



# Niagara Anglican

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## Probing a broken world

A Lenten Journey



**MICHAEL THOMPSON**  
RECTOR, ST. JUDE'S GUELPH

Since my mother's death in January, I have become more acutely aware of and more consistently attentive to the pain and loss that characterize so much of our human life. It isn't that I did not notice it before. It has been a substantial part of my adult life's work to bring the weight of prayer and proclamation into the places where shadows, loss and frailty ransack good human lives and lay them bare.

So it isn't that I have spent twenty-five years in this work without noticing such things. Instead, it is that now, in the face of *this* loss, it occurs to me that shadows, loss and frailty are not accidents that come to some, but fundamental features of the landscape across which we move from our beginning to our end.

We're mostly not supposed to notice that. We're mostly supposed to believe that if we align our lives with the right practices, the right products, the right principles, we can somehow avoid what happens to soft bodies in a hard world. We are supposed to believe that people can actually live in beer commercials.

But we can't. No matter how perfect the weather-stripping, the hard world will leak under the doors, around the windows, through the cracks of whatever we construct to protect ourselves. We are citizens of the real world, and the real world is a republic of pain. There is no other world.

This is the world that God creates. It is broken now – broken in ways that implicate us – greed, violence, indifference, and in ways that do not – volcanoes, tsunamis, cystic fibrosis.

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## SpiritQuest: Understanding the Seasons of our Lives

**JOYCE WILTON**  
CONSULTANT FOR YOUTH MINISTRY

When I returned home recently from staffing a SpiritQuest weekend retreat at Crieff Hills, one of my friends said to me "tell me about SpiritQuest, it sounds so interesting". I started to explain that it is a weekend spiritual retreat designed as an opportunity for older youth and young adults to take time, to slow down and find a deeper meaning of God in their lives. The more we talked about SpiritQuest the more I realized that she needed to hear from the participants themselves. And that inspired this article. So, three first time SpiritQuest participants share their experiences of this unique retreat:

**Dean Sutton Greenhalgh (All Saints, Hamilton)**

My experience at SpiritQuest was everything I ever wanted it to be. It was full of opportunity to grow in many ways. It provided times to

think, pray, reflect, write and relax in the midst of many other things. I took full advantage of everything it had to offer. Something special, as opposed to other youth ministry programs is that SpiritQuest has a very intimate environment. This intimate environment makes all of SpiritQuest's opportunity possible.

Through SpiritQuest I learned a lot, I wrote a lot and I thought a lot. The theme was the seasons of our lives, and that opened up many areas of discussion, reflection, prayer and meditation. One of the most thought provoking questions brought up in our discussions was what season do you think your life is going into? That question alone sparked a lot of conversation and really makes you think of your own life and where you will end up in the years to come. For me it was very hard to answer that, and some of the other questions brought up, but when reflecting later on, I started to find out some of the answers

during the solo time allowed. Among all of the aspects I valued, the solo time was my favourite. This solo time was in the middle of the afternoon for several hours. The solo time was the most rejuvenating aspect of the whole program. The solo time, as well as the whole program is something that I needed, and will continue to need for the years to come, as I plan to attend for as long as I can.

**Kate Smyth (St. James Dundas)**

This was the first time that I had been to SpiritQuest. Though I have attended many other youth events, I wasn't exactly sure what to expect. I had heard good things from my friends and others that had been there, so I thought that I would give it a go. I am an extremely social person, so I wasn't sure how this 'quieter' and 'more intimate' youth event would affect me.

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## Lent: The Great Journey

**PETER WALL**  
DEAN AND RECTOR, CHRIST'S CHURCH CATHEDRAL

As this edition of the *Niagara Anglican* 'hits the streets', we will again be beginning the season of Lent. Many of us will sing the hymn 'Forty Days and Forty Nights' on the first Sunday of Lent - this year on March 1. So the first thing to deal with in this odd season is the actual number 40 - it is calculated counting all of the days from Ash Wednesday through Holy Saturday (the day before Easter Day).

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## Bishop Bird returns from Canterbury

**MICHAEL BIRD**  
BISHOP OF NIAGARA

Dear Friends in Niagara, I have just returned from a two week trip to England and the highlight of that trip was an interview that I had with the Archbishop of Canterbury on January 20th. Well ahead of our meeting I sent him a package of material that included my charge to Synod in November as well as past Bishops' charges, theological papers on the subject of same-sex blessings that I commissioned to be written some months ago, a copy of our new Diocesan Vision and a detailed covering letter.

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## Giving: A moment of true faith

**RICK JONES**  
ARCHDEACON, RECTOR OF ST. PAUL'S WESTDALE

The worldwide economic downturn has had serious implications for many of our churches. Investment Fund balances have seen serious declines and interest from investments has all but dried up. Churches that have counted on interest from Investment Funds to subsidize operating budgets, have been forced to spend unrestricted capital and have no hope of rebuilding investments through future earnings.

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## PARISH NEWS



■ **YOUTH EXPRESS MURAL** St Cuthbert's, Oakville, recently blessed and dedicated a new painting representing their work with youth. Designed by a youth member of the parish named William James Green (Billy-Jim), and painted by his fellow members of Youth Express (the name chosen by the youth for their youth group) over this past year, the mural picks up the theme from the church's sanctuary cross which has a pelican protecting and feeding the church. The painting also includes an image of the Holy Spirit flowing from the church and its people flowing like a river and connecting to the Youth Express train. Note also "Michelangelo's" hand of God reaching down and the depiction of Cuthbert's Cross (replica of the pectoral cross found on St Cuthbert). The mural greets visitors to the church and its widely used parish facility as they enter through its east entrance foyer.

## Outreach at its best

'Happy Hookers', 'Knotty Ladies' and 'Fine Gentlemen' meet to make mats

**SUE CRAWFORD**  
ST. MICHAEL'S HAMILTON

Over the past year the people of St. Michael's church have been busy saving plastic milk bags. We approached neighbours and friends to help save the bags and the result was an astounding success. On Saturday, January 24, we arranged a "Cut-up" Day in the parish hall. It was rather reminiscent of the Sewathon (Niagara Anglican May 2008). Tables were set up for cutting (our "Fine Gentlemen" took on this role), flattening the bags (we called this "flatlining"), knotting the strips (these were the "Knotty" Ladies) and finally rolling the knotted strips into balls for the crocheters (our "Happy Hookers"). George Foster was certainly relieved to empty his garage where all the mounds of bags had been stored! About 30 people came out at various times during the afternoon to help. Fran Milburn a former volunteer with OMS (Overseas Mission Services) was on hand to show us how to crochet the balls of plastic into the mats. We started about 4 -5.

To end the afternoon, when we had all had enough of cutting, folding and hooking, etc., we brought out all the wonderful food that people had brought to share and enjoyed a delicious supper. We were extremely grateful to all who gave up their afternoon to assist with this wonderful outreach project. Even our long-term

interim, Canon Patrick Doran, and Canon Fred Roberts, our honorary assistant, came out to help cut up the bags. As with all St. Michael projects, particularly outreach, we had a super day of fellowship. It was the type of project that attracted all ages in the parish. Each one found their niche whether it was cutting, folding, rolling or helping in the kitchen providing refreshments throughout the afternoon. I don't think one of us could have gone home not feeling good about the way we spent our afternoon. We will probably schedule another day in the near future to finish knotting the bags and crocheting the mats. We had loads left to do.

What are the mats for and where are they going? Fran Milburn who assisted us on Saturday sent me some information about her rôle in this outreach project. She was originally taught how to make the mats by a parishioner from a church in Ancaster. She is a former volunteer with OMS (Overseas Mission Services). Fran attends Meadowcreek Community Church on the West Mountain. At present they do not have their own building but meet in Gordon Price School. Last May, Suzanne Bourette did an article about the mat project in Haiti. Apparently Suzanne had never received such a response as that was received from her article.

The mats are destined for Haiti; particularly to St. Louie of the North.

The people there are so poor, Fran tells me, that even Haitians call them their poor cousins. Following the hurricanes in Haiti, which left such devastation, the effects were so wide-spread they affected most people. The mats are important as the people have no place to sleep for starters. Some people sleep on dirt floors. Others gather banana leaves which can actually cut and injure the person. The mats made of plastic are cleaner and dryer and can be washed. Altogether 1200 mats are needed and so far 500 have been sent to Haiti.

Approximately 300 milk bags are needed to make a mat. (biodegradable bags are not to be used) Each bag has to be cut into strips about 1 inch wide. Each strip forms a loop. Each loop is then knotted to another, and then rolled into balls to be crocheted. A 7mm or 8mm crochet hook is used. A child's mat is 34" x 48" and an adult mat is 36" x 76". A single crochet stitch is used. There are specific directions for turning each row. Contact Fran Milburn for complete directions.

It takes quite a long time to crochet a mat but they last for 40 years. It is hard on the fingers (for some of us) and for beginners, like me, it took several hours just to do about 4 rows. One of our parishioners, Mary Farrell, with husband Matt knotting then rolling balls, managed to finish an entire mat within a week of our "Cut-up"



■ Caroline Thornton receives crocheting instructions from Fran Milburn.

Day. Our parishioners are so dedicated to this project that last Saturday during a fund raiser in the parish hall, people were knotting plastic while waiting their turn to take part.

I am sure Fran would be delighted to visit any parish who might be interested in making the mats. She is an extremely dedicated person. Although no longer with OMS, while

waiting for God's direction for her next project, she seems quite willing to come out to parishes to help get them started on the mats and ensure the quota of 1500 for Haiti is reached.

We at St. Michael's are proud of our involvement in this project for Haiti and will continue our support.





## Ascension hosts PWRDF dinner and auction

The Church of the Ascension hosted one of the first events in the yearlong celebration marking the 50th anniversary of the founding of the PWRDF. Feted with a great meal and wines (all donated), the happy throng bid generously at the silent auction! Our Priest Associate, Reverend Laura Marie Piotrowicz, reported that over \$2500 was raised locally to support the good work of the PWRDF.



## Variety of Services open to all

**MARY MELLISH**  
ST. JOHN'S ANCASTER

On Sunday, February 1st, Super Bowl Sunday, St. John's, Ancaster celebrated a Choral Evensong, followed by an organ recital performed by Angus Sinclair, who, among his many other accomplishments, is the accompanist for The Three Cantors.

The service of Evensong, which occurs four times a year at St. John's, allows the community to participate in a liturgy and enjoy music in a style not often heard these days. For some, it is a chance to remember when they ended every Sunday with the service of Evensong – a final opportunity for worship before re-entering the stresses of the workaday world. For others, it is something new in worship experiences, a chance to acquaint themselves with the early roots and language of Anglican liturgy.

The service also provides an opportunity for people from the wider community, who come expressly for the organ recital, to experience the wor-

ship service first, perhaps their first taste of Anglican music and liturgy.

It is also a chance to hear some wonderful music played by a versatile and accomplished musician. The Feb. 1st recital featured more modern composers of organ music, including Bert van der Hoek, William Bennett, Gerald Bales and Louis Vierne. Mr. Sinclair's rendition of the Adagio and Finale from Vierne's Symphonie 3 concluded the recital in rousing fashion.

Recent special services at St. John's have used modern and diverse liturgies, as opposed to the ancient liturgy of Evensong. Many of them were planned with the help of the Sunday School and Youth groups, under the leadership of Donna Ellis, St. John's Youth Director. The Sunday after Easter the congregation, while not exactly rolling in the aisles, roared with laughter during the presentation by the youth of the message of Holy Humour Sunday, which included a game show version of the lectionary readings, and

two "anthems" performed by puppets.

The Parish Picnic service, held outdoors with music provided by the NYC band, rocked the neighbourhood. The youth service on Christmas Eve, held for the second year in the hay loft at Maplehurst Farms, saw the worshipping community, children, youth and adults of all ages, wearing their warmest winter clothes, seated on hay bales, welcoming the Christ Child into our midst.

At every Eucharist, it is always made clear that St. John's invites all who seek Christ in their lives to join in the feast at our open table.

Our next Evensong will be on Sunday, March 29, with a sumptuous Afternoon Tea preceding it at 2:45. The guest recitalist will be Philip Sarabura, organist for St. Ann's Church, Ancaster, and recently-appointed conductor of the Brantford Symphony Orchestra. On May 3, Tea and Evensong will be followed by a choral concert, presented by the choir of St. John's.

## A parish reflection day

**C.T. (TERRY) GILLIN**  
ST CUTHBERT'S OAKVILLE

A "haibun" is a Japanese literary form combining prose and poetry; it often has an autobiographical character. The brief poems which are part of this essay are called "senryu." They are intended to capture the essence of a moment that reflects the human character. Historically, senryu, like the better known haiku, consisted of three lines of poetry with 17 syllables; the contemporary poetic rules are very flexible. All the poems here reflect advent waiting.

On Saturday, December 13, 2008, a group of eighteen parishioners from St. Cuthbert's in Oakville spent the day at the convent of the Sisters of St. John the Divine. The Sisters work at St. John's Rehab Hospital in Toronto; and in their convent they provide supports for quiet reflection and retreats. Their convent is only a couple of years old and is carefully designed with the environment in mind. Its architecture is simple and its rooms are warmly inviting and conducive to reflection. The sisters happily and graciously welcome guests in spirit of Christ.

The structure of the day was simple and felicitous. The day began and ended with common prayers. The prayers had a modern tone and rhythm, helping us to be aware of our connection to the world, even as we withdrew into silence for the day. Immediately after the prayers, the Reverend Canon Audrey Conard took 15 minutes to set the tone and offer some suggestions for the two hours of quiet time that followed. The focus of Audrey's remarks drew our attention to our breathing and made us aware of how conscious breathing can help us to center ourselves on not only on our bodies but our minds and hearts. Following the two hour period we shared the midday Eucharist and dinner with the sisters. After lunch Audrey provided another brief guide for the shorter afternoon free time. We closed with a half-hour of sharing the "graces of the day" and a brief common prayer. By 3:00 or so we were on our way back to families and homes. we begin breathing in and out and move toward listening

A variety of activities took place during the quiet times. We scattered into the different lounges, chapels and various nooks and crannies of the convent buildings. Some meditated, others read reflectively, some diligently wrote private notes, a few ventured outdoors to walk the labyrinth despite the frigid weather, a couple took brief naps – falling asleep while contemplating is a long and honored tradition among the prayerful. Whatever personal path we took, each of us ended up listening to the whispers deep inside our hearts. Because we had stepped away from our all-too-busy lives, albeit briefly, we each heard something of that often indistinct and illusive truth about ourselves that we needed to hear. As the psalmist says, "Be still and know that I am." trying to meditate out of practice aching

The chapel has a wall of high windows bringing in natural light and, with it, a graceful kindness. The Eucha-

ristic liturgy was presided over by a Lutheran minister who brought great personal warmth to the service and rich insight to the gospel with a gentle, telling humor. While the homily and communion were memorable, the memory that will continue to resonate most for me is after receiving communion we sat in chapel, listening while the celebrant carried the Eucharist and a sister rang a bell as they walked down a hallway adjacent to the chapel in order to bring communion to members of the community who were unable to attend the liturgy. Though physically apart from the service, these sisters were included in our liturgical gathering while we waited and reflected. in chapel the oldest nuns

bodies collapsing into their souls

After the service, we stood briefly at the refectory door until the sisters invited us into their refectory for dinner. It was a warm and homey meal, and we were hungry. Who knew that spending a couple of hours simply with own inner company could make us so hungry?

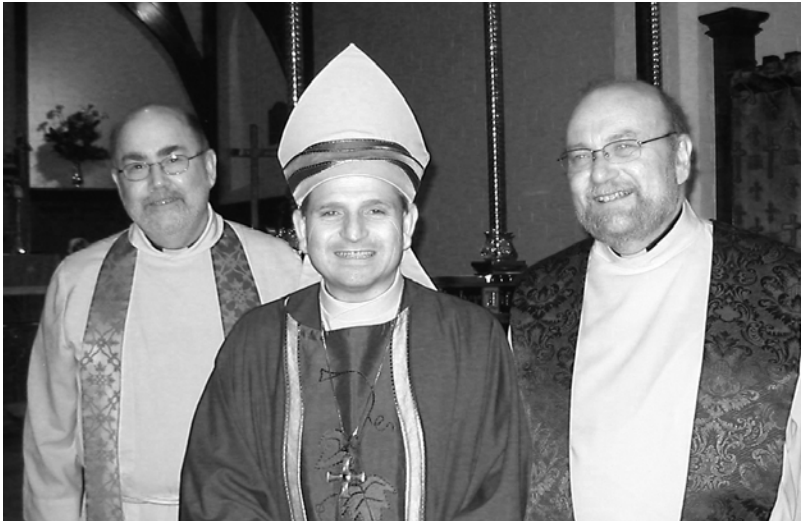
awaiting lunch some nuns do sudoku

Afterward, some commented that eating "in silence" seemed odd, eating and conviviality being such natural compliments. Cutting out the talk let us focus on other sounds – the inherent noise of knives and forks on plates – and on our inner dialogues. Personally – and perhaps unexpectedly – it made me happy to be together as a group and yet not visiting.

after lunch I clasp my hands on table's edge as the nuns of my childhood taught

In the last half-hour, we shared with one another something of the graces we experienced that day, intimations of the movements in our hearts. There is something reassuring in the shared realization that we are not alone in our journeys, that others, like ourselves, are in search of the ineffable – that something which is indefinable yet gives definition to our lives, an unsolved mystery into which we are drawn, compelling us to search for that which remains inexplicable. All of us, I think, felt both comforted and challenged by these stirrings. In the sharing there was reference to the uncertainties that had accompanied us on the day's journeys, the clarifications of doubts and difficulties in our lives, and comforts as we faced thorny decisions. A number admitted to some reluctance about going on a quiet day, and all who did indicated that they were surprised by the results of the day. Each of us – to borrow a phrase – was "surprised by joy." A joy we found in our sitting quietly alone and with one another. We are looking forward to another day of reflection during Lent.

Special thanks to the Reverend Canon Joe Asselin and Reverend Canon Audrey Conard for organizing the day and providing effective guidance. Equal thanks to Ms. Lisa Kallioniemi, who led the led the discussion about the graces of the day, and to all who helped with the common prayers.



■ Bishop Michael Bird installs Rev. Gordon Walls who came from Toronto to Grace Church Arthur and St. Paul's Mount Forest. Also pictured is Canon Mark Tiller.



## St. Elizabeth parish pays off debt!

GERRY BAKER  
ST. ELIZABETH'S, BURLINGTON

Soon after Rev. Jean Archbell came to St. Elizabeth's 3 years ago, I heard that she wanted us to pay off our Diocesan debt which had accumulated to \$81,000 as we had not been paying our full assessment for quite a few years. Until we paid off the full amount in addition to our current assessments we would be unable to contemplate embarking on any large scale projects such as improving accessibility, which would enable us to reach out more effectively to the community beyond our doors. Elimination of the debt seemed to be an excellent goal but I wasn't sure that it was feasible. We were barely, if at all, meeting our current expenses so I wondered where the extra funds would come from.

Over the next 3 years we gradually reduced the debt by small amounts each year until at the beginning of 2008 we owed \$58,000. In June the Corporation kicked off a campaign to eliminate the debt beginning with a "Go for the Gold and Silver Campaign" in which we were asked to donate any unwanted gold or silver jewellery or other solid silver or gold items.

In September 2008 each household received an invitation along with the legend of Stone Soup requesting their participation at a Stone Soup lunch on September 28th at the church. We were also asked to bring along a cup of diced vegetables so that, with everyone contributing to the pot, "we ate like Royalty". A presentation was made by those who attended, while those not present received their letters in the mail. The letter asked us to donate to the fund and suggested a specific amount that each recipient might prayerfully consider donating. Some parishioners resented being asked to donate a specific amount and were surprised at the amount suggested. During Announcement Time one Sunday Jean addressed the feedback by telling the story of the Bishop who asked a wealthy parishioner to donate \$200,000. Although the lady agreed to this request, the Bishop later found out that she had donated \$8 million to her Alumni. When he asked why she only gave \$200,000 to the church she replied that it was all he had asked for! In spite of our misgivings the amount owing gradually became smaller and smaller. Amazingly,

as a result of this campaign the debt was reduced dramatically within just a few months. Until, almost miraculously, Jean informed us just after Christmas, that the debt had been totally eliminated!

Can you imagine our joy, our surprise and our relief that we had done it! We had finally fulfilled our obligations to the Diocese, which after all, consists of our brothers and sisters in Christ. We could now hold up our heads with pride that we were no longer in debt and were finally meeting our commitments. We could also feel pride in our parish family for rising to the challenge and eliminating a large portion of the debt in such a relatively short time. We feel grateful to Jean for initiating this effort and to her and the Corporation for their belief in us, their perseverance and their encouragement that we could do this.

Accompanying all this euphoria is the realisation that we are no longer restricted by the necessity of paying down this debt but can now move on to bigger and better things to help to bring about the kingdom of God. We were capable of rising to the occasion this time; surely we should be capable of even more next time!

## About a box



ANDY KALBFLEISCH  
MISSION STRATEGY COMMITTEE

Boxes come in many shapes and sizes. They have four sides, a bottom and a top. The top can be flat, a geometric shape or any combination of geometric shapes. Some boxes are for living in. Some boxes are for working in. We shop in big box stores and we are entertained in big box theatres. The train, bus or car that we use to get from box to box probably has a gearbox of some form or another. We store our things in boxes like drawers, cupboards, closets or cabinets. The rules and regulations that define our society often seem to box us in. Let's face it; boxes are an integral part of our lives. Boxes can also provide us with comfort, being warm and fuzzy on the inside while keeping all the things that we don't like on the outside.

I was at a Vestry once where concern was expressed about the continued decline in weekly attendance. It was suggested by some, that it might be useful to contact those who were now absent and ask them why they found themselves no longer participating in weekly worship. Was there something that could be done differently that would invite them to come back? I have never witnessed such uproar. We were told that faith and our personal faith experiences were a private matter not to be discussed with others. The voracity and passion of these declarations made me wonder if a provincial or federal statute had been contravened and 911 had been dialed! It seemed to me that faith had been put in a box, just like most things in our lives. Faith in a box is compartmentalized faith, perhaps a 'one hour on Sunday morning' faith. In a box, faith only matters to those on the inside - the members of the club!

In churchland we often hear the phrase "think outside the box". It invites us to think beyond how we experience life in the boxes that surround us, but do we? Isn't that what Jesus did? But he went much further than thinking and acting outside the box. He, in fact, lived outside the box and in so doing invites us to join him.

John 2:1-10 tells us about Jesus' first miracle; turning water into wine. He could have used the emptied wine jars from the wedding or any other vessel for that matter, but instead he chose to use the jars that Jews used for their ritual washing. This likely would have been seen as an affront to the sacred traditions of the Jewish faith. In many ways I think this a more important image than the water to wine itself. It tells us that traditions can be challenged and changed even if doing so impacts our comfort zones. It is living outside the box.

I recently saw the following on a church website: 'The Anglican

Church welcomes new members, but faces a serious difficulty; to a newcomer, much of what we do in church looks puzzling or entirely incomprehensible.' So what do we do? There are some who say: Join us and we will teach you how we do things and help you unpack this incomprehensibility. Or, do we step back and ask ourselves the question: Is it us, are we the ones who don't get it?

Some years ago Rowan Williams, Archbishop of Canterbury, realized that if Western Christianity were to survive as we know it in the 3rd millennium, in our ever increasingly secular world, it would need to be transformed and reframed in the context of the current culture, telling the ancient stories in new and different ways that speak to those who don't know anything about liturgy, the BCP and the BAS. In other words, change the presentation, not the message. The era of Fresh Expressions of Church had begun, a time for new wineskins to replace the old.

It is interesting that in our secular lives we talk about, even embrace, how an artist can present an old theme in a new and exciting way. Take Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet for example. The 1968 Franco Zeffarelli version was produced as a traditional period piece. In 1996 the Baz Luhrmann version, using the same language, was fast paced, action packed and set in contemporary society - a style that was more in keeping with contemporary culture. Why do we accept outside the box ideas in our secular lives, but not in our faith lives?

How do we take our faith outside of the box we often keep it in and share it with others? How do we encourage others to talk about their faith not only within their own faith communities, but to others as well? How do we get back to the early church principles of spreading the words of Jesus to those who have yet to hear them?

Over and over Jesus shows us the way to think, act and live our lives outside the box. In Mark 4:21-23 (MSG) Jesus says: "Does anyone bring a lamp home and put it under a washbasin or beneath the bed? Don't you put it up on a table or on the mantel? We're not keeping secrets, we're telling them; we're not hiding things, we're bringing them out into the open. Are you listening to this? Really listening?"

Let us be bold and consider the challenge of living out our faith in the public square without being surrounded by the walls that keep us from doing what we are called to do.

So, let us joyfully sing;  
This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine  
This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine  
This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine  
Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.  
Everywhere I go, I'm gonna let it shine  
Everywhere I go, I'm gonna let it shine  
Everywhere I go, I'm gonna let it shine  
Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.



# How not to build up one another in the faith



**MICHAEL BURSLEM**  
ST. GEORGE'S, GUELPH

During my recent visit to Britain I was reminded by my sister-in-law that about 40 years ago I had come over and told everybody in the family that unless they repent and believe in Jesus

**“If we deny that God’s grace can cover the sin of Hitler, can we really be sure that His grace will cover our own sin?”**

Christ as their Lord and Saviour, they would go to hell. I had total amnesia of it, and I could only profoundly apologize for having said so. Whether I did say it or not, I certainly believed it, even before I became a rabid Evangelical. The *Quicumque Vult* in the Book of Common Prayer concludes, “This is the Catholic Faith: which except a man believe faithfully, he cannot be

saved.” This creed deals with the Trinity and Deity of Jesus Christ, which no infidel could possibly accept; so for many years that settled my questioning as to who was saved, and who was not. My error was to believe that anybody who didn’t believe as I did was an infidel.

A few years back I met a Baptist friend (he now attends an Anglican church) who had a more catholic or universal view on it. He pointed out to me the ten lepers cleansed by Jesus, but only one returned to thank him. He asked if it were ever recorded that Jesus withdrew the healing from the other nine. When we acknowledge Him as Lord and Saviour, we are, like that Samaritan leper, thanking him for our salvation; but others who do not, are they not no less saved than we? My friend argued that this indeed was Good News, because our salvation didn’t depend on us, but on God.

At the time I was attending St. George’s, Lowville, then a traditional Anglican Evangelical church, and I was a bit timorous to broadcast such an heretical idea. However, I did gather courage to speak to a wise friend. He surprisingly didn’t bite my head off, but suggested I read *The Fingerprints of God*, by Robert Farrar Capon. I did

so and discovered that there was good theological justification for a universal world view. Jesus died for all, “while we were yet sinners,” not after we had cleaned up our act, but before.

The thought occurred to me that perhaps we have been looking at the Scriptures with blinkers on, determined by our own theological or denominational background, and we all underestimate the bountiful grace of God; *Grace Abounding* as Bunyan entitled it.

Firstly, those who deny theism, as Bishop Spong does, are certainly wearing blinkers, because they just cannot see what the rest of us see through the eyes of faith.

But even those of more ‘orthodox’ persuasion, I also believe, are wearing blinkers; both Catholics and Evangelicals. Catholics see no salvation outside the church; but means of salvation seems to be some pious action around the Eucharistic elements, which have some atoning value of their own, quite apart from the death of the Lord Jesus and His resurrection. Also Evangelicals, who see no salvation without a personal faith in Jesus, tend to make the act of believing a ritual to earn their personal salvation. Neither, I feel, see the total picture, and neither of them “get it.”

To defend a universal atonement I would have to say from the start that there is no other way to God than through Jesus, and His atoning death and resurrection. Nobody can claim to be saved by any other means. The work of salvation is done, finished and complete, not by us, nor by any other deity but the one and true God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The Apostles boldly proclaimed the Good News, “You have been saved by the precious blood of Jesus Christ.” Whether we acknowledge that fact by believing it, or not, is up to us, but I think it does not change our state of salvation, which is a gift from God. This indeed is Good News.

It may naturally be asked, “What of Hitler?” Firstly, Sin is Sin and heinous in the eyes of a Holy, pure and just God. Secondly, all of us have fallen far short of God’s holiness. Thirdly, if we deny that God’s grace can cover the sin of Hitler, can we really be sure that His grace will cover our own sin? (Should we in the first place be judging the sins of others? Even of Hitler? That’s God’s job, not ours.) God declares that through the death and resurrection of Jesus his Grace has covered the Sin of all, Hitler’s and ours too. This is Good News.

The Lord has commissioned us to proclaim this Good News to the whole world. We are His ambassadors; but, if people do not accept us, as they probably won’t, are they no less saved? The rub is that in order to be good ambassadors we have to be their servants for God’s sake, and servanthood goes against our grain.

Bishop Spong has written a book, *Why the Church must Change, or else Die*. I do not for one moment think that the church will ever die, as the Lord has said that the gates of hell will never prevail against it. But I do believe that a paradigm shift is warranted, (perhaps not as great as Spong suggests) which is what he really is saying, if the church is ever to get its message out. But first we have to be sure what our message is, and I fear that among those who call themselves Christian there’s much disagreement about that. We may have to rethink our cherished, entrenched positions, going right back to the Sermon on the Mount. Lent is that time of year when we assess, and re-assess, what we really and truly believe. I don’t claim now to see the picture any more clearly than I did forty years ago, but I shall never, ever, again tell anyone that they’ll go to hell unless they believe in Jesus as saviour.

## We all have a role to play in preventing woman abuse

**SARAH PATTERSON**  
HALTON VIOLENCE PREVENTION COUNCIL

### What woman abuse?

Imagine for a moment that you have a friend who often has unexplained injuries, or the explanations she offers don’t add up. Perhaps her child is frequently upset and withdrawn, and won’t say why. She often cancels plans at the last minute, or seems afraid of making her partner angry. Would you consider speaking to her about your concerns? What would you say or do to help?

It is important that we start to recognize that woman abuse is everyone’s business. Woman abuse is all around us; in our homes, in our neighbours’ homes and in the lives of many people we know. Statistics Canada reports that in 2004, there were nearly 28,000 incidents of spousal violence reported to the police. 84% of victims were female and 16% of the victims were men. [Family Violence in Canada: A Statistical Profile 2006, Statistics Canada].

Woman abuse refers to violence by a woman’s current or former spouse, intimate or dating partner. Using the “term woman abuse” rather than “domestic violence” or “family violence” clearly acknowledges women are often the victims of abuse and men are most often the perpetrators of abuse. While abuse most often occurs within an intimate heterosexual relationship, it also occurs within gay and lesbian relationships.

Woman abuse may involve physical or sexual assault, emotional abuse

and/or control of finances and access to family, friends and community.

Woman abuse can affect the physical, emotional, spiritual, sexual, and financial wellbeing of women. Woman abuse hurts, damages, humiliates, isolates, intimidates, traps and sometimes kills. The impact will be different for every woman. You may not see any signs of abuse (e.g. physical injuries or marks), but that doesn’t mean the warning signs aren’t present.

### Neighbours, Friends and Families: Campaign Key Messages

As a family member, neighbour, friend or co-worker, you have a critical role to play in preventing woman abuse. A province-wide initiative called “Neighbours, Friends and Families”, provides communities with information and strategies to help prevent woman abuse, through:

- Recognizing the warning signs of woman abuse
- Supporting women and other members of the community who are affected by woman abuse
- Locating supportive resources in the community

The key messages of this campaign are as follows:

### Neighbours, Friends and Families have a crucial role to play in preventing woman abuse.

Almost every case reviewed by the Domestic Violence Death Review Committee where a woman was killed by her intimate partner, found that someone in

the woman’s life knew something about her risk for harm. However, they didn’t understand the significance of what they were seeing and they didn’t understand what to do about it.

### You can learn about the warning signs of woman abuse

The first step we can take to prevent woman abuse is to learn about the warning signs.

Through research, 15 warning signs and 23 risk factors have been identified to help those around the victim and abuser understand what they are seeing and be able to intervene. By better understanding what they are seeing, a neighbour, friend or family member can be encouraged to take some action when they notice something that doesn’t feel right.

Warning signs he may be abusive:

- He puts her down
- He does all the talking and dominates the conversation
- He checks up on her all the time, even at work
- He tries to suggest he is the victim and acts depressed
- He tries to keep her away from you
- He acts as if he owns her

Warning signs she may be experiencing abuse:

- She may be apologetic and makes excuses for his behaviour or becomes aggressive and angry
- She is nervous about talking when he’s there

- She seems to be sick more often and misses work
- She tries to cover her bruises
- She makes excuses at the last minute about why she can’t meet you or she tries to avoid you on the street
- She seems sad, lonely, withdrawn and is afraid
- She uses more drugs or alcohol to cope

### You can learn how to help.

The second step we can take to prevent woman abuse is to learn how to help.

It’s important that a woman feel in control of her life and how she would like to reach out for help. As a neighbour, friend or family member, there are ways you can help.

- Talk to her about what you see and assure her that you are concerned. Tell her you believe her and that it is not her fault.
- Encourage her not to confront her partner if she is planning to leave. Her safety must be protected.
- Offer to provide childcare while she seeks help.
- Offer your home as a safe haven to her, her children and pets. If she accepts your offer, do not let her partner in.
- Know that you or she can call for help at the Assaulted Women’s Helpline, your local women’s shelter or the police.
- Give her written materials about ways she can protect herself. The Neighbours, Friends and Families campaign has developed brochures that provide infor-

mation on the warning signs of woman abuse, how to help a woman become safe and how to speak to a man who uses abusive behaviour. These brochures are available on the website [www.neighboursfriendsandfamilies.ca](http://www.neighboursfriendsandfamilies.ca).

■ If you want to get further advice about a situation, contact a local women’s shelter or support program. They can help.

Many of us can feel reluctant to say something to a woman we might have concerns about. Please know that saying you care and are concerned is a good start and that doing nothing could make things worse.

### Talking to men who use abusive behaviour is critical to ending woman abuse.

Not only is it important to support women experiencing abuse, but it is also important to encourage men who use abusive behaviour to reach out for help. You may want to let him know that there are services available in your community to help him.

### Communities working together can make a difference in the lives of families who experience abuse.

By talking publicly about woman abuse and the role we can all play in preventing it, we are sending a message to women who find themselves living in abusive relationships; we will listen to you, we will help you find the support you need and we will no longer be bystanders to your pain.

## BOOK REVIEWS

# The Shack

A Reflection on Life, Death and Forgiveness



**CHARLES STIRLING**  
RETIRED CANON - CHRIST'S CHURCH CATHEDRAL

Since I have been busy reading out my library with the anticipation of a future move, I was surprised to be asked to read *The Shack* written by Wm. Paul Young in collaboration with Wayne Jacobson and Brad Cummings, for the *Niagara Anglican* and went out to buy it (Windblown Media, Los Angeles, California, 2007. \$17.98). It is a best seller these days, and no sooner I had begun to read it, I discovered all sorts of others reading it as well. On the whole I read it with interest. I especially like the chapter headings, written by a selection of well known and historic people. I recommend it to all of you to read. It is well written and I read every word... twice. My usual reading pattern can omit long descriptions and space fillers I don't really need.

When I suggested that it would be good for you to read it, it comes with a bit of caution which is based on how you believe in the Trinity, miracles and other aspects of reformed theology, which could also include what your relationship to God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit is really all about. Most importantly it really cannot be your dream.

The book begins with a very ordinary family of five children, one married, one away at college, and two teenagers, Josh, Kate and young Missy. They regularly attended church and Nan, the wife, has the habit of referring to God as Papa. I have a faint memory of calling God, Ralph, long before the days of Bishop Ralph. Mack, the father had a very difficult childhood and set out on his own at 13. Life with Nan has made him a good and caring father, but who still remembers his father's beatings. Missy (Melissa) is a delightful child with a collection of insects and a mind that is always questioning.

Under father's direction, he takes the three children, on a camping trip and it is a time of fun, swimming and boating. Friends are made and enjoyed. There is however a boating incident that imperils the life of his son. All is well as father comes to the rescue. As life gets back to normal it is discovered that Missy has disappeared. A search ensues, finally involving the police. It is determined that there is an abductor on the loose, who has taken several young girls and was known as the Little Lady Killer. None of the girls had ever been seen again.

The life of the family goes on, but now under a cloud they themselves call The Great Sadness. Part of that

process sees the remaining daughter, Kate, caught up in guilt, because of the boating incident in which she feels responsible for her sister's loss. Some three and a half years later, Mack finds a note in the mail box, an invitation from Papa to come to the Shack. I have some trouble with this part of the story. I just don't see God delivering notes signed Papa, along with an invitation to the scene of the tragedy. However that question might well be answered by a long time friend of the family called Willie. Mack plans to go alone and says nothing. The rest of the family and mother go to see one of her sisters and Mack, now free, sets out.

The story moves to a dream sequence for Mack in which the shack is restored and inhabited by three unusual people who in reality are the Trinity. I am convinced that my experience of how the dream plays out would be much different, if I were in the place of Mack. I am convinced that each of us, according to what theology we possess, along with our own vision of what heaven, is or indeed what form God in Trinity would take, would offer all sorts of problems and challenges. None-the-less Mack's dream is an interesting one, for the Trinity seek to redeem him and bring him to profess forgiveness and love for his father and lastly forgiveness for his daughter's killer. The figure of Jesus puts him through many tests, as do God and the Spirit. Their teaching and conversation win the day and Mack feels The Great Sadness lighten. Jesus takes him to a nearby mountain, where they see a marking that indicates a cave. Entering, they find his daughter's remains which they remove and bury in a plot Mack had cleared, at the direction of the Spirit, the day before.. Jesus then secures Mack's forgiveness of the murderer, and a way to help Kate with her sense of guilt. The dream sequence ends, the shack returns to its abandoned state.

Mack leaves the area to return home, but has a collision with another car and is hospitalized for a time. He discovers, at this point, he is two days ahead on the calendar, which represents, of course, his dream. Upon recovery Mack and Nan involve the local police to try the cave in search of Missy and her remains are discovered, and ultimately all of the other girls as well.

The really challenging part of the book is the dream sequence, which I have deliberately not shared very deeply, so that you can experience it. As I said it is not yours, but the opportunity to view it is well worthwhile. It also might form a really positive time to assess your relationship with God and provide the opportunity to right a few things in your life that need attention... the most important of these is life, death and forgiveness.

# Seeds scattered and sown

Studies in the History of Canadian Anglicanism



**FRANCEAN CAMPBELL-RICH**  
CHRIST'S CHURCH CATHEDRAL

Make room on your shelves for a good new book, all you readers - clergy and lay alike. Just when I thought I would never see it's like, it drops in my mailbox: a collection of the writings of eight scholars and essayists who know how to take our history and make a good story out of it.

It didn't seem so at first. Owing to the daunting title and size, and the intervening weeks of Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany, I set it aside. Even now I admit that with foreword, acknowledgements, introduction, notes, index, more notes, I've not read all 376 pages. And I admit something else: I have a habit of checking such books backwards - that is, the index first, hoping to light upon a familiar name or incident. When I failed to find any mention of Rocksborough Remington Smith, fourth bishop of Algoma, his custom of wearing gaiters, and when presiding at St. Thomas's in Toronto, wearing red gloves. So what. I was not surprised. No room for trivia.

And there is more: I have just discovered that there is a complete and proper review of *Seeds* by Linden Rogers, on the internet, to which I can add nothing whatsoever, except for one thing: my reaction to the period covered in the book that coincides with my own lifetime, experience, and memory. It wouldn't hurt, though, to give a clue to the way the writers (most of them) see the times by the titles of their contributions: "Who Shall Go Over the Sea for Us?" (1578-1867); "According to the Measure of the Rule" (1816-1867); "Some Moral Effect on the Population at Large" (1820-1914):

"By the Mouth of Many Messengers" (1867-1945)... and more - even the "Comfortable Pew" from Pierre Burton's popular book. Surely never did a title convey more, in its day.

As someone has said, this is a history "from the pew", the people, in the context of their times, and not so much "from the top down" of Anglican authority except as it has been shaped by the people gradually, gently. Many of us will draw a resemblance in what we witness, and share, in the evolution of our church today - our awareness of our individuality, our rights and our responsibility for where we go from here - and our endless conversations: our meetings, our councils, our willingness to listen and to understand; our growing sense of "Anglicanism".

The writers of *Seeds* are historians, theologians, and some, priests. Wendy Fletcher is Principal and Dean of the Vancouver School of Theology; she has chosen to examine the period since 1945, the close of the Second World War, calling it "The Garden of Women's Separateness" - a period well within the memory of many of us today, though few of us would think of it as a garden.

It may come as a surprise to learn, or be reminded, of the change in a clergyman's life in those post-war days from simple mission to corporate profession - or bordering on it. Woman's role had progressed in parallel, from what had been a common designation, not so long before, as "handmaidens of the rector" (guild members), to what Fletcher terms full integration in the life of the church. Her essay traces the events and movements, ecclesial and social that filled those decades:

The independence earned by women as they worked during the war years but reconciled now with the urge to reestablish home and hearth: the spread to the suburbs, the boom in childbirths, churches filled to the doors and new churches built; then the rise of feminism, contraception;

immigration and the change in cultural demographics; postsecondary education and economic change.

The discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, Vatican II and the encyclicals of Pope John XXXIII, the end of the polio scare; the fear of atomic attack; the Iron Curtain, the beginning of the space age, the ordination of women, new issues of theological understanding...

Wendy Fletcher wields her wit around most of these and some others - the Mothers' Union, and the ACW, both of them playing starring roles - one of them, the MU, to this day. These two organizations flourished through the changing times - and what change! Fletcher resorts to first person, from historical perspective, when she describes the hats and gloves of that ladylike era while the women laboured for the poor, sent clothing and essentials to parishes in the far north and raised money for the church. Canon Katharine Greenfield, the longtime archivist for Christ's Church Cathedral describes how in time the ACW wound down to monthly luncheons, with a speaker, usually herself, and that the luncheons were the 'last gasp' of the ACW, followed by a gift of \$1,000 to the Cathedral.

As for the MU, Diocesan Treasurer Janet Stirling states proudly that the Mothers' Union, dating from 1876 in England is the largest Christian charitable organization in the world, and that its activities in social service - in education, medicine, development in every area - are a force in no fewer than seventy-six countries. These latter notes gratuitously added to Dean Fletcher's more formal words.

The editor and writers of *Seeds Scattered and Sown*, and ABC Publishing, have given us a grand and erudite, not to say readable, account of our Canadian Anglicanism. It is up to all of us now to continue to cultivate, with pride and excellence, the seeds we have sown.

## The Diocese of Niagara is looking for a few good people like you!

In response to the Bishop's Vision for the diocese, 'the Pursuit of Excellence in Ministry', we are looking for individuals who could be called upon as consultants to:

- Coach parishes through the transition between rectors
- Assist a parish in understanding and implementing the Bishop's vision at the local level,
- Work with parishes to understand their identity and create realistic and accurate profiles
- Help communities to think strategically, seeing the big picture and creating a plan for ministry
- Be part of a task force that provides a parish with research and makes assessments of demographics and changing trends in an area
- Assist in creating an agreed upon ministry covenant of expectations between the Bishop, the parish and the incoming priest
- Be part of the Mission Strategy committee.

If you believe you have the gifts and the skills to be part of this new process, you may apply by contacting Archdeacon Michael Patterson at 905 527-1316 x257

# Recession-proof giving



**JIM NEWMAN**  
CHRIST'S CHURCH CATHEDRAL

There is evidence suggesting that charitable giving by Canadians may be somewhat recession-proof. It's too early to tell for certain this time, and the evidence is anecdotal, but that's the conclusion reached at January's meeting of Anglican Regional Planned Giving Consultants. An increase in giving happened during the recession of the early 1990's. The reasons aren't clear. Perhaps it's because the media help to express the need. Or maybe it's our God-given need to give, coming to the fore.

Many people say that they feel personally rewarded by committing to an intentional program of giving to

the church. They say that their commitment to giving is a kind of spiritual discipline, like prayer and worship, which helps them feel closer to God and more closely linked to their community and ministries. That makes sense to me. It all fits three important things I've learned about giving:

1. We are called to give out of a spirituality of abundance, not scarcity.
2. There is a direct connection between our stewardship of money and our spiritual growth. In order to grow spiritually I had to first understand the true meaning of stewardship. One would think it would be the other way around but it's not. The more I have learned about generous giving, the more I understand about faith, trust, grace, and commitment.
3. Finally, as Jesus implies in the Parable of the Talents, giving out of a spirituality of abundance requires you to move beyond fear. If you're too fearful or suspicious or distrustful, you're going to bury your talents. And this leads to "weeping and gnashing of

teeth" (i.e. sorrow and depression).

Your generous gifts of time, talent, and treasure enable your parish to serve your community with compassion and hope. That's what the world is looking for, and the need is great.

My parish is a wonderfully generous community. I have no access to individual levels of giving, but the overall statistics suggest that some of our parishioners give 5% or more of their income, some likely follow the Biblical tithe of 10%, and a few probably exceed that. And while other parishioners are not able to give at those levels, they give "off the top". That means they give to the parish first, out of a spirituality of abundance which is, of course, a key to spiritual growth.

You were designed by God to give. It's in your DNA. So take a moment right now to determine an appropriate level of giving in proportion to your annual income. And then make that change to your Pre-Authorized or Envelope Giving, starting today.

Annual Income	2%	4%	6%	8%	10%	12%
\$10,000	\$200	\$400	\$600	\$800	\$1,000	\$1,200
\$20,000	\$400	\$800	\$1,200	\$1,600	\$2,000	\$2,400
\$30,000	\$600	\$1,200	\$1,800	\$2,400	\$3,000	\$3,600
\$40,000	\$800	\$1,600	\$2,400	\$3,200	\$4,000	\$4,800
\$50,000	\$1,000	\$2,000	\$3,000	\$4,000	\$5,000	\$6,000
\$75,000	\$1,500	\$3,000	\$4,500	\$6,000	\$7,500	\$9,000
\$100,000	\$2,000	\$4,000	\$6,000	\$8,000	\$10,000	\$12,000

## Pay it forward

**SUE-ANN WARD**  
VICAR OF CHRIST'S CHURCH CATHEDRAL

In a world that seems filled with pain and tragedy, in which some children are too familiar with the sounds of bullets and bombs, it is good for us to recognise and celebrate the fact that most people go through their day to day lives trying to do good, seeking to help others, working to make the world a more just and joyful place. There are people of all vocations and all walks of life who reach out to others with generosity and love.

I met one such person at a Christmas party. Julie Crochetiere is a Canadian singer songwriter who used her incredible voice to bring delight and warmth to a crowd who had braved a winter storm to celebrate Jesus' birth with friends and colleagues. Julie and her band of accomplished professional musicians performed a home concert that entranced the audience. Her voice is powerful, pure, and deeply soulful. It embraces listeners and carries them to the heights and depths of her passion for people and for her art.

Hopefully, you are getting the idea that I think Julie Crochetiere is really talented. I am not the only one. As part of the band "Sugar Jones," Julie had two top ten hits, a platinum selling record, and two national tours. Julie's song "Precious Love" has been nominated for a Canadian Radio Music Week Award for Best Mainstream AC song. And, here is what Vickie van Dyke, Midday Host of WAVE 94.7 FM had to say about her, "Julie Cro-

chetiere has the soulful, honed voice of a bona fide star in the making. Her debut CD - A Better Place - recorded "live off the floor" with her band, showcases not only her sultry delivery, but also her songwriting prowess and her ability to cover past hits with unique aplomb. The lead-off single - Precious Love - begins with a simmer and erupts into full-blown boil in the most seductive way. "Rich Girl" is quite possibly the sweetest love song ever written. And check out her covers of "Stuck On You", "Slip Sliding Away" and "Someone Saved My Life Tonight". I am willing to risk life and limb here to say - they are all better than the originals. Magnificent."

But there is more, so much more, to Julie than her beautiful voice and some fine keyboard and trumpet playing. She has created a way to support and encourage young musicians and potential music lovers. Julie and her artist manager, Chris Bennett, donate time, talent, and experience to a program they call "Play It Forward". (To learn more about Julie Crochetiere or the "Play It Forward" event visit [www.juliec.com](http://www.juliec.com) or [www.myspace.com/juliecmusic](http://www.myspace.com/juliecmusic).)

Julie rehearses children's choirs and high school concert bands and then supports them as they perform with her at a concert that she holds as a fundraiser for community based children's music programs. The children have the opportunity to perform on stage with professional musicians in front of friends and family.

The young people learn about music, performing, and giving. They may discover a talent or develop an interest.

Julie and Chris aim to work with young people who would likely never otherwise have the kind of experience that they can provide. She hopes that the children on stage and in the audience will be inspired to explore their musical potential. Music fosters creativity, provides an emotional outlet, and is a universal mode of communication. Plato wrote, "Music gives a soul to the universe, wings to the mind, flight to the imagination, and life to everything."

Julie Crochetiere will perform in the auditorium of Sir John A. MacDonald High School, in Hamilton, on Thursday, April 2, 2009 at 7:30 P.M. with the concert band from Sir John A. MacDonald and choirs from the Jamesville and McQuesten Community Centres. To be successful, this show depends on sponsorships from businesses, faith communities, individuals, and organizations that purchase tickets for children and families who do not have the means to do so. It is the children whose parents are not able to purchase tickets who most need to be part of this event. The ticket price is \$22.50. All of the proceeds from the show will go directly to HARRRP, an outreach project of Christ's Church Cathedral, to support community programs.

For information call Sue-Ann Ward or Jessica Duarte at 905 527-1316 X340

## Fresh Expressions Vision Day

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### Questions...

Call Susan Kalbfleisch  
905-648-0302

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# Which God is it?



**NISSA BASBAUM**  
RECTOR, TRANSFIGURATION ST CATHARINES

At last! The public eye finally has something which takes the church, religion, in general, and God out of the Middle Ages or, at best, the Victorian era. Because of an ad campaign,

Have those of us who do believe in God been taught to be afraid of having too many good feelings?

ironically begun by atheists in Britain – There's Probably No God. Now Stop Worrying and Enjoy Your Life – people may actually be talking about a divinity that properly belongs in the 21st century.

The media's representation of religion, particularly though not exclusively on television, has long been a bugaboo for me. In the late nineties, I remember CBC radio's local morning show doing a five-part series on why people were no longer participant members of a faith community. The opening episode for this series was an interview with an Anglican priest from Toronto. Just prior to the interview, the station played classic church bells while its radio announcer said something like this: "If you were in church yesterday, you probably heard bells like these." I was so dismayed by

that comment that I actually phoned the talkback number (the first and only time I have ever done this) to say that I was an Anglican priest, that I had been in church the day before not once but three times, including a service at the Anglican cathedral in Hamilton, and that I had never heard traditional bells like the ones that the station had played. I went on to suggest that perhaps one of the stumbling blocks for faith communities in terms of new participants was the media's insistence on presenting an antiquated picture of church life and also of God.

For example, priests are often doddering old men with nary a brain in their head; marriage ceremonies continue to pronounce two people "man" and wife, maintaining an intrinsic understanding of a woman as something not quite reaching the level of personhood; and majestic old-fashioned church bells apparently keep on pealing everyone into the sanctuary. There are few people inside the church today who would describe their faith community in such an antiquated fashion. Yet the media continues to do just this and, therefore, the public face of religion and God remains unchanged; that is, until this latest ad campaign.

Perhaps the best response to these advertisements has come from the United Church on its Wonder Café website. To the atheist rhetoric, this denomination has said to its readers: There's Probably a God Now Stop Worrying and Enjoy Your Life.

When I heard the news about the original ad, I wondered to myself if the atheists' description of believers was a fair assessment. Do we worry ourselves to death? Does our faith

teach us that to believe in God means we can't enjoy life here and now? Have those of us who do believe in God been taught to be afraid of having too many good feelings? To some extent, I thought, these might not be unreasonable assumptions. I hearken back to one still very vivid childhood memory which makes me realize that bad religion – unfortunately something with which most of us over 50 are all too familiar – creates horrible nightmares for children and leaves us with a deep-seated understanding of a God whose sole aim in life is to punish us for sinful behaviour.

One Saturday afternoon a good Catholic friend and I had been playing outside for some time. Before I went home, Cheryl invited me into her house for a snack. In the way that some events in people's lives are forever stamped on their psyche, that particular visit to my friend's home will remain with me forever.

As soon as I entered through the front door of Cheryl's house, I smelled something I had never smelled before; it was salty and sweet at the same time. I followed my friend and that scent down the long dark hall towards the kitchen, all the while filled with a creepy feeling that I would be better off turning around and leaving the house rather than heading for the place from which the salty, sweet odour was emanating. Finally, we arrived at the light of the kitchen (Was I moving from hell into heaven even though it felt like I was travelling directly into hell?) where my friend's mother asked if I would like to try a piece of the meat they were having for dinner that night. In my head I said, "No thank-you," with

my mouth I chimed, "Yes please." My fear of God (who was obviously Jewish and looked distinctly like my mother) was apparently much weaker than the strength of the temptation that had assaulted my taste buds. I put the chewy pink meat into my mouth, now tasting, rather than just smelling, what was salty and sweet at the same time. The sensation I felt on my lips and my tongue I can only describe as exquisite. Whether this exquisiteness was related to the actual flavour or the fact that I knew the meat was so verboten will forever remain a mystery to me. Nonetheless, delectable is how I will always remember my first taste of ham.

Seeing that I had finished what she had given me, Cheryl's mother asked if I would like another slice. Desperately desiring another taste and wanting to say, "Yes, please," I instead mouthed the words, "No, thank-you, I don't think I should ruin my supper." Thank heavens, the fear of hell and damnation had regained their rightful place in my young life! For many days and months after this event, I was terrified that lightning would strike me dead – that is, if my mother didn't get me first – which in hindsight is amusing, since I never actually revealed to anyone in my family, let alone my mother, that I had consumed that piece of meat.

The history of Judeo-Christianity which has formed western societies is not a pretty one. It is a history that preys upon human beings by emphasizing our sinfulness and encouraging an image of a male father figure with a wagging finger that has the power to condemn us all to hell. Buck up, stop enjoying yourself, don't do anything

that might be misconstrued as fun, make sure you follow all the rules... if you do all of these things, as well as beat your chest when you fail, then maybe you'll end up in heaven. No wonder the atheist ad tells us that the only way to stop worrying and enjoy life is to accept that there's probably no God. I tend to agree with them. There probably isn't a God, at least not the one that has for so long been described to us by the leaders of our institutional faith communities, the one that unfortunately continues to be portrayed to the general public through advertising, the media and many television evangelists.

Where, instead, is the God described by the humanity of Jesus: the one who eats and drinks in public with tax collectors and sinners, unworried about hanging around with the right people; the one who begs us to be who we are because he tells us we are the light of the world; the one who shows his emotions, doesn't always follow the rules and gets into trouble for not towing the line? This God probably does exist and, because this God probably exists, we are able to stop worrying and enjoy life.

So, the United Church's response to these public advertisements hits the nail on the head, doesn't it? Interestingly enough, however, so do the original ads, themselves. The God with whom many of us have grown up probably doesn't exist, yet that doesn't mean that any God probably doesn't exist. It just means we have a lot of rethinking to do about our images of the divine.

Praise God for the atheists who have plunked this rethinking into the public eye!

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## Lent: The Great Journey

This *excludes* Sundays, since Sundays are always Feasts of the Resurrection or, as one source calls them: *Mini-Easters*.

The number 40, of course is a significant one: Moses, we are told, spent 40 days on Mount Sinai; Elijah walked for 40 days on his journey to Mount Horeb; God brought 40 days of rain in the days of Noah; the people of Israel wandered for 40 years traveling to the promised land; Jonah gave the city of Nineveh 40 days in which to repent. One of the earliest traditions of the Church said that Jesus lay in the tomb for 40 hours. However, it took several centuries for a *season* of Lent to become normative in the church, and several more before it was widely practised.

In many languages the word for the season has the same root as the word 'forty' but in by the time the word developed in the English language, *Lent* was used, after an old English term for *spring*. The actual word 'lent'

has Germanic origins and simply means *long*, seemingly referring the lengthening days moving toward the equinox.

### A period of preparation for Baptism

Long associated with 'high church' worship, Lenten observances have been far more common in liturgical churches – Roman Catholicism, Anglicanism, and Lutheranism in the west – than in reformed, Protestant denominations, although those characterizations are far less prevalent today than in the past.

The season was originally simply a period of preparation for Easter, and quickly developed into time of preparation of *catechumens* for baptism at Easter. In the early church, particularly before the adoption of Christianity as the religion of the empire, in the 4th century, baptism *only* took place at Easter, and baptism *only* took place at the Great Vigil on Holy Saturday night. This process of prepara-

tion for Easter (undertaken by all of the church, not only the *catechumens*) gradually, over several centuries, and largely influenced by the Desert fathers, lengthened itself into a 40 days season, and became a very distinct and special season of the church's year.

You and I find ourselves now, in this twenty-first century, part of a church which 'keeps' Lent in clear and well developed ways. We will have started together by reciting important and deeply moving words on the first of these 40 days – Ash Wednesday. In the course of that day's liturgy, we will have had our foreheads marked with the ancient sign of our mortality – ashes. (An interesting note – the much appreciated tome of Christian practice – *Ritual Notes* – now up to at least its 13th edition! – exhorts those making the sign of ashes on penitents' foreheads to say the words of imposition *audibly and impressively*). Through this season we will experience different Sunday morning liturgies, special mid-week

services and educational opportunities – bible studies, Lenten lectures, quiet days, or prayer meetings.

### Traditions abound in Lent

Traditions such as refraining from singing or saying *Alleluia*, removing the *Gloria in excelsis* from the liturgy, modifying the worship space (if possible), restricting the use of the organ or other musical instruments, the use of a Lenten array as altar and communion vesture, and different types of sermons or teaching opportunities within the liturgy are observed in many parishes. A note of caution: some want to see some of these things (the business with *alleluias*, for example) as unbreakable rules which must be adhered to at all cost. Remember – these are traditions: nothing more, nothing less. Traditions always need to be examined and assessed. If, for example, we really do hold Sundays as days *outside* of Lent, then the odd *alleluia* would probably be quite appropriate!

There are also personal practices during this holy season – as a mark of fasting and penitence, many people 'give up' something during Lent. If, for example, you cease from chocolate for Lent, might I suggest that you have a couple of morsels each Sunday – after all, it is a feast day!

### A time for renewal

Better yet, take on something during Lent. Say the daily office each morning; challenge yourself to a regimen of daily scripture study; attend a weekly bible study; volunteer for something which is new and different for you – who knows, after 40 days, it might become a continuing habit!

It is wonderful season, and we will all renew our own baptism at Easter-tide, so it is worthy of some time spent in preparation. In whatever ways you individually and in your parish community keep this season, may you have a meaningful, reflective, and a truly Holy Lent.



# A captivating experience of Medieval Worship



**ALAN L. HAYES**  
THE ITINERANT CHURCHGOER

One of the most totally transporting services of worship I've attended in recent years violated a lot of the liturgical rules.

I'm not commending this service to you as a model to follow, since it requires a sixth-century Byzantine church and a professional musical ensemble. I'm offering it as an example of how we're enriched by a variety of worship styles, and how rewarding it can be to break away from the ironclad norms of the Liturgical Movement. That's the school of thought that produced our standard contemporary liturgies, including the Book of Alternative Services.

To be sure, the Liturgical Movement had a great purpose: to reform and renew congregational worship in the mainline churches. It originated in the Roman Catholic church in the nineteenth century, where the mass was typically celebrated in Latin at a high altar hidden by a priest's back and secluded behind a chancel screen while most of the congregation, disconnected from the liturgical action, prayed the rosary or read devotional manuals, and most people couldn't take communion because they hadn't confessed to a priest and fasted.

## Reforming worship

This was a bad situation, and, spearheaded by European Benedictine monks, the Liturgical Movement took

it on. It was held in check by rival religious orders until 1948, when Pope Pius XII gave it a clear though tepid endorsement. Then it picked up momentum, and triumphed at the Second Vatican Council in 1963. A period of energetic liturgical reform and revision followed.

Now, as a result, Roman Catholics, Anglicans, and Lutherans typically take communion weekly using modern vernacular rites with updated music in a spirit of congregational fellowship, and laypeople assume many of the liturgical roles.

How was this movement so successful in changing how millions of people worshipped? The best way to change a church that values tradition is to pretend that your innovations are really a return to early models. The Liturgical Movement's narrative went like this: in the early centuries the church worshipped properly; in the middle ages everything went askew; now we have the opportunity to return to early tradition.

Unfortunately, its view of early Christian worship depended predominantly on a manual called the "Apostolic Tradition," which it thought was written in C.E. 215. At least two of our eucharistic prayers in our BAS are adapted from this manual. Most scholars now regard the "Apostolic Tradition" as a fourth-century compilation, and they doubt that many early Christians knew anything about it. (This text is also the source for the preposterous but widely believed idea that early Christians had to wait three years to get baptized.)

## Slashing and burning

The Liturgical Movement made

many improvements, but it slashed and burned its way through received tradition like Sherman through Georgia. In particular, it purged most things medieval. It pictured the Middle Ages as an age of clericalism, superstition, individualism, biblical and theological illiteracy, repression, accommodation to the state, and fear. Actually, the Liturgical Movement thought that the whole Anglican Book of Common Prayer was medieval.

So with this as background, let me tell you about the wonderful immersion in medieval worship that my wife and I experienced in Ravenna, Italy, last July. Ravenna was taken by the eastern Christian ("Byzantine") emperor in 540, and in 548 the basilica of San Vitale was completed. This church is perhaps the outstanding representative of the first golden age of Byzantine art and architecture.

It's designed as an octagon under a dome, and the congregation stands or sits in the centre. The eucharist is celebrated in a long choir or presbytery that extends the east wall. This architectural style is called "central plan," and it's quite characteristic of Eastern Orthodox churches. (In Canada, the best Anglican representative is the "Group of Seven" church, St. Anne's, Toronto.)

Under the dome, you're exhilarated by the grandeur of the space, the fascinating complexity of the overall design, and the elegance of the detail. When you start walking, you find surprises around every corner.

## Stunning mosaics

The mosaics of the presbytery are stunning in conception and exe-

cution. In the centre of the ceiling stands the holy Lamb of God, encircled by a crown which is held on the uplifted hands of four angels standing north, east, south, and west. From the corners of the ceiling a rich colourful ornamentation of acanthus and other leaves, fruits, and flowers converge on this centre, with beasts, birds, and stars in profusion. Elsewhere you can see mosaic medallions of busts of Christ, the apostles, and others, each framed by intertwined green dolphins. Behind the altar, Christ, young and beardless, and robed in purple, is seated on a blue orb, flanked by angels. In his left hand he holds the scroll from the book of Revelation with the seven seals.

The mass that we attended there was moving, too. I didn't understand much of it (since it was in Italian), but that just made it easier for me to listen with my heart instead of my head. I didn't take communion (because I'm not Roman Catholic), but I was happy to sit and reflect and pray. I didn't sense much fellowship (because I didn't know anyone), but that let me focus on the awe-inspiring mysteries. That's three rules broken right there!

The service music was written by twelfth-century Spanish women from a convent called las Huelgas, near Burgos, experimenting with what were then inventive new musical ideas along the lines of polyphony. By the way, the medieval abbesses of this convent heard confessions, preached sermons, administered sacraments, granted clerical licenses, and inducted clergy into benefices. The singers were a group of five

women called the Ensemble Kantika, and the mass was part of the Ravenna Festival.

## Deeply affected

At the communion, while the ensemble was singing "O Lamb of God," I was quite deeply affected by the variety of sensory convergences perfectly linking the spiritual and the material. Above, from the ceiling of the presbytery, the mosaic Lamb of God was set in heaven but prepared to pounce on earth. Around, the delectable polyphony of this centuries-old setting of agnus dei echoed from the ancient walls of this glorious space. Ahead, on the altar surrounded by mosaic images of Christ and images of sacrifice and images of priests, the lamb of God was sacramentally present. Incense lingered in the air.

When we venture forth from our familiar acculturated spiritual routines, what treasures await us in our Christian heritage! In particular, how much richer is medieval Christianity than the stereotype constructed and disparaged by the Liturgical Movement! I found not clericalism, but the musical ministry of the amazingly creative, gifted, and accomplished women of las Huelgas. Not individualism, but the carefully coordinated teamwork required to create mosaics and blend voices. Not biblical and theological illiteracy, but an extraordinary sensory experience of biblical truth. Every niche in this nave, every mosaic tile in the presbytery, every ornament in the singing, testified to medieval inspiration and innovation. Each reached across the centuries and enthralled my spirit.

# The power of active compassion



**LINDA MOORE**  
CANADIAN CENTRE FOR LEADERSHIP & HUMAN VALUES

A few years ago when I was in India I discovered a most fascinating phenomenon that for quite some time was beyond my comprehension and

Each of us craves to have another human being listen to our story.

yet has left an indelible impression on my spirit. That new awareness gave me a profound gift. It opened a door into the meaning and power of active compassion.

Every living being in the world, at one time or another, experiences pain

and suffering. Sometimes the pain is so great we rant and rave and physically want to attack any one and anything simply to release the pressure of the intolerable. The rage is white or red, searing us in its intensity until rational thought disappears. We wish to punch in walls; rip things apart or destroy whatever is immediately in front of us.

For some of us the pain is similar to shell shock. It immobilizes us. It freezes us where we are. We feel encased in bondage to its terror, unable to move forward. For some the coping process immediately takes over and we bury the pain deep within, creating the seeds of "dis-ease" that festers and poisons us over time.

Other pain expresses in a slow decline into a deep depression, a dark night of the soul from which there appears no relief. When in our deepest pain, most of us lie in the darkness and grieve alone, too hurt to even ask for help. The desolation reaches to our very core and leaves

us bereft of meaning and life purpose. For some, at times it is more than they can bear. This devastating pain and suffering is part of the human condition.

Wise beings of the ancient past, knowing this human condition as a truth, asked two profound questions. What if someone willingly offered to take on the pain and suffering of others? What if another human being's whole reason for being was to do just that?

From those most important questions grew a disciplined practice that addresses the power of simply "being" in a conscious mindset of active compassion.

In grottoes, caves, temples, monasteries and in every other imaginable place all around the world there are individuals whose sole efforts go to reducing the pain and suffering of others. Each day they sit alone in silent contemplation inviting the energy of the pain and suffering of others into themselves. Through meditation they cleanse the energy,

wash away the pain and suffering and release the renewed energy back into the world. This is their way of contributing to the world. Within cultures that acknowledge this way of giving, people know there are those human beings who care enough to take on the pain of others and in doing so the burden is lightened. This is seen as most important spiritual work. It speaks to renewal, regeneration and transformation. It speaks to possibility and hope. It is the power of active compassion for "other".

And how does this discipline relate to you and me? We too can embrace the practice of active compassion in our daily lives.

Each of us craves to have another human being care enough to genuinely listen to our story and to have compassion for our pain and suffering. Most of us are not asking others to solve our life problems. We simply want them to listen and care.

It is a simple process. It is what we all want and need. It is what we

all can do.

Slow down and acknowledge those around you. When someone comes to you in pain stop what you are doing. Listen deeply for what is in their heart. Get curious and show that your interest is genuine. We all simply need to know that someone else understands and can share the pain and suffering experience with us when it is too much to bear alone.

This may result in a conversation. It may be as simple as sitting quietly together in silence. It may mean holding a hand or putting an arm around a shoulder in comfort. It may be a heartfelt assurance that you will hold another in your thoughts and prayers. Know their pain is not yours to "fix" or to carry forward. Know that each person is whole, creative and resourceful. Whatever their situation your job is simply to listen, demonstrate caring and then let it go. It is the essence of being human. It is the essence of love. It is the power of active compassion.

# There are no atheists in foxholes

**GRAHAME STAP**  
RETIRED PRIEST

There are no atheists in foxholes is a saying that comes from the so-called Great War fought in the early part of the twentieth century. It is a saying that reflects the mood of people suffering from a situation beyond their control and turning to God for help.

It does not need to be a war; it can be anything that causes us to feel helpless. The economic situation the world is facing is making many thousands of people feel helpless. The loss of a job, or a house, or facing bankruptcy can cause a sense of such desperation it is hard to imagine. Ask anyone involved in food banks or any other charitable organizations to try and explain the looks of utter devastation they face

every day and they cannot, no one can.

Many people facing this type of situation will arrive at the doors of our churches seeking an answer to help them handle the crisis they face. What will they find?

Will they find a church divided against itself? Will they find a church unable to put the needs of others first? Or will they find a church capable of accepting others where they are and not where we expect them to be. I hope it is the latter but I wonder.

We sometimes seem unable to know whether to stand or kneel. Which Lord's Prayer we say or whether all can receive Holy Eucharist or just those who have been baptized. And whatever you do don't dare move the pews to say nothing about same sex couples being blessed.

Our diversity is, for the most part, our strength as long as we do not argue amongst ourselves. As long as we stand united in the love of God and understand we are called to help all people know God loves them.

If we can put our differences behind us then those who need to feel the love of God in a time of crises will stand a chance of continuing to arrive at the doors of our churches and we will be doing what we are called to do.

Along with our understanding the need to accept people where they are and not where we expect them to be is the need to understand that most of those who seek will not add to the bottom line. If anything they will make us stretch our already difficult finance even further and we must find a way to

make it acceptable to not put anything in the plate as it passes. And those of us that have been abundantly blessed must give even more so we can truly do God's work.

We are looking at a time when most churches will see growth in their congregations and we must move from our comfortable pew and make room for all children of God no matter who or what they are. If we do this then once again our churches will be full and we will truly be able to say we are doing God's work.

Maybe this Lent instead of giving up candy or whatever it is we usually give up we can give up our prejudices and with God as our guide reach out without putting our own biases first.

But as always it is only my opinion.

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## SpiritQuest: Understanding the Seasons of our Lives

I arrived early with one other delegate, and I was surprised to see that the leaders were just as ecstatic as I was. There was no great compulsion to remain silent and grave. The Holy Spirit was giggling with us. As for being a social person, I found that SQ was full of companionship, of a different sort. We ate, cooked and lived together for three days and yet we weren't even slightly annoyed with each other at the end of it. Just the opposite SQ turned out to be a completely different experience than I expected. Calmness, rejuvenation and happiness leaked out of all the corners.

In the midst of University demands of major papers to write and mountains of homework that is only getting

taller rather than shorter, I was happy to not think about school for a change. A retreat in all senses, after a very stressful and frazzled past number of weeks, I found that I could return to my life with a new sense of tranquility. I can tackle that homework mountain and those papers. The location of Crieff Hills, the people, and everything about that weekend was uniquely special. I will never forget my first year at SpiritQuest, and there is little that will stop me from going there again.

**Ben Lloyd (St. Paul's Shelburne)**

I had never attended a diocesan youth event before but my rector the Rev. Susan Wilson encouraged me to attend.

We were given "welcome kits" when we arrived at SpiritQuest that contained little things such as passages from the Bible and incense and chocolate and much more. When I was there I hadn't really paid attention to it, but once I got home I read one of the passages from Matthew that was included in the bag. I think that two parts from the passage really describes what SpiritQuest was all about. The first said, "What [Spirit Quest] is trying to do here is get you to relax, to not be so preoccupied with getting, so you can respond to God's giving." The other is, "Give your entire attention to what God is doing right now, and don't get worked up about what may or may not happen tomorrow. God

will help you deal with whatever hard things come up when the time comes." We learned that whatever the decision we make, be it right or wrong, God is always with us and helping us to understand what is happening in our lives. On Friday night, we did meditation on a stone. During this time, we realized that God is with us, even in the gloomy and darkest times of our lives and helps us back into the light. Have faith in God and he will always be with you. My time at SpiritQuest was truly amazing and I will definitely be looked forward to it next year. A big thank you to Joyce Wilton, Jamie Barnes and Mike Deed for planning and staffing such a good experience as SpiritQuest!

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1 »

## Bishop Bird returns from Canterbury

In that interview I reviewed with him the multitude of task forces, hearings, Bishop's statements, regional and parish meetings and the long list of Diocesan and General Synods that have discussed and wrestled with this issue since 1976. I gave him a full account of our dealings with dissenting parishes and the court proceedings we have been involved in. I shared with Archbishop Rowan our experience of the incredible contribution that gay and lesbian people have made and continue to make in every aspect of our Church's life and witness, and expressed the overwhelming desire on the part of two Synod's to move forward with the blessing of committed same-sex relationships for couples who have been civilly married. I also indicated to him my intentions with regard to my giving permission for these blessings to begin to take place.

One of the most powerful moments in the course of my fifty minute meeting with the Archbishop was the opportunity to describe the process of how our

new Vision has emerged and how we believe that God is calling us as a Diocesan family to enhance and develop our work together under the five key areas of focus that are outlined in the Vision. In fact I indicated that it was my sense that the challenge the Vision offers us around the work of prophetic justice-making has made us even more determined to become a more open and inclusive Church.

Archbishop Williams listened carefully to my presentation and there was no doubt that I had his full attention. He thanked me for such a full and detailed report and he indicated how important this opportunity was for him to hear from me personally. We went on to have a very helpful and frank conversation about the implications involved and I expressed my own personal commitment and the strong desire of the Diocese of Niagara to remain in communication and dialogue with our sister and brother Anglicans around the world. I made it clear that we very much value and hold

dear our membership in the Anglican Communion and we are grateful for his leadership and ministry.

It was a wonderful meeting and throughout our time together I felt listened to, respected and cared for and I am incredibly grateful for the privilege of having had this amazing experience. I believe that in the midst of challenging moments in the life of the Church, times of disagreement and division, there are two options open to us. We can decide to walk away from those who see things differently or we can work harder at keeping the lines of communication and dialogue open. I believe that we, as a Diocese, have remained committed to the second option in response to Jesus prayer for his disciples that: "they may be one, as we are one." (John 17:11) Included in this first week were two trips to the Anglican Communion Office for meetings with officials there and again I was very warmly welcomed.

The second week of my trip involved

my participation in the Canterbury New Bishop's Program at Canterbury Cathedral. This conference gave me the opportunity to interact and make new contacts with Bishops from Nigeria, the Congo, Kenya, Cameroon, India, Japan, Australia, Madagascar and the UK. The new bishops of Edmonton and Quebec were also present. The conference gave me another chance to share with those in attendance the details of our life and ministry in Niagara and there was a real spirit of friendship and partnership that developed between every member of the group. I want to thank our colleagues at the National Church for the scholarship they provided that helped to defray the costs involved.

We are working hard to put together the Budget and Vision material for our upcoming Regional meetings that will help us prepare for our Special Synod on March 28th. Please remember those involved in this work in your prayers over the next few weeks. Yours faithfully in Christ.

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# Predestination, freedom, and grace

COLIN C. M. CAMPBELL  
TEACHER, DIOCESE OF NIAGARA

Scotland's national poet, Robert Burns, said it best:  
O. Thou, Wha in the Heavens does dwell.  
For Whom it pleases best Thyself  
Tae send ane tae heaven and ten tae Hell  
A' for Thy glory  
And no' for any guid or ill they've done afore Ye.

The Calvinist church of Burns' day found its doctrine of double predestination in Chapter 9 of Romans, where Paul commented that God has mercy on whom he chooses, but also makes men stubborn as he chooses. The Protestant Reformers were driven to this position by the logical consequences that followed from their doctrine of justification by faith alone. This stated that the salvation, offered by Christ, was conditional on faith, accompanied by repentance. Since one who enjoys his sin is unable to make a move towards repentance, the first impulse to faith must be due to the action of the Holy Spirit in the soul of the sinner. Whereas all Christians agree on the necessity of grace for salvation, opinions differ about the role played by human freedom. If salvation is completely the work of God, with no part played by individual freedom, then for God arbitrarily to prefer some over others would seem to be unjust. On the other hand, if human freedom can thwart the Providence of God, then God would seem not to be God. There is, however, a way in which human freedom can be reconciled to the sovereignty of God by using an analogy drawn from quantum mechanics.

The laws of society are based on the assumption that most people know the difference between right and wrong and are capable of controlling their behaviour. Yet it is a matter of scientific fact and common experience that we cannot choose our reaction to external events. If I walk outside on a cold day without

a coat, nothing will stop me from shivering. This response is involuntary. If I am hungry and see a slice of pizza, nothing will stop me from wanting to eat it. This is also an involuntary response. If I have not been to the bank and consider stealing the pizza, nothing will stop me from realizing that what I am tempted to do is wrong. The fear of being caught and punished, likewise, is involuntary. However, I now have a conflict between two involuntary responses. Since my fear of arrest is greater than my desire to eat, I would normally resist the impulse to steal the pizza. If I am able to choose what I do, my action is voluntary. If the outcome is determined simply by the stronger impulse of punishment, then free will is an illusion and my behaviour is predetermined.

Even if the capacity for moral choice is admitted, it is clear that the will is not free in many situations. If an alcoholic is offered a drink, the desire to accept may be so compelling that it is almost impossible for him to resist. Here the outcome is determined by the stronger impulse. Luther referred to this as the "bondage of the will" and Paul termed it as being "a slave to sin." In theory, the alcoholic could resist; he knows that he should; he can fight the urge; nothing makes him take the drink, so he still has the faculty of voluntary action; however, involuntary forces hinder the free exercise of this faculty. Grace operates to restore to the will its freedom, so that, in this example, alcohol loses its compelling power. Since our personalities contain a complex of negative habits, the freedom conferred by grace is a lifelong process. We do not become free by practicing good habits, as Pelagius believed. Trying to become better by our own effort only increases our frustration. The ability to perform good deeds is offered freely by God to anyone who has enough faith to accept the offer.

Theologians differed over the role played by grace and the role played by the

human will in sanctification. IN Romans Chapter 9, Paul commented, "You will say, 'Then why does God blame a man? For who can resist His will?'" If some are not freed, it seems that God has chosen not to give them the necessary grace. In the same passage, Paul said, "Jacob I loved and Esau I rejected, even before they were born." Surprisingly, Paul continued and denied that God was to be charged with injustice. In the same vein, both Peter and Judas in their different ways, betrayed Jesus. Peter received the grace to repent; Judas did not. Why did God not cause Judas to repent, and leave Peter to the punishment of his sins?

One opinion asserted that all deserve rejection because of the sin of Adam. God does that to show his justice. However, he gives saving grace to some to show his mercy. Both actions show his goodness. This was the view of Augustine and Aquinas, and is called single predestination. Calvin's double predestination stated that the division of humanity into two groups, the elect and the damned, was preordained from all eternity. The graces necessary to save the elect were preordained, as well as the punishments due to the damned. Another opinion asserted that God offers sufficient grace to each person for him or her to be saved. Whether an individual is, in fact, saved depends on whether he or she accepts the offer. This view was held by Molina in the Catholic Church and by Arminius and Wesley in some Protestant churches and is commonly referred to as Arminianism. It was objected to because, in the final analysis, this seemed to make our choice the cause of our salvation, rather than the sovereign grace of God. The Arminians countered with the objection that both single and double predestination made nonsense of the Gospel's declaration that it is God's will "that all [persons] should find salvation and come to know the truth." (1 Tim. 2:4)

An analogy drawn from quantum mechanics suggests a solution to the problem. Before flipping a coin, it is impossible to know whether it will land "head up" or "head down," although our intuition tells us that its final state could be calculated, if we had enough information. This is not true at the atomic level. Here the cause of an event is not knowable. Using the coin analogy, the final state, even in principle, cannot be calculated. However, it can be described by a mathematical formalism, where the coin's state before flipping is composed of a description of the two possible final states. The act of flipping causes the initial representation to "collapse" into one of the two final states. This analogy is helpful in resolving the difficulties associated with predestination.

The difference between single and double predestination, on the one hand, and Arminianism, on the other, is that the former maintains that God foreordained the salvation of the individual and then foreknew their response. Whereas, Arminians believed that God foreknew the individual's free response and foreordained his salvation (or not) based on it. Both theories imply the fictitiousness of human freedom. The following theory does not.

There is a way to permit freedom of choice to Judas and Peter, which does not contradict the sovereignty and omniscience of God. A free, moral choice results in one of two final states: either the state of grace or the state of sin. Using the analogy from quantum mechanics, before the choosing, the individual's state may be represented as a choice between two final states. The two states are determined in the mind of God before the world's creation and are presented to the individual in time, so that a free choice can be made. Judas' choice collapsed the initial state into the state of sin and God's punishment, prepared in eternity. Peter's choice collapsed the initial state into one

of grace, with all the merits of that choice, also prepared in eternity. This theory protects human freedom and the sovereignty of God. It asserts contingency. It also shows how God wills contingency. If he wills it, it is not a limitation on his sovereignty. He does it in order to create people capable of a free relationship with him and with each other.

"But what about Romans 9?" I hear you cry. This chapter states that "God hardened Pharaoh's heart." We know that God is merciful when people repent and allows them to harden their hearts when they do not. Since that is a consequence determined by God, it can be expressed as God action to harden unrepentant hearts. The chapter also states that God loved Jacob and rejected Esau, even before they were born. Read in context, it is clear that Paul is not referring to the eternal destiny of Jacob and Esau, as individuals. "Jacob" is a metonymy for his descendants, the Israelites, and "Esau" similarly represents the Edomites. God chooses one of these people to represent him. If he were to determine the salvation of an individual in this way, he would certainly be unjust; however, that is not the meaning of Paul's words. None of us has been chosen to bear witness to Christ because of our merits. Nor were the descendants of Jacob. Their election was due to the choice of God alone. Some of my Jewish friends tell me that sometimes they wish that God had chosen someone else! Despite all the suffering that he endured for his Master's sake, Paul ends Chapter 11 on a note of praise. "O depth of wealth, wisdom, and knowledge in God! Who has ever made a gift to Him to receive a gift in return? Source, Guide, and Goal of all that is – to Him be glory forever! Amen." Along with Paul, let us also praise God for his gift of response-ability and all the graces that accompany it, so that we may glorify him by the right use of our freedom.

## Being connected



IAN DINGWALL  
RETIRED ARCHDEACON, ST. CHRISTOPHER'S BURLINGTON

Being "connected" is a characteristic to be recognized and implemented today more, probably, than ever before. Clearly and sadly, "dis-connected" would more accurately describe our world.

I remember reading E. M. Forster's novel, *Howard's End*. One scene from the novel tells of a breakdown in community/family life and the novelist has one of the characters cry out..." If only we could connect!" Each of us will remember occasions when we've experienced or observed similar situations and have responded in the same manner: Only Connect.

A while back I wrote a poem that

attempted to express my own feelings about human connecting. I share it with you now:

### Only Connect

The novelist invites us consider a world in confusion – a reliable fact that isn't delusion.

With determined will and insightful mind, he paints a picture that isn't too kind. In fact he sees something most of us miss: the world wobbling along in fragmented bliss.

And so he invites us with God-given might, to help build a world of Love and of Light.

To connect with self, to be at one  
To work until the goal is won  
To be yourself, surely a must, and to live in honesty and trust.  
Never to forget the folk with whom we share this planet's spacious room.  
To offer opportunity and space, to live and grow in truth and grace.  
We live and love on this planet divine

but betray our stewardship with something less fine.

Hope exists for all who dare

To join the Journey, to share the Quest

To work, to toil, and to detect

The Goal of all: Simply, Connect.

Surely "to connect" is an invitation for us to critique our own lives as well as our fellow journeyers in Inter-Connectedness, a task that will demand creative thought and sheer hard work: the wider our perspective, the better.

Connect with whom? Well the response surely is to be as wide and deep as we can imagine.

Begin with yourself. How well are you connected with your inner and outer self? Do you know who you really are and what your purpose in life is? Most of us have a long way to go on this journey and adventure but with the support of others in community, and the blessing of the Holy One, we can make a start towards the tape.

Turn attention to other people and invite them to participate with you in this adventure.

Risky, but it is potentially worth it for our own good and that of our society. Choose two people to engage with in a profoundly different way than simply being casual. One could be a person you like and with whom you have much in common. Invite her to participate in this with you – adding maybe another who could act as facilitator. Another could be someone you do not know well and, in fact, you may not like him particularly or simply do not know him that well.

In both cases there will be much that you can do together as you search for some answers to the world's dilemmas as well as how you can deepen your personal connection with each other. It will enrich your lives as well as the community of people with whom you associate.

Connect with our Environment.

No need to say more really but, if you wish to find direction, all you need is a newspaper or magazine to find out what we are suffering from its evil potential and, perhaps, what we can do about it: if only we'd connect with the problem and others who are concerned. These thoughts and this commitment ought to be at the top of humanity's priority list.

There are many more examples for this Connecting exercise. One final suggestion - yes and more than suggestion! A major priority will be to connect all of us who live together on earth; particularly those forced and kept on the fringes of life: enormous multitudes who suffer hunger, homelessness in a brutality of life that the rest of us cannot imagine. These folk cry out for caring and support and we ignore their cries to our own peril.

Only Connect. This is a human endeavour that we are called to by God, the Holy One.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1 »

## Probing a broken world

In this season of Lent, we probe the broken world. We probe it with our own foolishness in mind, hoping that some transformation might overtake us, that the next time we look in the mirror we might not see the worst of us — might not see how we are



He called into question a religious system that transposed pain into guilt

possessed by demons as surely and powerfully as our biblical ancestors. "What got into me?" we ask, and the answer is that we took into our hearts some down-market version of humanity, some shrunken excuse founded in our fear or greed or entitlements, some god who promised us the moon and left us with a hangover.

This is the world that God creates, and in which God endows humanity with freedom and power. Either one or the other might have been safe, but the combination has turned out to be lethal. With power and freedom we have both chosen and enforced profound evil. In every century, in every decade, every year, month, in every week, every day, every hour, every minute, some of us are using that freedom and power to visit pain on the earth and on earth's creatures.

This is the world that God creates, and it is as broken for the innocent as it is for the guilty. Pain comes not only from human choosing, but also from human frailty and the unrelenting stern truth that we are mortal.

Perhaps the first thing to do in Lent is to look at each other with eyes that acknowledge that the difference between a winner and a loser, as the world understands such things, is infinitely less than what the loser and winner have in common — that both must, sooner or later, dip their ladle into the well of pain, and drink. This republic of pain invites us to lives of solidarity. We might postpone the pain, might deflect it for now. We might find a way to evade it briefly, to assign it to another. But sooner or later, the pain of the world will come to our life; sooner or later our defenses will yield to the overwhelming erosion by which grief and loss and pain make channels in our lives.

There was a young rabbi who seemed to understand this, once. He proclaimed a kingdom whose primary distinctive characteristic was compassion — the capacity to address another's pain as, in some sense, one's own. The young rabbi seemed to understand that there was no way to drink the water of this world without drinking also its pain. His words and actions called into question a religious system that transposed pain into guilt, that held people morally responsible for the pain in

their lives. A leper, an alien woman, blind Bartimaeus, a paralytic, a woman caught in adultery. The centurion's servant, Jairus, a paralytic healed on the Sabbath. Again and again, Jesus fails to ask the question that the script supplies — "Who sinned?" Again and again, he proves fluent in the language of pain, and compassionate in the costly language of healing.

We will follow this young rabbi down the pathways of Lent — from desert temptation to lethal Calvary. Watch as he stops to touch the pain of the world, to embrace those who suffer it, to proclaim a kingdom that heals it, to offer the power of love to those who inhabit the land of the shadow of death.

Watch as this man bends under the weight of all that pain, of all our pain, of all that is lost and broken, confused and grievous. Watch as his soft body yields to the hard world, is broken by the lethal toxic brew of fear and hate that so often and so tragically governs history.

It is not time, yet, to peer around the corner. There is good news already in the Lenten pilgrimage, and reading ahead to Easter might trivialize the cost and the beauty of this haggard Lenten Jesus who shares the wilderness of pain in which we abide. For now, it is enough that he is with us, that he teaches and heals us, that he allows us to lament what is broken and dream of what is whole.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Mixing Church and Politics

Regarding John Ripley's Statement in Niagara Anglican, February 2009: "The spread between the rich and poor in this country is sinful."

It is shocking that an Anglican priest would mix religion and politics like this. One might expect it from a United Church minister, but an Anglican priest? The widening gap between rich and poor in Canada is largely because Canadians vote for it. Since Trudeau, the concept of social justice has become unfashionable. The succeeding government offered "tax reform". Many poor people voted for it, thinking that it meant increased fairness. Instead, it meant increased tax rates for the poor and decreased tax rates for the rich. In Ontario, much of our tax has been downloaded from income tax to property tax, which means that the poor and elderly cannot afford to keep their houses.

At every opportunity, both the poor and the rich vote for tax cuts, which ultimately harm the poor and benefit the rich. In my opinion, it is mainly rich people who make donations to political parties because those parties represent their monetary interests. Those parties then have an advantage in producing propaganda that seduces even the poor. We Canadians have consistently voted for a widening gap

between rich and poor. Many of us do it unintentionally; others do so, apparently, because we believe in social Darwinism. By calling the spread between the rich and poor "a sin", John Ripley is criticizing Canadian political parties, Canadian voters in general, and probably some Anglican churchgoers.

STEPHEN BARRETT  
Elora, Ontario

### Divisions must be addressed

It is a concern to some readers of the Niagara Anglican that so little has been written about the divisions in the Anglican Church of Canada and the departure from our Diocese of several parishes and their clergy. Surely it would be appropriate for readers to learn about the issues that have caused these divisions so that prayers might be offered for healing and unity.

Also, as one who has written about early church history in Canada, I feel that if nothing is published by the Anglican Church on this turbulent time in Church history, future historians will be deprived of much important primary source material.

BEATRICE DEADMAN,  
St. John's, Ancaster

## Play up, and play the Game!



SUSAN WESTALL  
ALL SAINTS HAMILTON

(At last! Thank you, Roger Tulk, for accepting my challenge! I have been waiting for somebody to question the thoughts that I have expressed in my



It is high time that we started at the grass-roots level, instead of dreaming up schemes that are passed down to those who have to do the real work

writings. I am sure that my readers must have stopped occasionally and said to themselves "Yes, but..." and left it at that.)

I do not believe that Christianity has blown it, but humanity has a bad habit of getting off on the wrong track. When we see the title "Saint" in front of a name I believe that we have a tendency to immediately think that such a person must have been a very good human

being. Athanasius was the Bishop of Alexandria, the city founded on the delta of the Nile that competed in importance with Constantinople, the eastern capital of the Roman Empire, today's Istanbul. The church of the fourth century was faced with a problem: there was a great confusion over the nature of "Christ". Was he Man, or was he God? If he was God, when did he become God? Did it happen when he was born, or did it happen when he arose from the water after his baptism by John the Baptist? If he was God, how could he be Man? As a child I asked myself that question. It seemed impossible to me that the Power of God could be contained in a small, frail human body.

Such was the question faced by the church fathers when they met at Nicaea in 325 C.E. under Constantine's chairmanship. Some believers did not believe that Jesus was crucified. How could God be crucified? How could the source of Life die? But someone was crucified. Then it wasn't God who suffered on the cross, but a human substitute. So believed a considerable number of Christians. Archaeological discoveries during the 20th Century have shown that this belief was rather common in Upper Egypt, for which Athanasius was responsible. Nicaea was supposed to decide the question once and for all and those who could

not accept the doctrine of the Nicene Creed were labelled "Gnostics" — they claimed "knowledge" that others didn't have. For seventeen hundred years this title has had a bad reputation because "Gnostic" writings were destroyed by the Catholic Church (in the sense that the Christian Church was one Catholic (universal) church that had not then been split by dissension). Since that time the Church has depended upon the biased reports of conventional theologians who have given Gnosticism a bad name. From 1945 onward some Gnostic writings have come to light in Upper Egypt and elsewhere and it is now possible to read the original arguments. We might rethink some of our doctrine in the light of St. Paul's "God in whom we live and move and have our being".

Christianity has not "blown it"; God cannot permit that. The time has come, I believe, when we must return to the "primitive" Church — the Church that grew in spite of all the power of Rome that was mustered against it from time to time by Roman emperors.

What does this mean? It means that the tail must stop wagging the dog. We live in an enlightened age, an age when general education is at a higher level than ever in the past. At least some people have been taught to think for themselves. Unfortunately, we have

lapsed into that comfortable habit of looking for leadership from the upper echelon, instead of accepting responsibility for team work. If our faith is to prosper, the work must be done by the rank and file.

How has this situation arisen? As a high school teacher I was involved with the annual student production. Being ambitious students, each student council was determined that its own annual production would be bigger and better than the previous year's and so they tried to excel. Unfortunately, human nature interferes; there is a limit to the resources at our disposal. In an age of environmental degradation this should be obvious.

Unfortunately, this philosophy of "bigger and better" has survived into our Anglican life. The *Anglican Journal* for this past January has a headline on p.1 "Budget slashed by \$1.3m". Turn to p.3 and read "Philanthropy department develops ambitious stewardship plan and the Council of General Synod dutifully endorses it". This is the thinking of the student council of my former high school; we haven't grown up. Annual vestry meetings will have been completed by the time that this issue is in your hands. Did you rubber-stamp the budget presented by your parish council, or did you seriously consider whether you meant to support

and afford it? The point is: be realistic. If, through team work, a parish decides something is really worth while, it can and will attain its goals; if the teamwork is wishey-washey, it will not. It is high time that we started at the grass-roots level, instead of dreaming up schemes that are passed down to those who have to do the real work — the work of fundraising in this case.

My point is that we must get away from the idea that parishes are run from the top down. We, the people who are "the parish", must be prepared to share our Master's load instead of leaving it to the clergy and a few dedicated lay people to do all the work. Our contributions are not just to pay the Rector's stipend and heat the church building. If the teachings of Jesus mean anything to us, then we must try to live by the standards that He has set us. This means dedication; this means acceptance of a membership that entails service. "And here we offer and present unto thee, O Lord, ourselves, our souls and bodies, to be a reasonable, holy and living sacrifice unto thee." (Holy Communion, BCP, p.287) This they all with a joyful mind Bear through life like a torch in flame, And falling fling to the host behind — Play up! play up! and play the game!" (Vitai Lampada, Sir Henry Newbolt, 1862-1938)



## EVENTS

### Lenten Program 1

St. Stephen's, Hornby  
The Anglican parishes in our area are planning a Lenten study program entitled "Why Church?" It will be held over five Sundays from March 1-29, each church hosting one part after the church service. More details to come.  
March 1, 12:00 PM-2:00 PM

### Parish Breakfast

St. Columba, St. Catharines  
Come one and all to dine with parish family members from the 'other' service. Menu TBA - but you can bet you'll be served some fluffy scrambled eggs!  
Cost: Free will offering  
March 1, 9:00 AM-10:00 AM

### Lenten Luncheons

St. John the Evangelist, Niagara Falls  
Soup, sandwich, dessert, tea/coffee. Runs each Monday during Lent.  
Cost: \$8.00 per person  
March 2, 11:30 AM-1:00 PM

### The Return of the Prodigal Son

St. Cuthbert's, Oakville  
Six week Lenten series exploring the great themes of the gospel... grace, forgiveness, reconciliation and coming home. Based upon Henri Nouwen's important book of the same name. All welcome!  
Cost: Contribution for resources  
Beginning March 3, 7:30 PM

### Family Movie Night

St. Cuthbert's, Oakville  
Watch a favourite film on our 8' by 8' screen. Bring friends, parents, pyjamas (if you want), sleeping bags, pillows and friends.  
Cost: \$1.00 per person  
March 6, 7:00 PM

### Music at St. Luke's

St. Luke, Burlington  
"Every Thing Greene" an Irish tribute to our first Rector. An Irish night to remember! Irish dancers and musicians will set your feet tapping. Irish stew, soda bread and apple cake complemented by drinks from the cash bar will surely set Irish Eyes smiling. As usual, calling 905-639-7643 will reserve tickets for you. Series tickets are \$90. Seating is limited so please order your tickets early to avoid disappointment.  
Cost: \$30.00 per person  
March 14

### Another Dinner to Remember

St. Columba, St. Catharines  
Our fourth very enjoyable dinner experience in Iona Hall. All dinner preparations will be done by our very own talented men. Remember to watch for tickets and menu details. Reservations will be limited.  
Cost: To be announced  
March 14, 6:00 PM

### Youth Leadership Training Program (YLP)

Diocesan Program Department, Hamilton  
This is a three year leadership training opportunity to equip young people to take an active leadership role within their parishes and communities as group leaders, committee members, etc. YLP is held at Canterbury Hills from March 15-18.  
Cost: \$225.00 per person  
March 15

### Social Night

St. Columba, St. Catharines  
Another night of cards, fun and laughter,

snacks and prizes. Couples and singles welcome.

Cost: \$2.00 per person  
March 21, 7:00 pm

### Lenten Quiet Day

St. Cuthbert's, Oakville  
Join us for a day away as we reflect upon the great Lenten themes of forgiveness, reconciliation and grace. We'll spend the day at the Anglican Convent (SSJD) in Toronto. Facilitators are the Reverend Canon Audrey Conard and the Reverend Canon Joseph Asselin.  
Cost: \$35 per person  
March 21, 8:00 AM-4:00 PM

### Mark Tiller

St. James, St. Catharines  
A dramatic presentation of St. Paul's First Letter to the Christians in Corinth.  
Cost: \$5.00 per person  
March 25, 7:00 PM

### Lenten Program 2 (Retreat)

St. Stephen's, Hornby  
There will be a special weekend retreat for lay people at the Mount Carmel Spiritual Centre in Niagara Falls on March 27-29. Cost includes room and board.  
Cost: \$200 per person  
March 27

### 2nd Session of the 134th Synod

Diocese of Niagara Synod Office, Hamilton  
The 2nd Session of the 134th Synod is Saturday, March 28th at Christ's Church Cathedral. Please mark this date on your calendar.  
March 28

### Flea Market and Rummage Sale

St. Columba, St. Catharines  
Gently used items and clothing offered for sale. Now this is where you will find some real attic treasures at bargain prices!  
March 28, 8:30 - 11:30 am

### Life in the Eucharist

St. Cuthbert's, Oakville  
Come and explore the meaning of Holy Communion in a fun, experiential learning environment. Suitable for children (accompanied by a parent or guardian) in grades one or older. For those who receive already and for those preparing to receive for the first time.  
March 28, 9:00 AM (3 weeks)

### Generation to Generation Lunch

St. Cuthbert's, Oakville  
Intergenerational potluck lunch. Community, conversation and food following the 10:00 AM liturgy.  
Cost: Potluck contribution  
March 29, 11:15 AM

### Choral Evensong and Afternoon Tea

St. John's, Ancaster  
Afternoon Tea with sumptuous scones, Devonshire cream, fancy sandwiches and goodies. At 4:00 PM traditional Anglican service of Choral Evensong followed by an organ recital featuring Phillip Sarabura, newly appointed conductor of the Brantford Symphony Orchestra.  
Cost: \$15.00 per person  
March 29, 2:45 PM

### Youth Rally

St. James and St. Brendan, Port Colborne  
Interdenominational Youth Service presented by The HUB Port Colborne, 72 Charlotte Street  
March 29, 9:30 AM-1:00 PM

## PEOPLE IN THE NEWS

■ The Reverend Joyce Phin passed away on February 1. Joyce was ordained deacon in 1989 and priest in 1990. Funeral Service was held at St. Paul's, (Westdale), Hamilton, on February 6th at 1 p.m. Please remember Dr. John Phin and family in your thoughts and prayers.  
■ Sympathy is extended to Archdeacon John Rathbone, Diocesan Archivist, and Murray Rathbone, O.N., Interim Organist for Our Saviour the Redeemer, on the sudden death of their brother Bruce Rathbone, on January 30. Funeral service was held at St. Timothy's, Toronto, on February 5.

■ The Reverend Mary Lucas has been appointed interim pastor at St. Stephen's, Hornby, beginning February 1.  
■ Deepest sympathy to Joan Urquhart, faithful member of St. Paul's, Dunnville, and her children: Alex, O.N., Kevin, Leslie, Stephen and Christine, on the death of Kenneth Urquhart on January 22. Please remember the Urquhart family in your prayers.  
■ Our thoughts and prayers are with Katherine Pike and family on the death of her mother, Marie Pakke, on Sunday, January 25th.  
■ Congratulations to Archdeacon Bruce McPetrie and Mrs. Suzanne

McPetrie on the birth of their first grandchild. Isobel was born on Monday, January 19 in Guelph to proud parents Matthew and Susan.

■ The Reverend Philip Santram issued a bishop's permission as honorary assistant at Church of the Epiphany, Oakville, effective, January 1 under the direction of the rector and during the diocesan bishop's pleasure.

■ Marty Pierson given permission to administer the chalice at Holy Trinity, Niagara Falls, effective February 1; John Frederick Wilson's lay reader license renewed at St. Luke's, Smithville, effective October 1.

## Engaging families in Good Friday



CHRISTYN PERKONS  
DIOCESAN RESOURCE CENTRE

Lent is upon us; that season in the Christian church when we focus on re-examining our relationship with God and the way in which we live out that relationship. We do this exploring with our children and teenagers in Sunday morning programming (it's not too late to get Lent resources from me) but we often miss out on the opportunity to engage the entire family in Lenten activities once the Pancake Supper is over. The church is one of the few institutions in our culture that offers activities geared to the whole family. Churches intentionally bring multi-generations together to learn from one another, to enjoy one another and to love one another.

Good Friday, as we come to the end of Holy Week and share in Jesus' great act of love, is a perfect opportunity to bring children, teens and parents together. Children don't have school and many parents will have the day off work. (Children whose parents have to work can be included in two ways; by asking other parents to offer home care for the remainder of the day or by providing daycare at the church before and after your program.)

What can you offer that will appeal to families? Children and parents like to vary the work/school day routine when they have a 'day off'. If your parish typically leans towards more formality, consider inviting everyone to come to the Good Friday service in their Saturday clothing. Perhaps you could offer a coffee/hot chocolate and muffins before the service. Another option would be to offer an all-ages activity for families before the Good Friday service begins, e.g. making prayer pretzels that could bake during the service and be shared afterwards.

Should you want to include the whole family in the Good Friday liturgy, you might add instructive pieces as in an instructed Eucharist so that children

and teens understand what's happening. Where interrupting the flow of the service is a concern, consider providing a guide (someone with a good understanding of the 'why' and 'what next' of the Good Friday service) and a special seating area for the children and teens. Alternately, offer children and teens a separate bulletin that has explanations or drawings of various aspects of the service as appropriate for the ages in your parish. *The Book of Alternative Services* is quite clear in its invitation to provide instruction/explanation about the Holy Week services and to invite lay people to help with the planning and to participate in the execution of these services. Invite families to serve as greeters, as offertory/oblation (gifts, wine & bread) bearers and communion ministers (if the Eucharist is part of your Good Friday worship). Include children and teen voices in the reading of the Passion. Intercessions offered by families or children/teens can be very powerful especially if they flow out of your Lent education program(s). The opening sentences of *The Ministry of the Word* could be led by an older child or teen. But remember, if your goal is to engage more families in your Good Friday observance, it won't work to just pick participants from those who show up. An invitation to specific people to do specific tasks based on the skills and gifts you've noticed they have is what will draw families out of their beds or away from their usual "holiday" activities.

If your Good Friday service is adult-oriented, consider offering a children and teen program during the service. For example, at St. Mark's Orangeville, nursery care is provided for babies and toddlers while the children participate in a Good Friday program that focuses on the Stations of the Cross. After hearing the Good Friday story, children move from station to station exploring various aspects of Jesus' walk to Calvary. These stations include creating a crown of thorns, making crosses from old barn boards, experiencing the weight of a heavy cross, smelling burial spices, making, burying a figure to represent Jesus in the Easter Garden that they created at their Ash Wednesday release program, and making Resurrection Rolls.

Experiential learning is a powerful way to embed the crucifixion story in the minds of our children. The Congregational Support and Development office also has an experiential Stations of the Cross program designed for teens that parishes are welcome to borrow.

Some parish communities follow the Good Friday service with a hike in a nearby recreation area as a meditative experience that draws participants closer to Jesus while others walk through the streets of their neighbourhood as a witness to the community of Jesus' walk to Calvary. Ending such an experience with a potluck or bag lunch allows parishioners to enjoy time with one another as well as the opportunity to share their reactions to the morning's activities. The Mountain Parishes Walkathon (a 35 year plus tradition) involves walking for pledges to support outreach with stops at Cresmount Funeral Home as well as the parishes for refueling and warming!

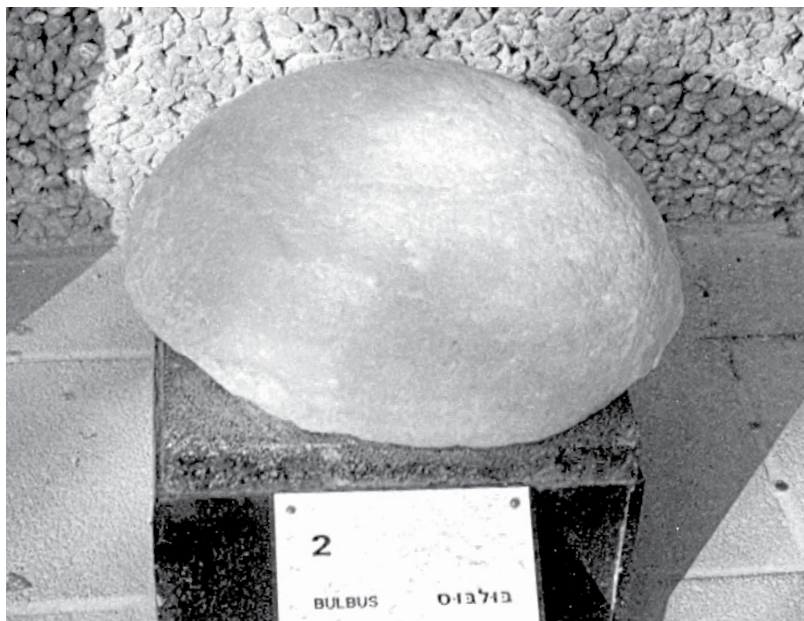
Parishes that offer full day programs for children and teens often show a movie that relates to Jesus' great love for us followed by a discussion of how the children/teens live out their calls from God in the world in which they find themselves. Craft activities, baking pretzels, faith-based computer games, rehearsals for an Easter presentation, service projects to help neighbours or partner organizations, PWRDF activities, food bank collections in the neighbourhood, Easter Vigil frontal/stole making, and writing intercessions for Easter Day are just some of the many activities you could include in a longer Good Friday program for children and teens.

Whether you involve families in the Good Friday service, have a morning of family activities or an entire day, parish families will be enriched by your intentional inclusion of them; their gifts and their needs.

If you're reading this during Lent and are feeling the need for Lent resources, don't hesitate to call the Congregational Support and Development office. And resources and instructions for the activities mentioned in this article are also available from Christyn at the CSD office, 905-527-1316 x460.

## SHOOT READY AIM »

# A bread for all occasions



**HOLLIS HISCOCK**  
INTERIM RECTOR, ST. GEORGE'S GUELPH

## SHOOT - The photograph

What does the stone in my photograph look like?

At least 20 people, wandering around an outdoor museum in Israel, converged around this display. In erratic unison we declared, 'it looks like a loaf of bread'.

Our instructor explained, 'some contend this is the type of stone with which Jesus was tempted in His first temptation in the desert'. Matthew (4:2-4) observed that after 40 days of fasting Jesus was 'hungry' (an astute conclusion). Then the Devil or tempter viewed the bulbous stone nearby, realized it looked like the loaf of bread made in every family oven, seized the opportunity and challenged Jesus: 'if you are God's son, order these stones to turn into bread'. It must have been tempting for the hungry Jesus, and He knew he could change stones into bread, just as certain as later He would change water into wine (John 2:1-11) and a blind man into a seeing person (Mark 8:22-26).

But Jesus responded to His tempter with, 'a human cannot live on bread alone'. Now the folks who support the Canada Food Guide may shout 'alleluia', because Jesus seemed to be promoting a more balanced diet.

Me, I love bread of every shape and kind. I know I could not sustain myself for many weeks by eating 'bread alone', but one can fantasize.

## READY - Words behind the photo

Bread references pepper the cooking sheets of many books in the Bible.

Job (23:12) could not comprehend the reasons for the terrific tragic downturn in his lifestyle. After all, he reasoned, 'I have not departed from the commands of God's lips; I have treasured the words of God's mouth more

than my daily bread'. Now that is a mouthful to swallow.

The writer of Proverbs (28:21), those pithy, perceptive life truisms, observed 'to show partiality is not good - yet a person will do wrong for a piece of bread'.

Jesus, in a variety of situations, employed bread to teach, to denote and to emphasize what God is like and what our relationship with God should be.

In a long animated discourse with a seemingly unruly crowd in a synagogue in Capernaum (John 6:25-59), Jesus called Himself 'the bread of life' and assured those listening that if they believed in Him, they would never be hungry or thirsty. This debate, splattered with grumbling and arguments, seemed to last the whole day. Finally, Jesus capped the debate by asserting that, 'I am the bread that came down from heaven; it is not like the bread that your ancestors ate, but then later died. The one who eats this bread (my body) will live forever'.

Maybe Jesus was setting the stage for the last supper (Passover meal) with His disciples scheduled for the not too distant future. When they eventually gathered in that upper room, Jesus changed the course of His traditional religion with a piece of bread. The Passover meal, with its retelling of historical happenings and their religious significance, had been consumed. Then Jesus picked up a piece of leftover bread, offered a thanksgiving prayer to God, broke it into pieces, gave it to the others and Himself and said, 'this is my Body, do this in memory of me'.

Days later, following His resurrection after His death on the cross, Jesus appeared to His followers in many venues. One encounter (John 21:1-13) occurred when the disciples, out of boredom or necessity, decided

to go fishing. From their boat, they spied a lone figure, near a charcoal fire, at the water's edge. A conversation ensued and they recognized Jesus, who invited them to come ashore and eat with Him. As they warmed themselves around the burning coals, Jesus re-enacted the scene from the Upper Room when He 'took the bread and gave it to them'.

Since then, billions have accepted the invitation to share 'the bread of life' in worship services, called Holy Communion, Mass, Eucharist, Lord's Supper and countless other labels. Twentieth century hymn writer Michael Hewlett captured the essence of why people do this when he penned these words:

Still through the ages your new friends draw near,  
And know when they do, that you will be here;  
We know you are present, though just out of view,  
To meet those who gather in remembrance of you.

Eating the 'living bread of Jesus Christ' brings a new meaning to the adage 'let them eat cake' (translated highly enriched bread).

## AIM - Questions and actions for you

■ What role does bread play in your life?

■ How do you share bread and what does the moment signify for you?

■ Where is the 'living bread' of Jesus effective in your spiritual life?

■ Hollis would appreciate your feedback on this series.

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The Reverend Hollis Hiscock, a retired priest, is presently serving as Interim Pastor at St. George's Parish in Guelph. He is available to do multimedia presentations on spirituality, the Bible and the Christian Faith.

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# Not just tourists: Just Christians



**ELEANOR JOHNSTON**  
ST. THOMAS, ST. CATHARINES

Picture a middle-aged couple headed for their first Caribbean vacation. Red-haired and fair-skinned, they plan one day on a beach east of Havana and the rest of the week in the old and once glamorous city. They are not just tourists. Each carries a battered second suitcase full of prescription drugs, the currency of a practical and inspired Christian justice.

The Canadians arrive at Havana Airport at midnight and have an extended chat with several armed and slightly irritable customs officials about the contents of two of their suitcases. They have in hand a letter from the Canadian government explaining that they are representatives of "Not Just Tourists," a non-profit organization recognized by the Cuban government. They are authorized to deliver the suitcases containing drugs to a psychiatrist, Dr. Ernesto Marzosa, in the foyer of their downtown hotel, formerly a family home and business, at 4:00 pm the next day. He will use the psychiatric drugs to treat his patients in one of the hospitals in Havana.

Several times a week, 40 volunteers, including five from St. Thomas' Church, meet in the basement of Dr. Ken and Mrs. Denise Taylor's St. Catharines home to sort drugs and package them in old suitcases. This operation is one of the largest drug dispensaries in the Niagara Region.

Our tourists, meanwhile, have hidden the suitcases in their closet and worry about hotel staff stealing the very valuable and, in the wrong hands, dangerous drugs currently in their care. They resist the urge to hang around the hallway the next morning to make sure the cleaning staff doesn't make off with the suitcases. Old Havana beckons.

Our tourists are having their first experience of being perceived as rich by

the people of a poor country. They see buildings in a state of apparent collapse, propped up by construction scaffolding. They tour the marina where Ernest Hemingway met the fishermen who inspired "The Old Man and the Sea" and his Finca Vigia (Lookout Farm) with the tower from which he watched for German U-boats during World War II. They explore the many bars Hemingway patronized, hear the different styles of upbeat bands, enjoy the sweet desserts, and try to grasp what life is like for the people of this poor country.

Denise and Ken Taylor were likewise taking in the Caribbean sun on a bicycle trip in Cuba, 14 years ago. Their compassion and curiosity took them behind the façade of the typical packaged tours of gated beaches and hotels. The real-life suffering they discovered called them, as Christians, to respond in a practical, generous way. It occurred to them that they had the contacts within the medical community of Niagara that could provide what the poor of Cuba needed and they had the support of volunteers, among their friends, who could help process the packing of the suitcases, the donation of used suitcases, the paperwork and the recruiting of tourists willing to become "not just tourists."

When our tourists return to their room to shower and meet Dr. Marzosa at 4:30, they have been sobered by the poverty all around them. The woman had seen a dead rat by the curb on a street just behind the government buildings. Since they were headed to lunch and she didn't want to spoil her husband's appetite, she didn't mention it to him, but she wasn't able to eat the Chinese food they ordered a few minutes later. When her husband and the waiter expressed concern, she made up an excuse and the waiter took away her plate. As he walked through the door to the kitchen she could see him begin to devour her food. The tourists spent the afternoon in the outdoor café of the Hotel Iglesia, mulling over the sadness under the sunny smiles of the Cubans. At 4:30 Dr. Marzosa didn't appear. At 5:00 he phoned their room to apologize and reschedule for the next day.



■ Volunteers sort and package drugs into old suitcases.

Where do these medications come from? Doctors' offices, pharmacies, drug agencies from the Niagara Region donate excess quantities of everything from ASA to antibiotics that the Taylors, with their volunteers, store and prepare for delivery.

Our tourists are given a walking tour of Havana's political highlights such as the boat the Russian-based Fidel Castro and Che Guevara used to come to Cuba in their invasion to liberate the island from the American-backed Batista regime. Pictures of Che are everywhere. The people are grateful to Castro since he brought education and health-care and kept order in the country; they are careful, since this is still a totalitarian state with many citizens in prison and police at every street corner, to avoid criticism of their President. And although their health-care is better than before the Revolution, they know that they are dependent on the charity of North Americans.

The Taylors have traveled extensively through the villages and cities of the Caribbean, meeting medical personnel, assessing needs and devis-

ing ways of meeting them. Is this not what Jesus requires of his followers?

The next day our two tourists spent time with a young guide visiting the churches of Havana. They started at the downtown Roman Catholic cathedral and moved to the out-of-the-way museum housing the masks and ritual objects of Santería which is the syncretic religion combining the native Caribbean with the traditions of the African slaves imported from Nigeria, both under the disguise of Roman Catholicism. The last stop was the guide's own Baptist church. The pastor was an older gentleman who had attended university with Fidel Castro and been allowed to keep his church open because Castro understood that it was working for the good of the people. The guide said that he had been a teacher paid \$10 a month; our tourists tipped him that much. He asked if they had ever been to Paris and said how trapped he felt on the small island, unable to get a travel visa.

In January, the Taylors were guest speakers at a St. Thomas' Speakers' Series. As they showed their pictures and

talked about all the people involved in their mission, their audience was amazed at all they have accomplished. Their current focus is helping the Haitian refugees in the Dominican Republic. Expanding beyond delivering drugs to handling other medical supplies, "Not Just Tourists" is now also involved in human rights issues and in building housing, schools and hospitals. There are "Not Just Tourists" groups working out of Ottawa, Toronto, Edmonton, Kingston, Calgary and Vancouver, and these groups are active in 70 countries, especially Cuba, Haiti, Kenya, Uganda and Guatemala.

When our tourists met Dr. Marzosa and handed over the suitcases, he said that most of the medications his patients used in his hospital came from St. Catharines via Not Just Tourists. Our tourists came home, somewhat sunburned, wondering about what they had seen and what they could do beyond the little they had done. They heard Bishop Michael's Charge to end poverty and listened to the Taylors' presentation at the Speakers' Series. They got talking to others at St. Thomas' and... Details to follow.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1 »

## Giving: A moment of true faith

Vestry meetings have faced hard choices, spend capital, cut expenses (read programs and staff) or project large deficits and hope for the best. These decisions are being made in a climate of uncertainty as our members are facing their own personal worries about job security, cutbacks, or a decrease in personal income from investments and pensions. Other Churches are dealing with anxiety over stewardship in general and a general atmosphere of uncertainty in the membership. How then can we respond as faithful followers of Christ?

It seems to me that this is a real opportunity to remember "who we are and whose we are". I have already indicated the answer to the first part. We

are followers of Jesus, the Christ. Do we take this identity seriously? Can we imagine for a moment being disciples in the way that first Century apostles and Christians were called to follow? Or for that matter the way that disciples in other parts of the world today are called to follow, even unto death for their beliefs? Put in this context perhaps our problems don't seem quite so great and our vocation quite so difficult. If we look at the prayer that Jesus taught us we find an interesting petition. "Give us this day our daily bread" The interesting part for me is the word "this". This is not a petition for long term security, for a happily ever after, but a recognition that we can ask for what we need for this day only.

Those of you who are in twelve step programs can teach the rest of us Christians the reality of our lives that in fact, all of us live "one day at a time". Can we really stop worrying so much about the future and have a little faith in the one who taught us that prayer? Lent is a time for renewing our relationship with God through Jesus and we have been given a discipline whether we like it or not. This is the spiritual discipline of trust and faith, giving our lives and the future of our churches into God's care; praying each day with faith "Give us this day our daily bread". There is more that we can do, however, and that is to remember "whose we are."

We believe we are children of a lov-

ing, God. The recent ad campaign that runs: "There probably isn't a God, so relax and enjoy your life", speaks volumes about the kind of God that many people think we worship. That is, a judgemental, punishing god that causes anxiety and a lack of enjoyment of life. We know the opposite to be true: "There definitely is a God so relax, give thanks, and enjoy your life". This is a God who blesses us with our lives, creation and all that we enjoy. We affirm that God in our Creeds: maker/creator of heaven and earth. If we take this seriously, we recognize that all we have, including our financial assets, belongs to God.

In this difficult time for our Churches we will probably be asked

to dig a little deeper each week, or contribute to a financial campaign to counter the affects of the economic downturn. It may be a time to remember the basics of Stewardship. It is not about the need of the Church for money it is the need of the Christian to give. This is the moment that our true faith, and not just our words, will be tested. Can we joyfully give back to God a responsible proportion of our financial assets? Or will we be overcome with anxiety and hold back? Will we rationalize away our trust in a loving, abundantly giving God? Or will we pray, "Give us this day our daily bread" and remember "who we are and whose we are"?

# Soap is soap



**JOHN RIPLEY**  
INTERIM RECTOR, HOLY TRINITY WELLAND

Somewhere in my record collection I have an old 78 rpm record that made it to #1 on the hit parade in 1952. It would, in my mind, be the least likely to reson-



An active connection with others can often be most effective, when we encounter them on their own turf.

ate with people in 1952 even if only for a brief period. Apparently, before the 50's were over the recording sold over 1 million copies. Remember, in 1952 the recording would have been in competition with songs like, "Glow Worm", "Don't Let the Stars Get in Your Eyes", "Walkin' My Baby Back Home", etc. It might have been a one hit phenomena, but, it struck a chord for so many. The song - "It's In the Book" - written and performed by Johnny Standley.

Now if you have never heard this recording you should know that it is a parody of a southern Evangelical preacher preaching a sermon on "Little Bo Peep". Also a part of the recording, on Side Two, is a rousing rendition of an evangelical 'hymn' - #222 "Grandma's Lye Soap". The hymn books are located on the "back of your seats". The whole thing is quite irreverent and considerably funny. As I thought about the 'hymn' "Grandma's Lye Soap", that, by the way is "Good for everything in the home..." I got think-

ing about soap. (I was in the shower at the time)

Soap has essentially one purpose - to get us clean. Now you go into any grocery store and you will find a multitude of different brands. Each of these brands makes a claim: It "floats", "is sudsier", "smells like an Irish spring", "is soft on your skin" and so it goes. Each has an angle. Each, obviously, finds a market based on the expertise of the ad maker commissioned to sell it. Variety, as they say, "is the spice of life", and variety there is as we attempt to get ourselves clean. Which, and here's the segue, led me to think about religion (thought I would never get there eh?)

On the Religion page of the Hamilton Spectator I read about "The Cowboy Church". This church, which is expanding, has as its primary hook all things cowboy. Ten Gallon hats and cowboy boots are de rigueur. Churches are decorated in a cowboy motif. Activities that give expression to this religious experience can range from a country dance to bucking broncos. Somewhere in all of this is God.

There are other examples of thematic religions that draw people together based on their specific interests. This got me thinking about "Fresh Expressions". This new phenomena is gaining a bit of a foothold in the diocese. One cannot deny that the challenge or reaching out to others will only be successful when we do reach out. An active connection with others can often be most effective, when we encounter them on their own turf. It seems that fewer are coming to meet us on our turf. It is a ministry of outreach. As we move forward with creative ideas related to Fresh Expressions it is oh so important that we root the experience in Jesus, because, he is the 'Ultimate Expression' of who we are as a Christian people. Remember: Soap is Soap!



■ John Bell, from the Iona Community and the Wild Goose Resource Group, engaged over 390 people in learning new music at St. Christopher's, Burlington. John led a weekend conference that explored topics from the renewal of congregational singing to creating Holy Week & Easter liturgies that enable participants to walk with Christ and to discover echoes and emphases of that walk in their own lives, and ancient Celtic spirituality as a gift that can shape our communities of faith and inspire our commitment to mission.

## Newspaper looking to the future

**CHRISTOPHER GRABIEC**  
EDITOR

Everyone these days is cutting back on their budgets in order to get through the difficult days in our economy. The *Niagara Anglican* is in the same position as everyone else. The time has come to begin to reduce some of our spending. The Publisher's Advisory Board (PAB) has been discussing this for months. The nature of the discussion is of course around how we can cut costs and at the same time continue to bring excellent coverage and most importantly relevant communication to the Anglican community in Niagara.

For the time being we have removed the colour on the centre pages of the

paper. This doesn't save a lot of money, but it saves some money. We would use colour if there was an urgent need, but for now, we'll do without. It could well be that we will remove four pages in the near future. This saddens us, but the fact is that if the money is not there, we simply cannot afford to continue offering the same number of pages as we have in the past.

We should point out that the *Anglican Journal* appeal figures have just been released. Last year (2008) Niagara Diocese netted \$17,741.00. In 2007 we netted \$19,415.00. This leaves us with a short fall of \$1674.00.

We are also moving ahead with an "opt out of the mailing" campaign. This means that we will invite people who

have internet connections to receive the paper electronically if they wish. We would then push both the journal and the *Niagara Anglican* to them when they are available. Not only will this save the diocese a substantial amount of money, but those who go for the electronic version will receive it some two weeks earlier.

At this point we are still hoping for donations to subsidize the newspaper. If you feel that you can help, please write a cheque to the Diocese of Niagara (Newspaper) and send it to: Niagara Anglican, Cathedral Place, 252 James North, Hamilton ON L8R 2L3. In the meantime we will continue to do everything we can to bring you a quality newspaper within our budget constraints.

**Caralei Peters** MSc, ND  
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