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THE DIOCESAN ARCHIVIST

For the past fifty years, 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.

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's responsibility 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 her at 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 Climate Justice Niagara's (CJN) role 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 CJN's ministry have been:

- Assisting parishes in completing energy audits, tracking energy use and developing five-year energy reduction plans to reduce energy use by 10%.
- Partnering with Zero Emission Churches (zeroemissionchurches.ca) to equip congregations and diocesan leaders with the information they need in order to convert their buildings into zero emitters of greenhouse gases.
- Assessing the ages of furnaces in every parish and continued to encourage parishes to switch to electric air source heat pump heating and cooling.
- Promoting the Communion Forest Initiative within the diocese and shared information with the Diocese of Toronto and the national Creation Matters Working Group.
- Hosting the "Our Power, Our Planet" event on April 22 (Earth Day) with former federal Environment Minister Catherine McKenna, Green Venture's Giuliana Casimirri, and former Member of Parliament Deb Schulte in lead up to Climate Justice Sunday on April 27.
- Relaunching the Climate Justice Niagara Parish Accreditation program, allowing parishes to earn bronze, silver or gold certification for environmental stewardship practices.
- Promoting the planting of pollinator, rain, water and children's gardens on church properties and awarding certificates to parishes to recognize their contributions.
- Updating and sharing a resource guide for the Season of Creation to support parishes in hosting events and incorporating Season of Creation themes into their liturgies.
- Conducting a "phone-zap," contacting every parish to invite Climate Justice Facilitators and their colleagues to an in-person meeting—held on September 20, 2025—to facilitate information sharing and to build networks of support, including a presentation from Environmental Defence Canada.
- Writing monthly articles for *the Niagara Anglican*.

Over the next year, CJN will continue to connect people to environmental justice as an initiative of the diocesan Mission Action Plan. The group will promote the parish accreditation program and support churches in receiving bronze, silver and gold certification and will continue our participation in Zero Emission Churches, providing support to parishes in implementing energy reduction plans. We will recruit new members to the CJN steering committee, particularly from 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 were invited to join with Anglicans across Canada to observe Refugee Sunday, often around World Refugee Day which falls on June 20. It's 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.

This year marks 10 years since Operation Syria, a moment that galvanized our diocese, and Canadians generally, to show solidarity through refugee sponsorship as war uprooted millions of Syrians. In 2015–2016, over 25,000 Syrian refugees found safety in Canada within a few short months. In Niagara, we sponsored hundreds of refugees through this initiative. Our various communities opened their hearts and homes; parishioners came together to form sponsorship groups and welcome refugees.

According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the number of forcibly displaced people worldwide rose to 122.6 million by mid-2024, marking the 12th consecutive year this number has grown. This total includes 43.7 million refugees, among them approximately 6 million Palestinian refugees under the mandate of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), as well as 72.1 million internally displaced persons and 8 million asylum seekers. The situation in Gaza is particularly dire: at least 1.9 million people - roughly 90% of the population - have been displaced.

Since the last report to Synod in September 2024, our diocese has welcomed 9 newcomers to Canada, representing 3 sponsorship cases, from Eritrea, Syria, and Afghanistan.

Interest from parishes in new sponsorships has been lower this year, as processing times for existing applications is lagging, meaning there are a number of cases pending arrival. Still, we expect to sponsor as many as 10 additional refugees by year end.

Our diocese undertakes this ministry as a Sponsorship Agreement Holder (SAH) through the Private Sponsorship of Refugees program of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada.

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 human trafficking.

The theme of this year's Synod: *"Take our life and let it be consecrated Lord to Thee"* is reflected in the work of this group, bringing awareness, encouraging prayer, and effecting change in our communities for those impacted by the scourge of human trafficking and modern slavery.

- **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. In the words of James 5:16, 'The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective'.
- **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.
- Organized and presented 2 presentations open to all in the diocese entitled, *"Human Trafficking: Not in My Backyard."*
 - The first was held at St. Columba's, St Catharines for parishioners there; the second was at the Church of the Transfiguration in St. Catharines.

We are always open to having new members join our working and share in this important work. We appreciate your prayers and support moving forward.

Respectfully submitted,

Mrs. Wendy Saunders
Chair, Human Trafficking Justice Niagara Working Group

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THE CATHEDRAL PLACE PROPERTY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

I am deeply grateful to and thankful for the expertise, effort, and work that the members of the Cathedral Place Property Management Committee (CPPMC) offer to the planning and caring for Cathedral Place as it supports a myriad of people living out many and varied ministries: thank you. We are indebted to Mr. Derek Smith, O.N., for his continuing work as the property manager.

Since Synod last convened, the CPPMC has commissioned and reviewed Cathedral Place's decennial inspection and supported plans to remedy some minor deficiencies identified by the inspector. Over the course of the year, we have also arranged for updated and improved signage in the cathedral's parking lot. Asbestos has been remediated around pipes in the distribution room. Electrical work was conducted to better support the kitchen—a significant need for the continuing ministry of the Cathedral Café. The Dean liaised with Hamilton Police Services in conducting a Crime Prevention through Environmental Design Property Audit. An Ontario Anti-Hate Security and Prevention grant has helped us make some changes, including new security fencing to better protect Cathedral Place's air conditioning units.

One of the major files that the CPPMC is working on is updating aspects of the cathedral proper to allow for greater capacity for non-worship use of the space. We have improved egresses and are working to install improved emergency lighting, with the goal of being able to use the nave for events of up to 350 people.

The most visible project CPPMC has been supporting remains ongoing. The heritage-designated main doors to the Cathedral have needed significant work for some time. One portion of this is updating the doors to allow crash-bar egress in emergencies. Another is replacing degraded hardware to improve ease of use of the doors. The final portion is repairing environmental damage to the doors' façade. The work has been slower than initially planned. Complexities of heritage permitting (both municipal and provincial) contributed, but many of the challenges relate to the doors originally being built more as pretty items than with design for long-term use as doors. The contractor is hoping to have the central doors operating this fall, and we are better positioned to plan for the north and south doors.

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 in the Diocese of Niagara that equips clergy and lay leaders to respond to God's mission in the world. Rooted in the Good News of Jesus Christ, the school helps participants live into the call to love and serve, bearing witness to the breaking-in of God's kingdom.

Now in its fourth year, NSML has grown from a promising new initiative into a well-established, reliable school, marked by consistency and momentum. With courses now posted early, promoted widely, and drawing broad attention, registrations in 2025 reached 111 students (75 from Niagara)—our highest yet! Communications are extending across the globe, while relationships with dioceses across Canada continue to deepen. Many dioceses are now sharing NSML opportunities with their clergy and laity, encouraging enrollment for both professional development and gospel-focused missional learning.

Guided by the NSML Steering Committee, the school offers a dynamic and coaching-based environment where curriculum, administration, communications, and finances are carefully aligned with its vision. The stability achieved in these areas ensures NSML continues to flourish.

This year we also celebrate the one-year anniversary of our partnership with Huron University College's Licentiate in Theology (LTh) Program. LTh students eagerly enroll in NSML courses for credit, while NSML participants may take Huron courses as part of their formation journeys. This partnership is broadening access to theological education across the diocese and beyond.

Highlights from the past year include:

- A new course: *Theology & Harry Potter*, with the Reverend Victor Kischak (rector of St. George's, Guelph; educator in scripture, homiletics, and theology). NSML also welcomed the Reverend Dr. Rob Jones (assistant director of Jewish Studies and assistant research professor at Penn State University) as an instructor for *Christian Foundations*.
- Strong enrollments in our core courses, including: *Missional Preaching, Reimagining Church, Engaging the Community, Missional Spirituality, Missional Prayer, Anglican Polity, Pastoral Care Fundamentals*, and *Adaptive Leadership*.
- The Curriculum Committee developing innovative offerings for the future, listening attentively to feedback from both students and teacher-practitioners.
- Preparations for a refreshed NSML website with improved navigation and design.
- NSML's widening reach was reflected in new students joining from Nova Scotia, Ottawa, Saskatchewan, Indiana (USA), and as far away as Australia.

NSML remains a vital expression of the diocesan Mission Action Plan: igniting and strengthening faith, reimagining culture, and prioritizing justice through accessible, relevant, and Christ-centered learning.

Respectfully submitted,

Ms. Sarah Bird

Missional Formation Coordinator, on behalf of the Steering Committee