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NIAGARA ANGLICAN

A section of the Anglican Journal



OCTOBER 2024

“The earth
has yielded its
harvest. God,
our God,
blesses us.”

Psalm 67:6



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Sarah Bird serves as the coordinator of the Niagara School for Missional Leadership. She can be reached at registrar@nsml.ca. Visit nsml.ca for more information or to register in an upcoming course.

Tickets Available for Anniversary Dinner

November will mark the 150th Synod of the Diocese of Niagara and Bishop Susan Bell is hosting a special anniversary dinner to celebrate this momentous milestone!

“Our sesquicentennial Synod is an opportunity to reflect on the collective faithfulness of generations of Anglicans in Niagara; it’s a long obedience in the same Gospel direction,” said Bishop Bell. “We give thanks to God for her provision over the years at the same time as we look forward to the next 150 years with hope and optimism.” The event will take place on



Saturday, November 2 at the Burlington Convention Centre, following the conclusion of the diocesan Synod set for that day. Archbishop Linda Nicholls, 14th primate of the Anglican Church of Canada, will be the dinner’s special guest. As part of the dinner’s program,

Archbishop Nicholls will have a reflective and discerning conversation with Bishop Bell as together they explore the Synod’s theme: ‘Faith in the Future’, inspired by Jeremiah 29:11. “For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope.” Tickets are \$150 and all proceeds will be directed to a fund to dedicated to support the formation of the Church’s future leadership by supporting curacy placements for newly ordained clergy. All are welcome

for this special occasion, which is being generously sponsored by Ecclesiastical Insurance, the diocesan insurer for more than 50 years. The Diocese of Niagara was formed in 1875 through an Act of the Provincial Legislature which brought together the six western counties of the Diocese of Toronto (Haldimand, Lincoln, Welland, Wentworth, Halton and Wellington) into a new diocese. Hamilton was designated as the see City for Niagara and Thomas Brock Fuller, godson of Sir Isaac Brock, was consecrated as its first bishop. In later years,

Dufferin County was added to the diocesan geographical boundaries. To reserve your ticket, celebrate this milestone, and support the ministry of our future faith leaders, please follow the QR code or visit niagaraanglican.ca.



In Praise of those Who Reap Our Bountiful Harvests and Those Who Support Them

MAGGIE MARTIN

Do you enjoy tomatoes, cucumbers, and wine? The answer from me is, yes, I do, and probably is the same for you too. For this I give thanks to the migrant workers from Mexico and the Caribbean who come faithfully to our country every year to do jobs that Canadians do not want to do. Working long hours in the hot greenhouses and out in the fields under the fierce sun for hours, and for much longer than is the normal working week here in Canada, and for far less money. For the past two decades the Government of Canada has been looking at the rules or lack of them pertaining to working

conditions for these migrant workers who spend months away from their families. The government is revisiting the situation again; let us hope that legislation for fair wages and conditions of employment will at last be put into place. It would also be wonderful if those who have been coming to Canada for years and would like to gain permanent residency, but cannot, because they only speak Spanish fluently because of lack of opportunity to learn English. They have been spending more time in Canada than they do in their own country. Let us show them our hospitality and give migrant farmworkers a chance to become Canadian. The Rev. Antonio Illas and Celia Tecamachaltzi de Illas lead

the diocesan ministry supporting the migrant farmworkers in the Niagara region, working with St. John’s, Jordan and St. Alban’s Beamsville and many other church and community partners. At St. Alban’s, Beamsville workers can get support every Thursday late afternoon and early evening at The Hub in the basement of St. Alban’s. Here they can get food which they are used to, groceries to cook at the places where they live. Their typical foods that they are used to are more expensive in our stores. There is a clothing cupboard and free medical assistance from Spanish-speaking medics arranged through Quest Community Health Centre. If necessary, they can then be



referred to specialists. Recently, my husband and I were treated to a tour of the hub by The Rev. Dr. Dan Tatarnic, the priest-in-charge of St. Alban’s. We had been invited to attend The Migrant’s Fiesta Celebrations which took place over three Sundays. I was able to practice my poquito Spanish. Everyone was having fun connecting, and of course breaking bread together. Isn’t that what we do best when we want to celebrate being together? What would a celebration be without music and a little dancing. I say little, because only 3% of the workers are women.


We were also impressed that there was a booth where the workers could educate themselves on their rights with regards to the use of pesticides. Afterwards, to finish off the evening Father Antonio celebrated the Eucharist. It was lovely time spent together and made possible by the donations of time, talent, and treasure from so many organizations who have come together to support this important ministry, including our diocese. My heart is full! Learn more about the Migrant Farmworkers Project at: migrantfarmworkers.ca.

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



Purchasing a columbarium niche ahead of time can ease the stress on your loved ones when you pass away. St. Matthew’s has niches available in our lovely new Canadian granite columbarium. It is located in a beautiful natural setting, surrounded by tall trees and magnolias, and close to our Quiet Garden, so your loved ones can sit and rest while paying their respects to your memory.

Come and check out the location at 126 Plains Road East, in the Aldershot area of Burlington, or contact the **Church Office** at: (905) 632-1233 or email office@stmatthewburlington.ca to make an appointment.

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The Joys of Journeying with a Spiritual Director

THE VENERABLE SHEILA VAN ZANDWYK

When I was in seminary many moons ago, I first heard about spiritual directors. I was immediately intrigued about the opportunity to have someone journey with me as I discerned and lived into my call to priestly ministry. I was blessed with a wonderful spiritual director for my last 2 years of seminary. When I was ordained and moved to Oakville, I immediately began to search for a new director to work with during this new chapter of ministry. I was so blessed to be given Wendy Passmore's



Archdeacon Sheila, left, and her spiritual director, Wendy Passmore.

Photo: Contributed by the author

name. We clicked from our first meeting. I have been incredibly grateful to God to have Wendy

as someone who is alongside me in my walk with God.

I have found that spiritual direction is one of the points of intersection in my life, where all that I am before God is reflected on. I am a priest, a woman, a person who lives with depression, a daughter, a sister, a friend; and often these facets of myself can get a bit compartmentalized. I may talk to a colleague about an issue in my parish, or my friend about something going on in my personal life or my doctor about my depression. But during my time with Wendy, they are all reflected on and together we explore the ways that all

of these facets come together before God.

Spiritual direction helps me to see the common threads running through all areas of my life; not just my ministry or my personal faith life. It helps me to notice where God has been present and where God might be leading me and helps me to reflect on the journey that I am on in my life and ministry. It is a chance for me to be very honest in my joys and my pain and know that I am being deeply heard. I could not imagine my ministry without a spiritual director to help me see when I am not being true to myself, my

call or God. Wendy has been part of my journey through my curacy, my first parish as rector, and my appointment as regional archdeacon. It is an incredible blessing to have that shared history together to help me reflect more deeply on the call God has placed on my life, the blessings God has given me and the challenges I have faced along the way. The hour I spend in spiritual direction each month helps to ground me more firmly in my faith, allows me to vent in ways I often can't and allows me to share the joys of ministry more deeply.

Reconciliation and City Life Mingle at Cathedral

DR. JOHN WATTS

The community of the Cross of Nails is an international partnership of churches, schools and charities focusing on reconciliation and peace-making. It has its origin and gets its name from a cross made of nails from the medieval roof beams of Coventry Cathedral, in England, on the days after the cathedral's destruction by bombs and fire in World War II. Originally directed towards post-war reconciliation, a broader set of priorities has arisen, including witness to healing relationships in historical injustices such as racism and colonialism.

Christ's Church Cathedral in Hamilton has a Cross of Nails over the pulpit. This was given to the parish, it is claimed, in 1948, following a series of organ recitals which were fundraisers for the new Coventry cathedral organ. If the date is correct, it is one of the oldest such crosses outside England.

It has special meaning for me, having grown up in Coventry and having passed the rebuilt cathedral daily as it rose from

a massive hole in the ground to its consecration in the year I left high school. In addition, my father was injured fighting the fires caused by the incendiary bombs in the old cathedral. His stay in hospital introduced him to a young Irish nurse- and I was the result -a true Blitz Baby!

Dean Peter Wall and I introduced the praying of the Litany of reconciliation, the core statement of the Community, every Friday at noon several years ago. We did so outside in the cathedral's forecourt as we felt it was important that this should be a form of public witness. The cathedral is situated in the old downtown of Hamilton in a very unprepossessing and poverty bound area although recently gentrification has gradually occurred.

We added to the litany itself, in the light of Canadian experience, prayers especially for reconciliation with First Nations people; we also added our prayers for both victims and perpetrators of current conflicts, particularly Ukraine and Gaza. Thanks to an initiative by our Assistant Curate, Monica

Romig-Green, we also recently added the reading aloud, and subsequent burning, of prayers provided on paper slips by anonymous writers. These come from two sources. The first is a monthly Art Crawl which coincides with a street festival and when we invite passers-by to come inside to see, hear and feel the building. This attracts over a thousand visitors on the second Friday of each month, a crowd which is diverse in its faith background, including many who have never been in a church of any sort.

The second source of prayers is the Cathedral Café, a recently established resting, warming/cooling and feeding program for the homeless and home-insecure. This attracts over 200 such people each day and is funded by the City of Hamilton with professional staff from St Matthew's House, an Anglican-affiliated non-profit social service agency. The Café also has more than 120 volunteers, 70% of whom come from backgrounds other than the cathedral,

The prayers from these sources are remarkable in that



The Cross of Nails in Christ's Church Cathedral Photo: Diocese of Niagara files

they rarely ask for prayers for the writer, although heaven knows they deserve our prayers more than most. It is also noteworthy that many have prayers that ask in some way for reconciliation with family members, ex-spouses, friends, and others. They are a reminder that those who live on the streets and sleep in tents or in alleys or the doorways of our city, are amongst the loneliest members of society, for whom a friendly or reassuring voice is a rarity. This social, caring, and loving contact is, in

many ways, the real importance of the Café. It is also why there is a natural link between the Litany of Reconciliation and our homeless guests.

Increasingly we find ourselves joined in the Litany and prayers by Café guests who, even if they are unable to read or understand the language, understand what it is that the litany is praying for and what forgiveness means, even if they have rarely experienced it.

It is also true that the Café benefits not only its guests. Increasingly both the volunteers and the congregation recognize that their own reconciliation is occurring in their conversations with those who were previously nameless and who they may in the past have ignored or even been frightened by, and who they now see as their friends and greet by name.

Reconciliation with those that we see (but often ignore) daily in our own community can be more difficult and demand more effort and resources than with those in countries far away, but it is an important part of our Christian life.

In other words

The Teddy Bear Church



JOHN BOWEN

Churches are often confused when it comes to “being missional.” What does it mean? We run a food bank out of the church, we sponsored a refugee family last year, and we put out materials from the Primate’s World Relief and Development Fund (PWRDF) regularly. Doesn’t that count as missional? What more do you want, for goodness’ sake?

Those are all good things, of course. The world would be a much poorer place if churches didn’t do things like that. We certainly shouldn’t stop doing them!

The number one missional skill

But there is a skill that is much talked about in missional circles that can change our attitude to “being missional.” In one way it is the simplest thing in the world, a skill we learned in earliest infancy. In another way, it is the hardest thing to learn. The number one lesson is being missional is: listening. Specifically, listening for God—or at least learning to listen for God.

But exactly how do we listen? One easy way to begin is to go and talk to leaders in the community—the police, school principals, city councillors, and community associations, for example—and ask them what they are seeing in their work. Having asked the question, we then listen. And sometimes that is how we hear God, and it becomes clear what we are supposed to do.

In some instances, the thing we are to do involves rethinking what our church is doing already. At other times, listening leads to starting a new Christian community—a fresh expression of church—outside the walls. Here’s a story about the first kind of listening for God—the kind that leads to a change in the ministry of an existing

church—and what happened next. I heard it from my friend, Kevin Martin, who used to be the dean of the cathedral in Dallas, Texas. He told the story at a conference in Niagara a few years back, and I retell it here in his words, with his permission, because it is a lovely story of listening for God—and the remarkable results.

Talking to the police

We suggested to our small churches, with fewer than fifty members, that they should find a mission outreach that all members could work with, and by which they could become known in the wider community. A church in deep east Texas heard me say this and my suggestion that a place to start was to interview the local police chief. Two women decided to do this.

At first the chief listened politely to these grey-haired senior ladies, and told them he couldn’t think of any particular need. Then he added, “Wait, does either of you sew?” When they inquired why, he said that their teddy bear needed repairing. They volunteered to do it—but then asked, reasonably enough, why the police force needed a teddy bear.

The chief explained that in Texas, when the police are called to a domestic dispute, one of the adults is probably going to be taken to jail. Often in the turmoil there are small children and, since the police don’t have time to deal with them, they stick the kids in the back seat of a patrol car and give them their one teddy bear to hold.

St. John would be pleased

The women not only repaired the bear but told the chief that any time they needed a grandparent type, any hour of night or day, to call them and they would



come and sit with the kids and give them their own teddy bear. The chief agreed and soon the whole church was making teddy bears, delivering them, and showing up even in the middle of the night to be with and comfort the children. They became known as the teddy bear church.

East Texas is a highly segregated area where blacks and whites live literally on the opposite sides of the railroad tracks that divide the small towns. One day a black family arrived at the church, almost unheard of in their community of black and white churches. At the coffee hour, the father explained that he had been drinking and turned on his wife. The police came, and he went to jail. He got into Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) and got sober, and the family decided they needed a church. They decided, he said, to go to

the teddy bear church where—he pointed—“those two ladies comforted our children and gave each a teddy bear.”

I still cry when I tell this although this happened over

Davy Bears Offer Care & Comfort in Difficult Times

Beginning in 2019 and growing out of the parish’s prayer shawl ministry, parishioners at St. David’s were moved to do something special for the children or even adults that could use a little comfort during difficult times. A first batch of 25 Davy Bears – named after the parish - were delivered to Family and Children’s Services (FACS) in St. Catharines. Since then, the parish has delivered bears to FACS Welland, the Welland Fire Department, and area hospitals, coordinated by parishioner Judy Szalinski (pictured with a few of the bears). To date, more than 700 Davy Bears have been lovingly made, blessed and gratefully received by community partners.

Photo: Contributed by St. David’s Welland

twenty years ago. The church’s name on their sign is St. John’s. In the community, they remain “The Teddy Bear Church.” Personally, I think St. John would approve.



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Medical Humanitarian Aid for Ukraine

SUZANNE MCPETRIE

Not Just Tourists (NJT) is a medical humanitarian aid organization started thirty years ago in Niagara by Dr. Ken Taylor and his wife Denise. Over thirty enthusiastic volunteers have collected donated medicine, medical supplies and equipment which is provided to medical professionals in over 90 needy countries.

Shortly after the Russian invasion of Ukraine, NJT was approached by members of St. Peter and St. Paul Ukrainian Orthodox Church in Niagara Falls to help supply much needed aid to Ukraine. Within a couple of days NJT volunteers, under the direction of nurse coordinator Jane Gordon, sorted and packed 250 boxes of medical supplies. This was followed a few days later by many more boxes of medicine. These items were exclusively from our supply of donated items.

Not only were the NJT volunteers eager to help, but volunteers from the Niagara Warehouse of Hope and For the Needy—Not the Greedy organizations were as well. Both have provided medical equipment and supplies and funded the cost of sea containers. The needs of the people of Ukraine are far greater than ever dealt with before. Until this time, we had received donations from Rotary Clubs to cover some of our expenses. For the first time we needed to actively fundraise to start purchasing medicine in particular.



Volunteers sort and pack donated medical supplies.

Fundraising

For many years the parishioners of St. Thomas' Church, St. Catharines have been very supportive of NJT. When we asked for assistance with fundraising, they readily agreed. As a result, for more than a year and a half we have been able to purchase medicine. Ken is a practising family physician and through his contacts can purchase antibiotics and pain medicine for approximately half of the wholesale price paid by pharmacies. We are grateful to JAMP Pharma, Drug Representative Moya Freeman, and Pharmacists Ron and Mark Bocchinfuso of Merritton Community Pharmacy and John and the late Cathy Henderson

of Henderson's Pharmacy in Thorold for their support.

We are grateful to St. Thomas' parishioners and others who have generously donated to this cause, enabling us to purchase more than \$4,000 (wholesale) worth of medicine each month. Most of this medicine is air shipped to Ukraine with the financial support of many Ukrainian Churches—in particular St. John Ukrainian Catholic Church, St. Catharines and AMD for Hope, and St. Peter and St. Paul Church who pay the shipping costs. It is important to note that this project is being accomplished by many Christian Churches working together.

of Hope and food from Niagara Christian Gleaners is being collected.

Recently, members of St. John Ukrainian Catholic Church, St. Catharines, gave a slide presentation to St. Thomas' describing their recent trip to Ukraine. They explained the procedure they follow to collect, ship and distribute our donations to various parts of the country. Several Ukrainian churches in Hamilton and Toronto are also involved in the shipping process. The aid is distributed to numerous parts of the country where it is then further distributed to many destinations. Volunteers risk their lives daily to get the aid to where it is needed the most. The presenters expressed with great emotion their appreciation for St. Thomas' ongoing support and presented them with a Ukrainian Flag signed by soldiers and others.

For more information on how you can help, contact Ken and Denise Taylor at 905-646-5110 or notjusttourists@gmail.com



Translation of the flag is as follows:
This is the flag of a free country.
This is the flag of cities and villages.
This is the flag of my fatherland and the eternity of goodness in it.
It floats like the blue sky, without a cloud and is a symbol of goodness.
And yellow, the wealth of this soil.
A mark of faith and warmth.

Photos: Bob Tymczyszyn

Shipments and Delivery

Our volunteers along with Niagara Warehouse of Hope volunteers are collecting items to fill the 12th sea container to be sent to Ukraine over the summer. In addition to NJT, medical supplies, equipment and medicine from the Warehouse



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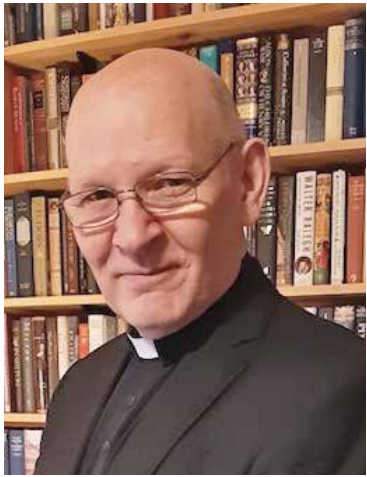
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Hamstrings and Memoirs: Piercing the Veil of Immortality



THE REVEREND MICHAEL COREN

Earlier this year playing cricket in, of all things, an Anglican cricket tournament, I pulled my right hamstring. Never happened before—wasn't even aware I had a hamstring! As I limped off the pitch it suddenly occurred to me that I was old. Not that only old people pull hamstrings but for some strange reason my sense of immortality and perennial youthfulness was as shattered as my cricketing career. I felt the same sort of emotion about writing my memoir. Surely this is usually an old person's game. Well yes, it is. And Michael, you now qualify.

After decades of writing books about other people, mostly long-dead, I now write about myself, not yet dead. What a curious, slightly disturbing feeling it is. Not that it's the final book, and I just signed a contract for another, but it's in some ways a last word on my life and that calls for often sobering reflection.

One of the central themes, perhaps the most central theme, of the book is the journey towards ordination. It is, I suppose, a spiritual autobiography. Paradoxically, becoming a priest wasn't a consideration for most of my life, not even a remote possibility, but as I wrote the book I realised how if I looked behind the curtain of the days, dates, and drama there was that emerging pattern of something almost inevitable. Where would I find meaning, what am I about, what is it that genuinely matters?

But oh, what a circuitous route. A secular, half-Jewish, working-class family and upbringing, clever but lazy, a fully-funded university education, drugs, parties, and irresponsibility, and then a career in journalism, partly because I'd

no idea what else to do. Working with Oscar-winning screenwriters, hanging out with Salman Rushdie and Martin Amis, writing books with famous broadcasters, appearing on radio and television, being published by one of the most respected companies in Britain.

All this by my mid-20s, and the emerging realisation that I was no happier than I'd been before it all. That stung, that made me think, that pushed me towards faith. Then meeting and falling in love with a Canadian, emigrating with no thought for how that hurt my friends and family in England, and 20 years of radio, television, books, and column-writing, often on the conservative wing of politics.

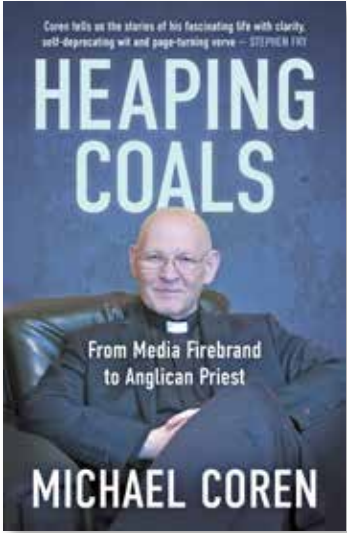
Then a conversion to a faith I'd never known before, something deep and progressive and fulfilling and challenging. That conversion, that slide into ordination, came at such a price and cost, both professional and personal, but it released my soul, revealed the inner workings, made me the Christian I always ought to have been. It was cathartic and liberating but it was also painful and disturbing. Being forced to ask questions

about my own life, and my own being. To be critical and honest.

I'd knew that I'd said and written things over the years that demanded redress and contrition, and for more than a decade have done all in my power to repair and reform. But as I reflected on my life, I thought about how I'd treated those people who loved me and cared for me. I found myself sitting at my desk before dawn—I've an eccentric writing schedule—close to tears, even openly weeping, and my own behaviour regarding my parents in particular. They're gone, I can't call and chat, can only stew in my own regret. That, of course, is what prayer is for, that's what self-reflection is for. We've all made mistakes, none of us perfect. Yet I'm still on that path of self-forgiveness and not sure if I'll ever reach the end. Not entirely sure I'm supposed to.

The solace I find is in Christ. There, I've said it. In Him, in Him alone. Does that make me sound rather evangelical? If so, I rejoice in it. The longer I spend as a priest, the more I realize that there's a lot of window-dressing around in the church, and there's a terrible danger of losing

the gift among the decorations. What gets me through, what makes it all possible, is the Word made flesh, the Son of God. 65 years of life, recorded in an autobiography, given a central thread by being a follower of Christ and being ordained as a priest. I'm so glad that I wrote this book but just as happy that I won't have to do it again.



Michael Coren's memoir, Heaping Coals: From Media Firebrand to Anglican Priest, has just been published and is widely available at booksellers across the diocese and online.

Ontario Provincial Synod Meets in Sault Ste. Marie

The 38th Session of the Synod for the Ecclesiastical Province of Ontario brought together representatives from its seven dioceses, including Niagara, from September 24 to 26 in Sault Ste Marie or 'Bawating' in Ojibway, which means the place of the rapids.

Archbishop Anne Germond, metropolitan of the province and bishop of the host diocese, Algoma, chose "Conversations at the Crossroads" to serve as the theme of the Synod, based on Jeremiah 6:16: "Stand at the crossroads and look; ask for the ancient paths, ask where the good way is, and walk in it, and you will find rest for your souls."

Vocations and formation for priestly ministry were a significant focus of the Provincial Council, and the Synod offered many opportunities to engage this priority, including reports by each diocese on their individual efforts.

In keeping with the theme and the focus on vocations,



Archbishop Stephen Cottrell, Archbishop of York

Photo: Church of England

Archbishop Stephen Cottrell was invited to be the Synod's keynote speaker. Archbishop Cottrell served as the Bishop

of Chelmsford in 2010 until 2020 when he became the 98th Archbishop of York in the Church of England. A found-

ing member of the Church of England's College of Evangelists, he has also chaired a group of bishops with an interest in the



media and is one of the authors of the Church of England's Pilgrim course, a major teaching and discipleship resource. He is president of the College of Preachers.

In addition to the usual business of Synod, two elections were held during the Synod; one for metropolitan (the senior bishop of an ecclesiastical province) and prolocutor (a senior officer of the Synod who is either a lay person or cleric).

Look for more details, including election results, in the November Niagara Anglican.

Reflecting on a Season of Camping

ZOE OLIVEIRA

I hope this article finds you embracing the fall season—I know I certainly have.

I'm writing this from the comfort of a cozy couch, with a steaming mug of tea in hand, and a cool breeze blowing against the windows. Fall, even though it's not officially here, certainly seems in full swing, and yet, I find myself wholly preoccupied with thoughts of the summer. Thoughts that I am blessed to be able to share with all of you.

While I'm by no means a mathematician, numbers certainly break things down, and so, I'd like to provide an overview for you of this past summer—camp in numbers, if you will.

Over the course of eight weeks between July and August, Canterbury Hills Camp saw approximately 1,170 campers within our Overnight Camp, Day Camp, Bridge Camp, Adventure Camp, and Leaders-In-Training programs. We saw approximately 50 young adults take on leadership roles, and grow and develop as members of our community. We saw approximately 9 clergy members, all of whom graciously shared their time and wisdom with us on various Friday afternoons during our Eucharist services. There were approximately 32 campfires, 8 Fancy Dinners, 15 Cabin Cup Winners, and 1 Glorious God to make it all happen.

God made lots of things happen this summer! God gave strength to our staff, as they powered through weeks of rainy campouts and encouraged their campers to do the same. God gave them creativity, as our Leaders challenged themselves to make every camper's dream come true—from winning an



Olympic medal to running a Starbucks out of the dining hall. God gave campers courage, allowing them to test themselves in a plethora of activities, like rock climbing, archery, high ropes, swimming, and the ever infamous gaga ball. God gave opportunities for kindness, in the sharing of late-night snacks and craft supplies and encouraging cheers for campfire performances.

In our June article, I made reference to a passage from Ecclesiastes, which assures us that there is a time for everything under the heavens—that God always provides an opportunity. As I sip my tea and look back on the summer, I cannot help but find profound truth in those words.

There was a time for friendships to be made within the walls of cabins. A time for lifelong memories to be shared along the banks of the creek. A time

for camp songs to be sung and friendship bracelets to be given. A time for courage to be found, kindness to be shared, and God to be thanked above all else.

I'm beyond grateful to have had the opportunity to witness these pieces in time this

summer. I am grateful for Canterbury Hills Camp, for providing the space for so much good, and to God, for leading me here. I am grateful, as I was when I was a child, and as I imagine I will be all my life, for summer camp, the friendships it

builds, and the people it shapes. I'm grateful there is time for it under the heavens.

At our Friday Eucharist services, we often tell the campers that the values they practised and learnt at camp don't have to be left here, and that better yet, going home at the end of the week, and returning to their families and their lives, provides a perfect opportunity for them to showcase what they've learnt, and how they've grown. I see the ten months spent away from camp very similarly. Not as goodbye, and most certainly not forever, but the perfect opportunity to show what the summer taught us, and how we've grown. To apply the new skills and strengths we've gained, and share them with our families, our friends, and our communities at large.

Ten whole months to practice everything camp has taught us—what a time under the heavens indeed.

Camp is a time for making friends, having fun, and making memories, such as at campfire time.

Photos: Contributed by Canterbury Hills Camp



The Shepard Tone: Requiem to Civilization



THE REVEREND DR. DANIEL TATARNIC

The road through the old section of Victoria Lawn Cemetery is everything you might expect from a Victorian novel. Barely wide enough to accommodate a modern car, it winds its way between rows of weathered gravestones, crosses, mournful statues and ancient oaks, uphill and downhill. One can imagine a horsedrawn hearse bearing generations of the dead along Queenston Street, through the west gates, past the watchful eyes of the stone sentinel, the Raven perched on his postern, to their places of rest.

I was driving through the old cemetery enroute to the new section of graveyard which, like most modern grid-based burial sites, is sleeker than its predecessor. Seeking to recollect myself at the grave after the unexpected death of a best friend, sudden movement caught my attention. In my rearview mirror a white SUV had driven up on my bumper and was tailgating my car. I was driving too slowly. And the driver, shouting and waving her hands in an effort to urge me on was less than subtle.

As we entered the new section of burial ground the road widened and the driver, who had had enough of my dawdling, spun her tires on the gravel shoulder and made a hand gesture as she passed me on my left. There is a first time for everything. Getting ‘the finger’ for driving too slowly in a cemetery

was a first. What of civilization? That night as I sat at my desk I stared silently at my books. And my books, like the granite raven silently perched upon his postern at the cemetery gates, stared back at me.

I know that some people are weary of hearing about how much life has changed after the pandemic. I for one expected life to be different, but I didn’t anticipate that it would feel this different. I can’t shake the feeling that many of the communal habits of civilization, the things that make us civil, have become craze-driven and noisy. It is called the Shepard tone; a high-pitched noise that increases until it becomes intolerable and induces madness.

There is the constant ping of texts, voicemail, email, messenger, apps pushing notifications and news outlets pushing content. There are now algorithms designed to keep us increasingly unsettled and constantly anxious (because an anxious public is a consumer public). A social media industry has developed to keep us perpetually offended and on the edge. The pitch intensifies its messaging. You’re not pretty enough to be a model; but one more selfie on Instagram won’t hurt your cause. You’re not smart enough to succeed in life; but subscribe to these online courses and paramours will find you irresistible. You’ve got too many weeds on your lawn; but our company has the solution for your lawncare needs. Have you thought of Ozempic? You’re still using the iPhone 14? The Shepard tone. Is there anywhere in the world that is still sacred and quiet, or will every performance I attend from here until eternity be interrupted by someone’s cellphone, cellophane wrapper, or amateur commentary? Can anything be done?

I remember when reverential silence was not just a norm but a societal expectation. Churches,



theatres, courtrooms, the sitting rooms of your elders, and cemeteries, were just a few of the places we kept silence. Why did we do this? Because we knew that entering into the presence of universal and transformational forces was worthy of reverence: God, justice, art, wisdom, death. Gone are the days?

Blaise Pascal wrote that “All human evil comes from a single cause, man’s inability to sit still in a room.” Pascal, eminent mathematician, person of faith, and man of letters, respected the transformational power of

silence. He understood the link between practising reverence, and a practicing civilization. Warning, it doesn’t take long to unravel.

I made my visit and said thanks-and-farewell to my friend. The sun was setting as I wound my way through the old section of Victoria Lawn Cemetery toward the west gate where the granite sentinel keeps watch. There were no signs of white SUVs anywhere. I drove slowly. A beam of light from the waning sun struck a stone near the side of the road illuminating

the inscription, “I am the Good Shepherd”. The car switched into electric mode and it was silent, as Edgar Allan Poe’s poem *The Raven* came to mind: “And the Raven, never flitting, still is sitting, still is sitting, On the pallid bust of Pallas just above my chamber door; and his eyes have all the seeming of a demon’s that is dreaming, and the lamp-light o’er him streaming throws his shadow on the floor; and my soul from out that shadow that lies floating on the floor shall be lifted—nevermore!”

Creativity with Anglican Prayer Beads

SUZANNE MCPETRIE

Barbara Jean Lick, a parishioner at St. Thomas, St. Catharines and an early childhood educator in profession, knows how regular prayer has impacted her life. When a parishioner happened to mention that Anglicans use prayer beads Barbara Jean has started crafting and customizing these beautiful wristlets, after some research and much creativity. A symbol of love, and meditation, four cruciform beads symbolize the Cross that is central to Christianity. The 4 points on the compass, bringing us into mindfulness of the created world. The 4 sets of seven smaller beads are the day of the weeks. Barbara Jean customizes each one with either a cross or a special bead such as ‘faith’.



Photo: Wanda Lick

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Is Basic Income Still a Thing?

DEIRDRE PIKE

After Premier Doug Ford cancelled Ontario's Basic Income Pilot Project (BIPP) in August of 2018, breaking the first of many promises, it seemed like it might just fall off the radar.

Certainly, poverty is still a thing and though the government might like it to fall off the radar of Ontarians, it continues to deepen and become more visible in our communities. While social assistance remains woefully inadequate (could you live as a single person on \$733 a month?), and minimum wage (soon to be \$17.20) is far below a living wage (approximately \$20 across the diocese), basic income is still a viable option.

Thankfully, the movement continues, and hundreds of people gathered in Ottawa last May from across Canada, including the Diocese of Niagara, to explore where we are at with the basic income as a necessary solution to the income

insecurity faced by so many Canadians.

I had the privilege of emceeing many panels of experts who brought their perspectives both on the need and the how-to of bringing a basic income into reality for provinces and territories or on a national basis.

Kerry Lubrick, a member of Christ's Church Cathedral parish, is also the coordinator of the Ontario Basic Income Network. She was a panelist with other BI movers and shakers, using her past background as the Director of Ontario Works in Hamilton, as the stage for arguing why basic income is essential.

Although there are a few nuances to the various models, the premise is that every individual or family would receive a basic income, a sort of level floor from which to explore and choose employment, housing, and education options. Those who exceed a certain income level would not get the extra dollars. The income tax system

would be the tool to decide to whom and how much is allocated.

This fall, Bill 233, a private members' bill by NDP Leah Gazan, will have a second reading in the House of Commons. The bill would develop a national framework for a guaranteed livable basic income. From there it would go to discussion at the committee level. The government needs to know we support this movement.

As Sheila Regehr, director of the Basic Income Canada Network says, "Every day, headlines showcase people struggling with the crises we face—in food insecurity, housing affordability, precarious jobs, extreme weather, mental distress, discrimination, the disruption of artificial intelligence, anxiety about today, and lack of hope for the future. These issues and many others are not only about income, but they are always about income."

At the forum in May, faith communities were urged to encourage members to support this bill. Back in 2019, Bishop Susan Bell signed onto a letter to the Prime Minister along with 50 other Canadian bishops, asking him to bring forward a national basic income. It is time to make our voices heard again.

If you would like to be part



Kerry Lubrick, left, Tom Cooper, and Deirdre Pike attended the Basic Income Guarantee (BIG) Forum in May.

Photo: contributed by Deirdre Pike



of a diocesan effort to respond to poverty and homelessness across Niagara, please send me a note. Let us find some ways to work together and have some impact on the immediate needs of people in poverty in our communities while working toward the longer-term solution of a basic income.

To join the Diocese of Niagara's Income Security Working Group, write to Deirdre at deirdre.pike@niagaraanglican.ca.

Celebrating 40 Years of Ordained Ministry

DIANA COEN

On November 16, at St. Simon's, Oakville, we have cause for great celebration! Our rector, the Rev. Malcolm French, is celebrating the 40th anniversary of his ordination to the priesthood. This is a significant milestone, and we look forward to honouring Malcolm in style with a gala dinner on the very evening of his anniversary.

Our guest speaker will be Canon Scott Gunn, executive director of Forward Movement, whose mission is to inspire disciples and empower evangelists. It promises to be a fun, festive and faith-filled evening – a wonderful way to mark a vocation that has spanned four decades.

Malcolm's ordination journey began at St. Luke's Anglican Church, in Regina, Saskatchewan where he grew up. He started his post-secondary schooling in

education at the University of Regina. However, he soon felt the tug of his call to ministry, and after he completed his arts degree, he enrolled at Trinity College at the U of T, where he is happy to count our former bishop, the Right Rev. Michael Bird, among his classmates. Malcolm's career has seen him in different parishes in Saskatchewan, New Zealand, and now Ontario. In the 1990s to early 2000's, Malcolm took some time away from his ministry and served in the Naval Reserve, where he served as an Intelligence Officer, and as Executive Officer of HMCS QUEEN in Regina. He also worked in the Saskatchewan government, where he was part of a team that was given the Premier's Award for Excellence in the Public Service. He's also pretty convinced he's the

only priest in the Anglican Communion with a professional accreditation in Public Relations! At St. Simon's, we count ourselves blessed to have a rector with such a diverse life journey, that has gifted him with the ability to connect and speak Good News not only to Anglicans but to the unchurched and dechurched. And, if you know Malcolm, he has some great stories to share!

As Malcolm's journey illustrates, when we follow God's call, our lives often take us to places we might never have imagined finding ourselves. In honouring Malcolm's journey, we hope you will be inspired for your own ministry through the words and witness of Canon Gunn. We hope you will consider joining us at our celebratory gala dinner on Saturday, November 16 at the St. Volodymyr Cultural Centre in Oakville.

Tickets for the event are \$150; with \$50 being eligible for a tax receipt.

Please contact Diana Coen at stewardship@stsimon.ca if you would like to attend.



Seeking out God in the Messiness of Life

**THE REVEREND DEACON
STEPHEN J.E. LA SALLE**

I often speak about how sheltered I felt growing up as a youth in the suburbs of Ottawa. In many ways it was a very Pollyanna existence that continued to shape my beliefs and expectations until much later in my adulthood when I joined the Canadian Armed Forces and served in the Reserves with the Cadet & Junior Ranger Support Group; first as a cadet instructor and later in a public affairs capacity.

It was then as an officer, working with youth, that I quickly began to realize that the world was not as I had grown up to believe. Instead of it being easy, it was hard. Instead of being safe and loving, at times it was dark and uncaring. Having been sheltered from so much of it growing up, the understanding I had of the world quickly became shattered with the realities of the messiness of life.

What I thought was a strong sense of faith as a Roman Catholic who attended church regularly, emerged as being merely part of a regular routine that I had grown up with and continued into adulthood. Now questioning and seeking answers into the realities I was seeing in the world, I no longer felt a sense of comfort in attending church. I would sit in the pew, looking around amidst the congregation, listening to homilies that I felt were not based in the realities of life that I was experiencing and, think to myself, “they don’t get it. They aren’t experiencing the same realities of life that I am.”

I would soon fall out of faith as I questioned where God was amongst all the messiness of life. That was if he even existed.

In a recent podcast from “The Brothers Zahl” on the subject of Holy Spirit, the hosts speak about how “the Spirit gives you a warm feelings and nice feelings, but the most reliable sign of the Holy Spirit is the anxiety and unsettling feeling that accompanies profound change.” As I encountered my own darkness in life, I finally began to see the Holy Sprit at work in my own life and finally found God’s presence walking beside me.

Becoming seriously injured while on duty in the spring of 2018 and suffering a rare nerve



Stephen La Salle, centre, in training.

injury in my lower leg, I spent three years in suffering from unbearable pain that my medical team struggled to control. Becoming bed ridden and my quality of life quickly deteriorating, the difficult decision was made to amputate my leg below the knee in October 2021.

It was then, lying in the hospital bed, recovering from my amputation that I began to see God and the Holy Spirit at work amidst my own darkness. Amongst my sense of loss and despair over my injuries, He appeared at first through the simplicity of a “Get Well” card from a church that I was only familiar with in name. Inside, signed by members of the parish, were words of encouragement and support. Soon it was followed by regular emails checking in on my recovery and progress. It was through this support that I felt God beside me, walking with me on this journey. Whilst he could not fix me or make me better, I recognized that through the work of the Holy Spirit, He was reminding me that I was not alone.

Knowing that I was not alone brought me much needed comfort. It also helped me begin to see the importance of belong to a church: a loving and supportive community. A place of quietness from the busyness and noise from everyday life, where, together in community you are able to walk through journey of life, without fear or prejudice. It is where you can celebrate together each others successes and, on the tough days, be helped to see the light amongst the darkness.

Recognizing that sense of

community, the Community of St. Luke’s Anglican Church Smithville, became a place of refuge from the daily struggles I was facing. St. Luke’s became a place of positivity in a head filled with negative self talk. Leaving church on Sunday, however, I would be faced with another week of struggles, frustrations and, often setbacks. Whilst, I felt connected to many of the parishioners, I never have felt that I truly fit in with them nor that they could understand all the feelings I was feeling inside. For the other six days of the week, I would struggle to understand myself and to find anyone else who was feeling the same way I was. Despite the love and support I had around me, I was still feeling lost and alone.

That was until early 2024 when I received the exciting news that I had been selected to be a part of Team Canada for the upcoming Invictus Games being held February 8-16, 2025 in Vancouver and Whistler, British Columbia. I will be one of 56 competitors on the team, made up of both serving members of the Canadian Armed Forces and veterans, all with an illness or a physical/mental health injury acquired while serving Canada.

In fact the Invictus Games were created by Prince Harry after a 2013 visit to the U.S.-based Warrior Games, where he witnessed firsthand the important role that sports can play in improving the lives of ill and injured armed forces members, veterans, and their families.

Invictus” means “unconquered” and embodies the fighting spirit of those competing at the Games, and the incredible

will they possess in continuing to overcome the challenges they face. Overall, the event in BC will see approximately 550 ill and injured veterans and serving armed forces personnel from 25 nations compete in 11 adaptive sports.

Now having been apart of the team for six months, we have trained together as a team twice; once in Whistler, British Columbia and last month in Kingston, Ontario. Over that time we have bonded together as team both in person during our camps and online where we

converse each day on WhatsApp.

While all of us on the team recognize that all of our experiences are different, we have come to see how many of us share the same feelings related to our visible and invisible injuries from our service. All of us have had to battle many of the same feelings. Whilst we often feel alone and not understood in our struggles, becoming a part of Team Canada for the 2025 Invictus has shown us that we are not.

At the same time, through the sharing my story as I prepare to compete in the games, the Anglican Diocese of Niagara, the Community of St. Luke’s where I now serve as a deacon and the wider community of West Lincoln have all embraced my participation in the games and follow my progress in my training online through social media.

Sharing my journey through regular postings on social media have helped others see for themselves that despite what challenges in obstacles that they may face in life, they too can overcome them. Like me and my teammates, through overcoming adversity, they will become a more resilient and stronger person; better equipped to handle whatever may come next in life.

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THE REVEREND DEACON DOREEN HAYWOOD

School has started and social media posts have appeared with children holding chalkboards with captions of their favourite colours, grade they are entering and the age-old question of what do you want to be when

you grow up? Throughout my life, I have been searching for an answer of a different kind. I have always been involved in the life of the church and been part of many different ministries, but I felt that God wanted something more from me. I can't recall a time when I have not felt called to help and comfort others and live out my baptismal and confirmation promises. Over the years, I have spent quite a bit of time with those who are feeling alone or experiencing sickness or loss and those who are dying. I felt it was “just something that I do” until a clergy friend pointed

out to me that not everyone is comfortable in those situations, and I clearly was able to offer support in a way that gave people comfort. Was this what God was calling me to do? I knew God was continuing to call me, but was this the message He wanted me to hear? Was I being open enough to hear the plans that He had for me? As I prayed and discerned, the answer became much clearer... Like Samuel, I needed to listen and answer “Here I am”. In my ministry as a Deacon, I have been blessed to become a part of the community at Anchor Pointe—a local retirement home in St. Catharines. Starting out as a trial, I was asked to hold a couple of Morning Prayer services prior



to my ordination. It wasn't long before it turned into a weekly service. However, it has become much more than just a service for the residents there. Through our time together in the chapel each week, a sense of community has emerged amongst them. It is a community, rooted in faith, where the residents can genuinely feel that their lives still do matter. Once feeling disconnected from the churches that they previously belonged to, they have said that St. John's (Port Dalhousie) has come to them. Whether it is St. John's parishioners coming to participate in Monday morning prayers, the choir coming to sing or The Rev. Rob Towler, coming to celebrate the Eucharist, the residents have been shown that they have not been forgotten—they are loved, heard, cared for and, most of all, still appreciated for who they are. The group that attends is made up mostly of Anglicans, although the service is open to

all and others from other faiths have joined us. This faithful group have been and remain part of my ongoing spiritual journey. When my Ordination Day was announced, they requested that the activities director make arrangements for them to watch the livestream service so they could feel part of it. On Tuesdays, you will find me at Anchor Point for their coffee hour. It gives me a chance to reach out not only to those who attend the services but others in this community who look forward to the opportunity to share in fellowship and conversation, regardless of their faith or beliefs. My ministry continues to evolve as I join Father Rob in ministering to our own congregation of St. John's (Port Dalhousie) who are in hospital, nursing or retirement homes as well as hospice. It is a sacred and holy journey, and I give thanks to God for calling me to this ministry.

Ordination to the Priesthood

On September 29, God-willing, Bishop Susan Bell will ordain five new priests to serve Christ's holy, catholic Church. Your prayers are invited for Mike Degan, Monica Green, Sarah Grondin, David Montgomery, and Russell Wardell as they embark on their priestly ministry. The Reverend Victor Kischak, rector of St. George's, Guelph, was invited to preach at the service at Christ's Church Cathedral. If you believe you might be called to served in holy orders, speak with your parish priest or visit: niagaraanglican.ca/ministry/vocations/priesthood.



Candidates for ordination September 29, clockwise from upper left: Mike Deegan, Monica Green, Sarah Grondin, Russell Wardell, and David Montgomery



Photos: Diocese of Niagara

Niagara Anglican Deadlines and Submission Guidelines

Upcoming Deadlines:

- November – September 27
- December – October 25
- January – November 22

Submissions:

- News, Letters, Reviews**
(books, films, music, theatre)
– 400 words or less
- Articles** – 600 words or less

Original cartoons or art –

- Contact the Editor.
- Photos** – very large, high resolution (300 ppi), action pictures (people doing something). Include name of photographer. Written permission of parent/guardian must be obtained if photo includes a child.

All submissions must include writer's full name and contact information. We reserve the right to edit or refuse submissions.

Questions or information:

Contact the Editor at editor@niagaraanglican.ca

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God’s Call to the Priesthood; Felt and Seen!

JANE WYSE

It has been my honour and privilege to walk with applicants, candidates, and priests for over 23 years while administering our diocesan ordination process. Niagara is blessed by our clergy and the candidates who are offering themselves. They are faithful and gifted followers of Jesus who are passionate for ministry and filled with the love of God.

Those clergy are bringing their love of God’s people, their hunger to share God’s unconditional love with others, and their excitement about the Church’s mission to neighbourhoods, parishes, and affiliated ministries across our diocese. They are embracing the challenges of a church called by the Spirit to show the love of Jesus in their communities, engaging with neighbours and other partners to bring about a new society where compassion, kindness, justice, and restored relationships shine. But they need help ... they need support from new priests if they are to carry on God’s work across this diocese. Through prayer and conversation, the diocese is clear that God is urging the Anglican Church in Niagara to affirm the calls of a diverse group of disciples who hear God and their faith communities affirming their affinity for ordained ministry.

Do you have a passion for sharing the story of God’s love with family, friends, and neighbours? Do you feel compelled to hear the stories of others, to engage with people in your daily life? Does it bring you joy to pray for others, silently or aloud? Does reading and exploring the story of God and God’s people in the Bible draw you in? Do you find yourself in servant leadership roles in your faith community? Do you wonder about the ministry of walking with a church community or a neighbourhood affinity group as together you lean into God’s call to do justice, love mercy and walk humbly with your God? If any of this describes you, I urge you to have a conversation with your parish priest and others in your parish or affiliated ministry.

We are all called to ministry through our baptismal covenant, but only some are called



Rob Miller and Nicola Zhang were ordained to the priesthood in September of 2023.

Photo: William Pleydon

to the ministry of priesthood. An awareness of our baptismal ministry, along with opportunities to exercise our gifts, can lead to identifying our future priests. Some people experience a call from birth, some may have experienced being hit by a lightning bolt as in the Damascus Road story in Acts 9, and for others their call may have progressed over time as they grew in discipleship within a community. Perhaps you have seen someone with wonderful gifts and think they might make an excellent priest? I encourage you to ask them if they have ever considered it? They may be reluctant in the beginning to hear your thoughts, but a few conversations may uncover a latent call. Having this conversation may be the very affirmation this person is hoping to hear. Take a different look at your church’s servant leaders—might there be a call to ordained ministry that needs only to be encouraged?

Our discernment process is one of exploration and deepening knowledge on the part of the interested person and the diocese wherein each takes time to affirm a fit and a sense of calling to the priesthood. Initially there may not be a clear sense of calling nor is there an

initial expectation of certainty but rather a sense of deepening a relationship and discerning for both the church and the individual about the nature of the call. The process involves four steps:

Inquiry. Those who have some interest should have conversations with their parish priest early on to reflect on their understanding of being called to such a ministry. Once a sense of call has been discerned, inquirers make arrangements through the episcopal office to meet with the bishop – a requirement of the process which often takes place in the fall. With the bishop’s blessing, the inquirer may apply for ordination to the priesthood.

Application. Selected applicants are invited to an interview day following the February 1st annual application deadline. Applications include the completed application form, as well as submission of a parish commendation and vulnerable sector check. Typically, applications are made during the first year of the student’s Master of Divinity (MDiv) degree but is not limited to this time. The cost of theological education is borne by the applicant, and they are strongly encouraged to ensure

the affordability of any debt. On the interview day, applicants participate in two one-hour interviews, deliver a five-minute sermon, and participate in a group discussion or share their faith story. The day also includes worship, lunch, and time for fellowship.

Candidacy. With a positive recommendation from the candidates committee and the bishop’s approval, the applicant becomes a candidate in the Niagara process. Candidates receive a written report with observations and recommendations from the interview day. Candidacies typically last two years but may take longer, especially if studying part-time. This time is devoted to conscientious formation for ministry through parish placements and internships, as well as participation in meetings with all candidates and the candidates committee which may consist of working on a case study, or discussion of an assigned article or video or a shared activity. Each candidate is also asked to establish a relationship with an assigned mentor who acts as an interpreter/coach and a chaplain for pastoral care throughout the process, as well as with a spiritual director, chosen by the candidate. The process also includes attendance at an Advisory Committee on Postulants for Ordination screening weekend and completion of a vocational/psychological assessment; the costs of which are borne by the diocese.

Candidates are required to complete an MDiv or equivalent degree at an accredited theological institution or an approved

Licentiate in Theology and one year pathway of study through the School for Missional Leadership, including a parish placement.

Ordination. A candidate becomes an ordinand when the bishop decides, in consultation with the candidates committee, to invite them to present themselves for ordination. Status as an ordinand is conditional on the availability of a placement and the mobility of the candidate.

We are all called by God to some part of God’s mission in the world through our baptismal covenant, but only some are called to the ministry of the priesthood. If you are ignited by the irresistible love of Jesus, missionally oriented, and feel the call to serve God’s church as a priest, I invite you to discern your sense of call with your parish and the diocese. If you know someone who exudes the irresistible love of Jesus, is devoted to God’s mission, and you think could serve God’s church as a priest, please talk to them and encourage them to explore what you are seeing.

Finally, please do pray for God’s Church and for new vocations; you might consider praying the prayer adjacent to this article, written by Canon Christyn Perkons.

More information regarding our ordination process can be found niagaraanglican.ca/ministry/vocations/priesthood. Jane would be happy to answer any questions regarding our discernment process and can be reached at 905-527-1316 x 420 or by email jane.wyse@niagaraanglican.ca.

A Prayer for Vocations

God who loves your church, Jesus commissioned leaders to make disciples in their neighbourhoods and in the broader world by telling the story of your unconditional love. May those who have the gifts to be ordained leaders in your church today, who are overflowing with the joy of your love and longing to share your story and the way of Jesus, engage the discernment process in Niagara. May those responsible for mentorship, discernment, and encouraging vocations use their wisdom to guide those who long to serve your church. Bless our faith communities with servant leaders guided by a compassionate heart, a steadfast commitment to prayer and action, and a love for the breaking of bread. Amen.

