

OTHER REPORTS

THE DIOCESAN ARCHIVIST

For nearly fifty years, since 1975, McMaster University has overseen the storage of non-current diocesan records dating back to 1875, including parish registers, service books, minute books, and other materials from more than 100 congregations. These records are on deposit only and remain the property of the diocese.

The care and upkeep of the diocesan archives are governed under Canon 2.6. The diocesan archives kept at Cathedral Place include:

- synod journals from 1875 to present;
- copies of the Niagara Anglican from 1975 to present;
- personnel files of deceased or retired clergy;
- parish files, current or closed, including some parish histories and clergy biographies;
- some artifacts of our ministry;
- confirmation records; and
- some blueprints or drawings of past church building projects.

While we were not successful in engaging a summer student to work in our archives, we are hopeful of hiring a student in the future, in partnership with the university, to support our ongoing archival efforts.

As public acts, records related to baptisms, marriages and burials are held in trust for the participants and for the whole Church and are thereby parishes and the diocese are responsible for maintaining the integrity of the records. Lorna Shaw receives and processes requests for records that are held by the diocese, primarily related to disestablished parishes. All such archival inquiries should to be directed to lorna.shaw@niagaraanglican.ca.

Information related to the storage and retention of church records is available on the Archives page of the diocesan website.

Respectfully submitted,

The Venerable Bill Mous
Executive Officer & Secretary of Synod

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CLIMATE JUSTICE NIAGARA COMMITTEE

The role of Climate Justice Niagara (CJN) is to equip both clergy and lay people throughout the diocese to live more deeply into the Fifth Mark of Mission, “to strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the earth.” Aligned with the environmental justice emphasized in the diocesan Mission Action Plan, CJN assists parishes, homes and communities to respond to the climate crisis both locally and globally, through prayer, education, action and advocacy.

In the past year, a few highlights of our ministry have been:

- Assisted 30 parishes in completing energy audits, tracking energy use and developing five-year energy reduction plans to reduce energy use by 10%.
- Partnered in the creation of Zero Emission Churches (zeroemissionchurches.ca) to equip congregations and diocesan leaders with the information they need to convert their buildings into zero emitters of greenhouse gases.
- Promoted the Communion Forest Initiative within the diocese, assisted by a matching grant of \$7,500 from the Anglican Foundation of Canada.
 - The project will assist parishes with tree inventories to determine the state of current trees as well as the potential for future planting.
 - Twelve parishes are in the process of completing tree inventories.
- Promoted the planting of pollinator, rain, water and children’s gardens on church properties and awarded certificates to individual parishes to recognize their contributions.
- Developed a resource guide for the Season of Creation to support parishes in hosting events and incorporating Season of Creation themes into their liturgies.
- Provided support to parish Climate Justice Facilitators and convened an in-person meeting to facilitate information sharing and to build networks of support.
- Contributed monthly articles to the *Niagara Anglican*.
- Convened conversations about fossil fuel divestment.
- Provided the opportunity for two students from Niagara College to intern with CJN through the Communion Forest Initiative.

Over the next year, CJN will continue to connect people to environmental justice as a shared emphasis with the diocesan Mission Action Plan. The group will promote and advance the Communion Forest Initiative through activities such as tree planting, restoration and stewardship projects. We will continue our participation in creating Zero Emission Churches and provide support to parishes in implementing energy reduction plans. We will recruit new members to the CJN steering committee and parish facilitators, with intention toward less represented areas of the diocese.

Respectfully submitted,

Mr. Bruce Mackenzie
Chair, Climate Justice Niagara Committee

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THE DIOCESAN REFUGEE SPONSORSHIP INITIATIVE

Over the last year, parishes and community groups across our diocese continued to sponsor refugees from around the world, providing essential orientation and care for newcomers as they are resettled and welcomed to Canada.

With the primate's encouragement, our churches joined with Anglicans across Canada to mark Refugee Sunday on June 23. The observance followed World Refugee Day on June 20, a day to honour refugees around the globe, celebrating the strength and courage of people who have been forced to flee their home country to escape conflict or persecution.

According to information from the United Nations Refugee Agency, in 2023 the total number of people worldwide who were forced to flee their homes due to conflicts, violence, fear of persecution and human rights violations was 110 million people. Of these, the UN estimates that more than 2.9 million refugees worldwide will need urgent resettlement next year.

Since the last report to Synod in September 2023, our diocese has:

- submitted applications for 7 new sponsorship cases totalling 17 people; and
- welcomed 34 newcomers to Canada, representing 15 sponsorship cases, from Eritrea, Syria, Somalia, and Afghanistan.

Our diocese undertakes this ministry as a Sponsorship Agreement Holder (SAH) through the Private Sponsorship of Refugees program of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada. In 2024 a new online application portal was initiated for the submission of sponsorship cases to the Government of Canada for consideration.

As with all ministries of the Church, this work happens because of passion and incredible faithfulness of the people, parishes, and missions of the communities we serve. In addition, there is a team of dedicated volunteers and staff who help support this diocesan ministry, helping us live into our responsibilities as a Sponsorship Agreement Holder.

If you are interested in learning more about this work, or generally supporting our refugee sponsorship efforts, please email refugees@niagaraanglican.ca.

Respectfully submitted,

The Venerable Bill Mous
Coordinator, Diocesan Refugee Sponsorship Initiative

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THE HUMAN TRAFFICKING JUSTICE NIAGARA WORKING GROUP

Human Trafficking Justice Niagara (HTJN) continues to follow the lead of the General Synod 2019 Resolution A204 Human Trafficking and Modern slavery, equipping the people of the diocese to live more deeply into the Fourth Mark of Mission and our diocesan Mission Action Plan to be strong advocates for local and global change in the following ways.

- **Prayer** – Ensure that prayers and concern for human trafficking become an integral part of parish life, particularly on National Human Trafficking Awareness Day, the third Sunday of February.
- **Education** – Equip and inspire social justice facilitators and teams by developing and disseminating current local resources and evidence-based knowledge about modern-day slavery, human trafficking and forced labour.
- **Action** – Provide facilitators, clergy, and lay leaders with the tools to ensure their parishes are able to assist local outreach in support of victims of human trafficking.
- **Advocacy** – Model strong leadership and resolute political action to address human trafficking and modern-day slavery. Support parish and diocesan leaders in recognizing the presence of trafficking in our communities and ways to speak out against it.

Over the past year, HTJN members:

- Met regularly to keep up to date on human trafficking stories in Canada and beyond.
- Attended the Hamilton Anti-Human Trafficking Conference in February as a committee.
- Submitted an updated liturgical resource for prayers, preaching and reflection for parishes to use for Freedom Sunday.
- Planned for a forum to be held on Saturday, October 26, 2024, on human trafficking and community responses. Guest speakers include Jennifer Richardson, former Ontario director on human trafficking; Jen Lucking, executive director, Restoration House; and Detective Kyle Jarvie, Hamilton Police Services, Human Trafficking Division. The forum will be held at Christ's Church Cathedral and be open to the public

Respectfully submitted,

The Reverend Jody Szöke
Chair, Human Trafficking Justice Niagara Working Group

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THE CATHEDRAL PLACE PROPERTY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

The Cathedral Place Property Management Committee (CPPMC) exists, per Canon 2.10, to “oversee the care, maintenance, and management” of Cathedral Place. It is composed of two members elected by the Cathedral Vestry, two members elected by Synod Council, the dean, the executive officer, and a chair appointed by the bishop.

We are thankful for the diligence and care of Mr. Derek Smith, the Cathedral Place Property Manager, who attends to so many details and issues during and outside of regular hours.

Over the past year, the CPPMC has commissioned an Interior Heritage Study to aid our work in developing recommendations and a plan for conservation and use of the Cathedral. Significant time and effort has been devoted to supporting the ongoing work of the Cathedral Café program, which continues to welcome and provide needed supports six days a week.

Since last Synod met: several plumbing issues have been addressed; the office space on the upper levels of the School House portion of Cathedral Place have been painted (and a wall constructed); we have responded to new vandalism of Cathedral Place’s air conditioning units; and we have supported the work of adding cameras and upgrading the locks of CP. The latter project was made possible by the Ontario Anti-Hate Security and Prevention Grant.

CPPMC and its members have also been supporting the work of the Cathedral churchwardens in planning for new flooring in the nave. We expect that you’ll be able to enjoy the new floor shortly after Synod meets this year.

Respectfully submitted,

The Reverend Canon Matthew Griffin
Chair, Cathedral Place Property Management Committee

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THE NIAGARA SCHOOL FOR MISSIONAL LEADERSHIP

The Niagara School for Missional Leadership (NSML) is a Gospel-focused learning community based in the Diocese of Niagara that trains effective missional leaders – both clergy and lay – to respond to the needs of God’s world. The school centres its learning on the Good News of Jesus Christ – that the Church is called to participate in Jesus’ mission in the world in bringing about the Kingdom of God. Jesus calls us to life and compels us to love, and as we live into and out of this calling, the kingdom breaks into the world around us.

The school is monitored and directed by the NSML Steering Committee who are mandated to support the school’s vision of creating a practical and coaching based learning environment where participants are equipped to respond creatively and faithfully to God’s mission. The work of the Committee includes providing input regarding the development and administration of the school, promotions, finances, and monitoring alignment between the school’s operations and the school’s mission and vision.

We are excited that the NSML has entered a new partnership with Huron University College’s Licentiate in Theology (LTh) Program. The Memorandum of Understanding was completed and signed by both parties on August 21, 2024. The Huron Faculty of Theology Committee approved all fall semester NSML courses and teacher-practitioners in early September. Huron’s LTh students can enroll in NSML courses to receive credits for their certificate program and can petition course credits for MDiv and MTS programs. Likewise, NSML students are encouraged to register in Huron’s LTh courses to receive credits towards diocesan missional pathways. This partnership continues to expand the breadth of theological education that we are offering students within the diocese and across the country.

Highlights of our ministry over the past year include:

- The enrollment of over 300 students, across 27 offered courses since launching in September of 2021.
- Increasing numbers of students from outside the diocese taking NSML courses, many of whom are from the new partnership with Huron University College.
- Course being taught by over 20 teacher-practitioners, including archbishops, bishops, archdeacons, theological professors, international missionaries, and synod staff.
- New teacher-practitioners continue to join NSML, including the Reverend Canon Dr. Judith Paulsen and Dr. Matthew Green, who were welcomed this year
- Updates to the school’s website and administrative platforms have created greater efficiency and diocesan brand alignment.

The Niagara School for Missional Leadership will continue to live out the diocesan Mission Action Plan objectives to create and implement opportunities to ignite and strengthen faith, reimagine culture, and prioritize justice by developing practical, accessible, and culturally relevant studies, ignited by the irresistible love of Jesus.

Respectfully submitted,

Ms. Sarah Bird

Missional Formation Coordinator, on behalf of the Steering Committee