we are able to reach far beyond our church walls and show the world Jesus' love.

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The Reverends Mike Degan, Monica Green, Sarah Grondin, David Montgomery, and Russell Wardell were ordained to the priesthood by Bishop Susan Bell on September 29 at Christ's Church Cathedral. At the same time, The Reverend Wojtek Kuzma's orders were received from the Roman Catholic Church.

Photos: William Pleydon

## Six Priests Called to Serve



Bishop Susan Bell anoints the hands of David Montgomery during the ordination liturgy.

# Reflecting on the Experience of MAiD

### THE REV. ALAN COOK

In 2023, 15,280 Canadians died with medical assistance. That's up 15% from in 2022. In 2024, the number will doubtless have grown; one of those thousands will be my late wife, Beryl, a faithful parishioner at Church of the Apostles in Guelph. Two days before she died, she invited over 20 people to be with her at our home on the day.

How would you react to such an invitation?

In sharing the story of the day she died, I want to do what Beryl always wanted to do: to educate. As diocesan educational consultant and program administrator from 1985 to 1992, and in her various later roles in parish life, she sought to be an educator, helping Anglicans to "think outside the box." As the Church marks All Souls' Day, I believe she would welcome this opportunity for us to learn about the new era of MAiD which Canada has entered since 2016.

What follows are some reflections by those who were present on the experience of being invited to be with Beryl at her death.

Preparing. A few guests

were taken off guard, but most already knew that MAiD had been in Beryl's mind for when the cancer treatment ended. Palliative care had already started, but she was declining quickly. Not everyone was able or even wanted to come. Most, however, said, "It was a privilege and an honour to be invited." Some spent time preparing in their minds or hearts. "I appreciated the short video in the invitation letter which explained the medical procedure." "I wondered what I should wear!" "I prayed." "I just got on with my weekend and waited to see what would happen."

Gathering: No-one except Beryl and I knew everyone in the room, so it was important to have time, space and refreshments to allow guest to meet and make connections. Explanations by me and the doctor were helpful so that folks knew what was planned. Some felt nervous, so having something to do, like making the tea, was beneficial.

Saying Goodbye: Fortunately, Beryl still had the energy and desire to greet everyone: one by one or in pairs, each made a personal farewell. Everyone

reported that their moment of peaceful closure was a highlight to cherish. It's one of the gifts of the MAiD experience, it seems.

Providing a spiritual 'umbrella': Our goal for the day was that this be much more of a spiritual event than a medical one. Yes, people were reassured to meet our wonderful palliative care doctor, but we were not there to watch a medical procedure: we were witnessing a spiritual rite of passage.

Gathering around Beryl, we became one as we sang, watched and prayed. Psalm 23, 'Amazing Grace' and a Taizé chant became what someone described as an umbrella over us all. "Not everyone sang, but we were all together under that umbrella of faith, hope and love." The movement of the 'service' was to lift Beryl's spirit by our love and blessings from her suffering, dying body into the loving arms of God.

Another invitee, not a religious person, but who had recently lost some other dear people, reported that the spiritual elements "took away those feelings of anger and hopelessness." The songs felt bigger than death – they could contain it

and transform it with hope. "You could tell that Beryl's comfort with dying came from her faith." Beryl, never one to proselytize in life, was evangelising even in her death! Our rector was unable to be present at the death, but came soon afterwards to bless Beryl's body before she left the house.

Helping us grow in humanity and in facing death.

The experience was universally reported to be a positive one. "It was such an honour". "I learned a great deal" "I feel very positive about what I saw of MAiD and the medical team." "I'm less afraid of death itself now." "The spiritual content made all the difference."

I share this experience as example of why MAiD is becoming increasingly popular in our society: the ending of suffering,

the creation of community, saying goodbye and finding closure, all with the opportunity to make meaning in the face of death. These are valuable benefits of a spiritually-directed MAiD. Yes, they are available for many 'natural deaths', too, but the focus and intentionality of MAiD feels qualitatively different.

As the Church continues to discern pastoral responses to MAiD, I hope that I have described something that Canadians, many of them not religious, experienced as a positive and transformative spiritual experience, courtesy of one brave and faithful Anglican educator. As one thoughtful guest put it: "We are in uncharted territory, and Beryl's death is blazing a new trail."



Photo: istockphoto.com/PeopleImages



## ST. JOHN'S

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# Order Of Niagara Services Celebrate Lay Ministry

In November, nearly 50 lay people will be honoured at two services at Christ's Church Cathedral with the Order of Niagara, for their faithful dedication and contributions to the diocese, their parishes, and the wider Church.

Parishes have been invited annually to nominate a person who has given of themselves to various ministries in service. The first awarding of the Order of Niagara happened back in May of 2000. Each year since, between 50-100 recipients have been inducted into the order.

We've selected a few of this year's recipients to represent the diverse and faithful range of ministries across the diocese that have been lifted up through this honour.



**Sandra Hodgins**  
St. Paul's, Caledonia

Sandra is a dedicated member of St. Paul's and is currently serving as deputy people's warden. She is an altar guild team leader, co-leader of Puzzlers and Bridge Fellowship Group, a member of the choir, and the prayer shawl ministry. Sandra is a leader in the parish's truth and reconciliation journey and one of the land acknowledgement writers. Her quiet determination and commitment to her ministries are inspirational. In addition, Sandra is also a volunteer driver for Senior Support in Caledonia, Brantford, and Hamilton.



**Janet Southall**  
St. James, Dundas

Janet has been integrally involved in church and community life for many years at St. James. She has served on the parish council, the parish finance team, and as a warden. Janet chaired and was treasurer of the Holiday House Tour and currently seeks out and researches homes for the tour. Janet is currently a Rotary Club member and has also served in the past as the president. Janet also finds fulfillment as a greeter and volunteer host at Margaret's Place Hospice in Dundas.



**Kathy Kairies**  
St. James & St. Brendan, Port Colborne

Kathy is kind, considerate, and always willing to lend a hand in the parish community. She has been a St. James & St. Brendan's member for years. As a retired nurse, it only made sense that she was part of the pastoral care team during the pandemic. She has served as deputy people's warden and is currently the people's warden. She is also an active reader and member of the social committee. Kathy supports the St. James and St. Brendan services volunteering as a part of the camera operation team for live-streaming worship services.



**George Willows**  
St. John's, Jordan

George is a faithful member of St. John's. He is a choir member, chalice bearer, and reader. He also volunteers as a parish caretaker and when he has time, helps out with the Migrant Farmworkers events. George has earned the reputation of the 'go to' person when you need to find out how something works, when it was purchased, or the history of an event. During his time he supported a parish committee that helped to welcome a refugee family to Canada. George is one of the chefs for the men's breakfast, has been on parish council, was a warden, and currently is a member of the cemetery board.

catering of all church events, and was team captain for the North Halton Coldest Night of the Year event. In the community, Julia also volunteers at the Abbeyview Community Summer BBQ and Montclair School Breakfast Program.



**Robert Bruce**  
St. Luke's, Burlington

Bob has been a member of St. Luke's for a decade and has made a great impact on his parish and the wider community. He has served on the parish council, as deputy people's warden and people's warden. Bob has been essential to many building projects including the Columbaria Project and a project to change all the lighting in the extensive parish hall and church to LED lighting. He is now chairman of the board of St. Luke's Close which provides rent geared to income housing for seniors.



**Julia Lockhart**  
Church of the Incarnation, Oakville

Julia is an inspirational leader in her professional healthcare career and her volunteer ministry at Incarnation and the wider community. Currently, in her second term as warden, Julia manages the safe church screening procedures and records, sings in the choir, organizes the annual Charles Dickens night, and is the volunteer coordinator. Julia serves on the social committee, assists with the





# Reflecting on God and Ministry

**THE REVEREND DEACON SANDRA THOMSON**

Earlier this year, I heard a fair number of sermons or conversations about God's love and the fact that all that we have, has come from God. Often enough, that it made me think more about those two things and of course that is the hope when we give a sermon, for someone to think about what is said. My ministry as a deacon is with people who are homeless, less fortunate, mentally challenged. Quite often sermons take me to that part of my life, wondering what would those I connect with have to say about God's love or 'Everything they have, came from God'.

## Love

It is used 310 times in the King James Version and 801 times in The Living Translation. God's love isn't the same as another's love. Love means different things between people. When I hear someone say "I love you," I sometimes get that warm and fuzzy feeling. Knowing God loves me isn't quite the same, but it certainly makes me feel

good. I know in my heart that he is always there, at any time, or place. I talk and he listens. He talks and although sometimes I don't always listen the first time, he keeps it up and I eventually realize that I need to listen. Even if I don't listen, or agree with what he wants me to do, he still loves me.

So, I asked a few people how they know God loves them. This is what they said.

1. The Bible says so.
2. It is all about hope.
3. I really understood God's love when my boys were born. I know how much I loved them, and that made me realize God's love and how powerful it is.
4. I wake up each morning, look around and see everything around me that God has given us all.
5. There are people in my life who drop by to give me soup when I am sick or give me a call to see if I am okay. I know that is God's love moving through others.

Although I didn't ask anyone at the breakfast program, I do wonder what their answer would be. Do they know that God loves them? I am sure some

of them do, some of them might not even think about it and others would definitely say that there is no way God loves them.

## Everything I have comes from God

I struggled with this, knowing how much one person can have and how little others can have. I have someone I can go to, to ask my faith questions. She and I chatted about how can it be fair that some of us have nice houses, decent jobs, great friends; pretty comfortable lives. There are some who have more than others, some who have less and still others who have only the clothes on their back. How can we convince those people with nothing that everything they have came from God and God loves them just as much. That they too are children of God.

But it isn't like God hands things out as we go along in life. A lot of factors are also in place or stand in our way. This statement is more about realizing it isn't all about us, it all started out with God and that what we have needs to be shared. Many of us, well probably most of us have more than enough



and giving to others is a good way to give back. We need to remember to be happy with all that we have because the people with nothing still manage to smile especially when someone helps them out. I am quite often amazed at that some of the people who have nothing are willing to help others in the same situation. A cigarette is given out, sometimes for free and sometimes for a minimal fee. One of our guests found out that the spoons have been taken and we keep having to buy more. He offered to get us some.

And then there have been a few people who, if we run out of sandwiches and someone comes in late, they hand over one of theirs.

I am quite often asked to pray prior to opening the doors for breakfast and always ask the God remind the guests that he is always with them and that they never walk alone no matter what path they find themselves on. I will now add that they know and feel God's love by what the volunteers each morning do to give them breakfast, some kind words and a smile.

# Diocese Welcomes New Communications Coordinator



We are pleased to announce that Dani Leitis has accepted the position of diocesan communications coordinator, on

a full-time basis. Dani will be responsible for coordinating, curating, and creating missionally-oriented and institutional content for publication across our various communications platforms. Part of this work will include overall responsibility for our website, our social media presence, and the *Niagara Anglican*.

Dani comes to us with an advanced diploma in Broadcast Television and Communications. She has over 8 years of experi-

ence in digital media and communications and over 10 years in print production. Dani's experience includes working with the Roman Catholic Diocese of Hamilton and her time as the Diocese of Niagara's interim communications coordinator.

Dani can be reached at [dani.leitis@niagaraanglican.ca](mailto:dani.leitis@niagaraanglican.ca) for communications matters or [editor@niagaraanglican.ca](mailto:editor@niagaraanglican.ca) for Niagara Anglican submissions and related matters.

## Niagara Anglican Deadlines and Submission Guidelines

### Upcoming Deadlines:

- December – October 25
- January – November 22
- February – December 23

### 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](mailto:editor@niagaraanglican.ca)




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# Pollinator Garden Renews Church Property

**CAROLYN WHITING**

As spring approached, a group of keen gardeners were eager for a project. On the south side of Holy Trinity Church, Fonhill, is a large expansive garden that was really calling for some attention. A sidewalk borders it, and throughout each day it is fairly busy with neighbours and their pets passing by. Could this be turned into a welcoming space or even a useful pollinator garden?

To help us assess the site, we sought out a representative from the Niagara Conservation Authority. She made a visit and felt the garden was very suitable for a pollinator garden. Worldwide pollinator populations of birds, bees and butterflies are declining due to pesticides and loss of habitats. Since 80% of all flowering plants need pollination to produce seed or fruit, we agreed that this project seemed perfect for us to pursue, an expression of God's call for us to care for creation.

We were given advice on soil preparation and a promise of some native starter plants to get

us going. Before any planting could begin, a few old bushes needed to be removed, so we enlisted some strong helpers. When planting day finally arrived, we were an eager group ready to set in an assortment of blazing star, coreopsis, native columbine and geranium. The church is over 160 years old, so it was exciting to consider the generations of parishioners before us who had gardened this soil. The seedlings were small and needed regular deep watering to establish well, so we set up a biweekly watering roster. To fill out the garden, we brought plants from our own gardens, that we knew to be pollinator friendly such as echinacea, Russian sage, bee balm and joe pye.

What a joy this summer to see such colour and blooms! All who participated felt pleased with what we had created together. Goal number one was to create a habitat for pollinators, and we were well on our way. As the plants mature, they will fill in the space nicely.

Our other goal was to welcome friends and neighbours as they pass by throughout the



Photo: Paul Verroche

day. We decided to purchase a memorial bench to be placed nearby and serve as a rest stop to enjoy the garden.

As we contemplate next year, perhaps there will be a phase 2. A neglected piece of driveway is just waiting to be reclaimed, so perhaps a raised bed filled with herbs for sharing is in the future.



Bees and other pollinating insects are attracted to flowers in the pollinator garden.

Photos: Carolyn Culliton



## Giant Tiger Patrons Support Welland Food Pantry

The Giant Tiger store located at the Fitch Street Plaza in Welland held a three weeklong food drive in support of the St. David's Food Pantry. With the help of Stephanie Reaman, manager-in-training, the food drive collected 282 bags of groceries, totalling over 1100 individual non-perishable items. As a result of

this wonderful donation, the St. David's Food Pantry is able every Monday afternoon to meet the needs of many of our visitors who are struggling with food security. St. David's is blessed to have a number of community partners, and volunteers who support our mission of reaching out to their neighbours in com-

passionate ways by following the example of Jesus Christ. The parish is deeply grateful to Giant Tiger and the community's support for this initiative.

## Four Diocesan Chaplaincy Grants Awarded

Three ecumenical university chaplaincies (McMaster University, the University of Guelph, and Brock University) as well as The Mission to Seafarers of Southern Ontario have received funding from the diocese to support their unique ministries on local campuses and at area ports.

Chaplaincy Grants are awarded for a two-year period to a maximum of \$8,500 per year. Created a decade ago, \$34,000 has been disbursed to support the core work of these chaplaincies, including program

expenses, salary and ministry-related capital costs. Funding is made possible through the ongoing legacy of Anglicans through Survive and Thrive Outreach Endowment Fund.

"Supporting a chaplaincy that is embedded right within the campus context is exactly what it means to be missional — we are sent, in the name of the triune God, to proclaim and bear witness to God's healing activity in a setting that is beyond the well-worn path of the church institution," reflected Chaplain Andrew Hyde about how the



Ecumenical Campus Ministry Chaplain Andrew Hyde lead a fall retreat day for students at the University of Guelph.

Photo: contributed by Andrew Hyde

chaplaincy's work connects with the diocesan Mission Action Plan.

University chaplaincies are an example of ecumenical cooperation between Anglican, United and Presbyterian churches, allowing chaplains to undertake ministry in a way that none of the denominations could offer alone. Each chaplaincy is rooted in the context of its campus community, but all provide pastoral care, a variety of programs that range from faith formation to social justice initiatives in addition to opportunities for worship and theological

reflection.

The Mission to Seafarers of Southern Ontario differs a bit from on campus, with a primary focus on hospitality and care. It is part of the largest, multi-faith, non-denominational ministry in the world, and has served the Port of Hamilton since 1961.

"When seafarers arrive in Hamilton they tell us they feel as if they have "come home" because they know we care about them and for them," said The Reverend Judith Altree, a board member of the Mission.