

St. Matthew's House Launches New Strategic Plan

The board of directors and staff of St. Matthew's House have developed a Strategic Plan for 2024 – 2029, which was launched at the organization's Annual General Meeting held in June at Cathedral Place.

"This Strategic Plan reflects our understanding of what our community values most about St. Matthew's House and addresses the opportunities and challenges we face in providing high-quality support to individuals and families experiencing economic barriers," said Mary Burnett, board chair of St. Matthew's House.

The plan includes refreshed mission and vision statements, discerned after a strategic planning session and a number of community consultations. The mission of St. Matthew's House has been refocused to ensure its many programs and initiatives are centered on empowering people to lead fulfilling lives.

"Over the next five years, we will assess and deepen our approaches to our work, taking on a leadership role with an expanded group of community partners and actively engage more donors," said Renée Wetselaar, executive director.

With a fresh perspective on its mission, understanding what it does well, and the environment in which it operates, St. Matthew's House will pursue the following strategic directions:

1. Enhance and expand community supports through new and existing partnerships.
2. Invest in the people of St. Matthew's House.



3. Elevate fundraising efforts to better support its mission.
 4. Focus community engagement on equity and justice outcomes.
- "We are so excited and proud to use these strategies as our guiding lights," said Wetselaar. Founded in 1967 by local Anglican churches in inner city Hamilton with a focus on supporting vulnerable populations in the surrounding neighbourhoods, St. Matthew's House continues to play a vital role in Hamilton. Figures included in their 2023 Impact Report show that 2584 meals were served at the Cathedral Café in December, 95 evictions were prevented, and

their Holiday Hope program provided care, hope, and love to 2271 families and seniors.

"Over the past year, we have responded to emerging community needs through a number of new initiatives and partnerships," said Burnett. "The Warming Bus, the Cathedral Café drop-in program, expanded street outreach, thriving child-care centres, and the groundbreaking of the 412 Barton residence—all exemplify our commitment to translating listening into meaningful action."

To learn more, visit their website at stmatthewshouse.ca

To Hope and Act

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

the Earth.

Currently there is talk of climate crisis anxiety, and this may include some thoughts and feelings of being less hopeful, or even that the situation is hopeless. The good news is that by taking action, including the voicing of justice – speaking truth to power – we can be hopeful. We live in hope, and we live with hope, thanks be to God. During this Season of Creation, a way to honour the creation that God invites, and we believe, expects us to care for, is to use your voice to safeguard the integrity of God's creation by taking action against unjust practices that harm this beautiful planet.

As an example, you may be wondering if any investments you have are supporting fossil fuel extraction and promoting further degradation of the Earth. Talk to your financial institution about divestiture. Ask if they are reducing their commitment to funding such harmful endeavours. If that's not an option, consider changing your financial institution to better reflect the integral values of care of creation.

We can be energized about getting better at safeguarding

creation. We can embrace a better way of living, with gusto, with excitement even. The thing we should be truly saddened by, would be if we don't do anything. If the status quo continues unchallenged, the life of this planet as we know it will just continue to decline.

In the fourth chapter of Paul's Letter to the Romans, he speaks of how, in the covenant between God and Abraham, Abraham was hoping against hope. Paul states that Abraham did not weaken in faith. Even when Abraham took into account the facts of his own age, he still believed the promise that he will have children. "No distrust made him waiver when concerning the promise of God," Paul wrote.

That is hope against hope, complete faith and trust in God, for the hoped-for outcome that God will do what God will do. What is God's will, will be. If we say "yes" to God, if we cooperate with God's Holy Spirit, we too may hope against hope.

During this Season of Creation, and beyond—let us practise hope together, as we seek to safeguard this beautiful Creation. Let us give thanks to God!



Photo: Craig Fairley

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Rainbow Kings and Queens Find Refuge in Niagara

DEIRDRE PIKE

When the newly formed Rainbow Kings and Queens had their first gathering in the Niagara Room at Cathedral Place in March, there was an overflow of both joy and numbers.

We planned for 30 and 42 people showed up. By April, we moved to Myler Hall, planning for 50 and we had 72 people arrive. By May, we planned for 90 and levelled out around 80. There are now, however, over 200 on the Rainbow Kings and Queens WhatsApp group!

The levelling out to the in-person gatherings comes largely because so many of these refugee claimants, 90% from Uganda but also numbers from Kenya, Ghana, Rwanda, and Nigeria, are settling into homes instead of shelters and finding work.

The Rainbow Kings and Queens started with a furniture delivery program out of St. James, Dundas. Lynn Dykeman, a long-time parishioner with her partner, Nora, started hearing of newcomers needing beds and she swung into action. By the time I heard about it, they were two months in. I simply volunteered to drive a U-Haul every other Tuesday back in January.

Then one day, one of the volunteer movers (they are usually men who were living in shelters and without a work permit) came out to me as gay. The next week, a guy we delivered furniture to greeted us in a toque with a rainbow flag on the side. He asked for help with his immigration case so Lynn and I met him for a coffee.

“How many of the people we’re delivering furniture to might be gay or lesbian,” I asked Herbert.

“Oh, so many,” he exclaimed in reply.

When I suggested we find a way to connect and perhaps gather in person, he said, “that’s the best idea you’ve ever had!”



By that night, there were 12 people who identified as gay, lesbian, or bisexual on the WhatsApp group Herbert started. He gave it the name, Rainbow Kings and Queens. By the end of the week there were 50.

How did this happen? Well, most of them credit Prime Minister Justin Trudeau by name. It was a decision of the Canadian government to partner with the Rainbow Railroad just after the Anti-Homosexuality Act was passed in Uganda in May of 2023. This government policy change would make it easier for LGBTQ+ refugee claimants to make their way into Canada.

The fact that they now have over 200 on their WhatsApp group shows the success of that policy. Why they came to Hamilton is often credited to the Uber drivers who picked them up at Pearson International Airport. Many of them report being told the shelters in Toronto are full and they should

try Hamilton instead. In June, during the diocesan’s annual Pride celebration, Fiercely Loved, about 20 of the RKQs danced their way up the aisle for the procession song, Speed. The song talks about the needs of people and how God responds with speed, as in Godspeed. They were all sporting rainbow tie-dyed shirts with the new RKQ logo. They wore the same shirts to the Dyke March and the Pride Parade in Toronto at the end of June.

Lynn continues to support the group by offering job fairs and we both assist with resumes. The monthly meetings include a Ugandan meal cooked by 4 or 5 women, some of whom have been assisted by St. Matthew’s House to get their safe food handling certificate. St. Matthew’s House also pays for the food and one staff member from the Cathedral Café team to help during the evening. Guest speakers have included the 2SLGBTQI+ liaison officer from Hamilton Police Services, a doc-




tor and counsellor on physical and mental health, and a labour rights educator.

Over the summer, many of them will take a tennis lesson at Rosedale Tennis Club, thanks to the generosity of the club pros who will lead it. They are also all invited to a free BBQ put on by Hamilton Police Services as a lead-up to local Pride celebrations the next day. The Rainbow Kings and Queens will be overflowing in numbers and in love and laughter as they experience Hamilton Pride down at Waterfront Park.

All in all, the joy experienced by the Rainbow Kings and Queens through the freedom they have in Canada is infectious. They are so happy to have settled here and many worship with the Anglican community at St. James, Dundas, at Christ’s Church Cathedral, and at All Saints Mission.

If you’d like to find out more or make a donation to support this work, please contact Deirdre Pike at deirdre.pike@niagaraanglican.ca.



NIAGARA ANGLICAN

The official publication of the Diocese of Niagara, published 10 times a year from September to June as a supplement to the *Anglican Journal*.

The Diocese of Niagara lies at the western end of Lake Ontario, encompassing the Niagara Peninsula, Hamilton, Halton Region, Guelph and portions of Wellington and Dufferin Counties.

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Printed and mailed by: Webnews Printing Inc., North York, ON
Available online at: niagaraanglican.news (blog)
niagaraanglican.ca/newspaper (PDF)
Subscriptions: \$15/year.
Submissions: Submission information and deadlines are printed elsewhere in the paper.

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Exploring Important Topics with Crucial Conversations

JOHN DENNIS

This past June, the Church of the Apostles in Guelph piloted a new public forum called Crucial Conversations. Run as an extension of the Living Better on Less (LBOL) Program, the forum invites leaders in the community to speak on topics covered in the program in standalone sessions. Our sessions have included community leaders speaking on Food Security and Healthy Aging.

LBOL Coordinator John Dennis said “the idea for Crucial Conversations came from the feedback that we received from LBOL program participants. A number of people commented that they found the discussion around certain topics to be enlightening and that many people could benefit from in-depth discussions on these topics”.

LBOL is a free educational



program developed at the Church of the Apostles in 2009. LBOL provides information to participants about living a healthy and simpler life by consuming less, spending less, and treading softly on the earth. The program is run over 6 sessions, each module focusing on a specific issue.

Crucial Conversations sessions last for about two hours

with two speakers presenting and an extended question period. The first session had Guelph MPP, Mike Shreiner, and the Executive Director of the SEED, Tom Armitage, speaking about food security. They both talked about the changes in food security related to the pandemic, land use, and inflation. Audience members asked questions of the speakers and shared personal

stories related to food security.

“I always enjoy seeing the social connections that are made at these events,” said Kim Logue, who is the Facilitator for the LBOL Program and Crucial Conversations. “Living Better on Less sessions always result in the sharing of ideas and experiences, fostering collaboration and innovation, and building relationships.”

The second session was called “Healthy Aging and the Power of Flowers” delved into memory loss, using your senses, and horticultural therapy, presented by Robin Smart from the Alzheimer Society of Waterloo Wellington and Heidi Toreitter from the Guelph Enabling Garden. During the session Heidi Toreitter had audience members looking at, smelling, listening to, and even tasting flowers that had been freshly picked from the Guelph Enabling Garden.

Additional sessions are planned for 2025 with topics including “Housing as a Right” and “Why is the internet trying to steal your money?”.

John Dennis. is the Coordinator of the Living Better on Less Program at the Church of the Apostles, Guelph.

Ordinary Discipleship Workshop an Extraordinary Event

BLAIR RICHARDSON

“Thank you so much for your work to get Jessie there: I was blown away, very uncomfortable in the way I know means I need to change something, because of a new insight, a revelation.”

This reflection came from one of the 70 people who eagerly participated in the interactive, day-long Ordinary Discipleship workshop held in late May at St. Christopher's, Burlington.

There were three goals for the day: one, to better understand the importance of discipleship; two, to learn about the concepts (contained in the book entitled “Ordinary Discipleship” by The Reverend Jessie Cruickshank) and the discipleship process,

and three, to gain insight on personal barriers to discipleship and how to address these.

The workshop was originally an idea from the Niagara Huron Anglican Cursillo Secretariat; Bishop Susan Bell agreed to co-sponsorship, with diocesan representation in the planning and hosting of the event. Leading organizers were Tim Standish and Ann Mulvale, with key support provided by Emily Hill and Canon Christyn Perkons.

The participants benefitted from presentations from three experts, who led panel discussions and facilitated the small group exercises. Participants left with homework questions to reflect on too! The presenters were: Dr. John Bowen, emeritus

professor of evangelism at Wycliffe College, University of Toronto; the Rev. Canon Dr. Ian Mobsby, community missionary and canon theologian for mission; and The Reverend Jessie Cruickshank, a nationally-recognized expert in disciple-making and the neuroscience of transformation.

As one participant commented, “The workshop was excellent. All three speakers gave their rendition of discipleship, especially The Rev. Jessie Cruickshank. She spoke from the heart and being a neuroscientist, was able to explain how the brain works in conjunction with God's word.”

One of the panelists, in the closing discussion observed that

“People want to see authenticity – revealing vulnerability is powerful. When people see you walk through the struggle, they

know that they are not alone (as a disciple). The discipling process heals both of us – the disciple and the disciple-maker.”



Photo: Renee Anderson



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Embracing Environmental Stewardship:

My Journey with Climate Justice Niagara

NAVNEET KAUR

I grew up in India, a country known for its vibrant culture, diverse landscapes, and rich history. India is a land of immense natural beauty, from the majestic Himalayas in the north to the serene backwaters of Kerala in the south. The country's biodiversity is astounding, with a wide array of flora and fauna, including several species that are unique to the region. Growing up in such an environment, I developed a deep appreciation for nature and the importance of preserving it.

Moving to Canada as a newcomer was very exciting. Canada's pristine natural beauty and commitment to environmental preservation were immediately apparent, and I felt a renewed sense of hope. I felt very good as I received admission to Niagara College, and the best part was being selected as an intern with the Diocese of Niagara. The warm welcome I received from the community and the diocese made my transition smooth and fulfilling. Here, I found a platform where my background and passion



Photo: Contributed by Navneet Kaur

for climate justice could merge, allowing me to work towards a cause I deeply care about. Climate Justice Niagara is a remarkable initiative that emphasizes the intersectionality of environmental issues and social justice. It recognizes that the impacts of climate change disproportionately affect marginalized communities and seeks to address these disparities through regular morning prayers, advocacy, education, and action. Working

with the diocese has given me the opportunity to engage with these issues at a grassroots level, collaborating with dedicated individuals who share a common vision of a sustainable and equitable future. Under the guidance of my supervisor, Deirdre Pike, I have gained valuable insights into the potential challenges and opportunities for the Communion Forest project and its effective implementation. I have worked on different aspects like joining

webinars to gain knowledge and meeting other volunteers in various parishes about the tree inventory. The best part of the internship is interacting with these passionate individuals, sharing ideas, and working together towards a common goal. My time with the Diocese of Niagara has been incredibly rewarding. I am inspired by the commitment and passion of everyone involved in Climate Justice Niagara. This experience has not only deepened my understanding of environmental issues but also strengthened my resolve to make a difference in our world. The support and

camaraderie within the diocese has made my journey as a newcomer in Canada enriching and enjoyable. In conclusion, working on Climate Justice Niagara has been a transformative experience, allowing me to bridge my past experiences in India with my present efforts in Canada. It is a testament to the power of community and the impact we can have when we come together for a common cause. I am grateful for the opportunity to contribute to this vital initiative and look forward to continuing this important work.

New Diocesan Treasurer and Director of Finance Appointed

At the end of June, Synod Council appointed Christine Morrow to serve as the diocese's next treasurer and director of finance to oversee finance and accounting functions, stewarding the resources entrusted to the care of the Synod and its parishes.



Diocesan Treasurer Christine Morrow
Photo: Diocese of Niagara

excited to join the diocese," said Morrow. "This role represents a unique opportunity to integrate my financial expertise with my dedication to supporting the Church's mission." As a member of the senior leadership team of the diocese, Morrow will also support the implementation of our diocesan vision and Mission Action Plan priorities by provisioning resources for ministry. "I am eager to collaborate with the diocesan team and contribute to the meaningful work of advancing our shared vision and goals," added Morrow. The appointment comes after a significant search process to fill the vacancy left by Kemi Okwelum's resignation in January. Canon Joanna Beck graciously agreed to serve as interim treasurer. The process involved a hiring committee comprised of the bishop and

executive officer and three members of Synod Council, ably supported by the diocesan human resources and volunteer coordinator. "With nearly 20 years of experience in the accounting field, Christine brings considerable gifts to this role alongside a deep desire to serve the diocese and its affiliated organizations," said Archdeacon Bill Mous. "We are excited to welcome her to our diocesan leadership team." The new treasurer holds a Bachelor of Accounting degree from Brock University as well as the CPA, CA designation from Chartered Professional Accountants Ontario. She has worked to support countless non-profit organizations through her work, and presently serves as a volunteer committee member with the Canadian Accounting Standards Board.

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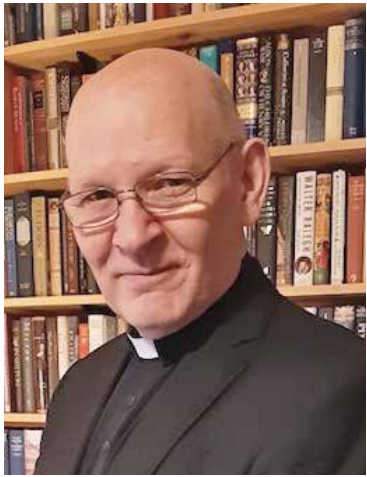
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Faith is a Dialogue, Rather than a Rant



THE REVEREND MICHAEL COREN

Earlier this year yet another street-preaching Christian was confronted by the police, this time in England on London's Uxbridge High Street, not exactly renowned as the epicentre of world evangelism and theological debate. The pattern was fairly typical and achingly predictable. Someone called the police with an allegation of a homophobic hate crime, the police arrived and explained the details of public order offences, the missionaries filmed the whole thing, conservative tabloids pounced on the story, and alleged free-speech advocates made a fuss. And the Gospel was

advanced not one inch and quite probably took a beating.

The evangelist defended himself by claiming, "All we're doing is preaching our religion ...the Bible says in the book of John, chapter three verse 16, for God's love of the world he gave his one and only Son so that whoever, whatever person - homosexual, drunk, liar or a prostitute - believes in him shall not perish and have everlasting life."

That, of course, isn't quite what it says. The reading is, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." No mention of homosexuals – a word unknown until the 19th-century. It's genuinely fascinating how often street-preachers speak of a subject hardly mentioned in 784,000 words of scripture.

That being said, the police in Britain and here in Canada can certainly be over-zealous, just as some people can be extremely intolerant of anything even remotely linked to Christianity. A few weeks before the Uxbridge nonsense an entirely innocuous Gospel singer in the centre of London was warned

by a policewoman that she had no right to be performing where she was. The cop, who also poked her tongue out at the camera, was a volunteer officer, and her superiors apologized for her actions.

One couldn't, as they say, make this stuff up. At a time of rising and often unsolved street crime in Britain one has to wonder if this is all a valid use of police time. In their defence, the police themselves are usually polite and often seem reluctant to be there but If a possible hate crime is reported, sometimes after a passer-by specifically and provocatively asks about gay relationships, they're obliged to act. There are cases where they've gone to the scene, realized that someone has over-reacted, and simply walked away.

My form of public witness is a little different. I wear my clerical collar wherever I go, which often leads to productive and respectful conversations and inquiries, and I write columns and articles. If I were to preach on the street, an extraordinarily unlikely event, and someone asked me what the Christian view was on same-sex relationships my reply

would be something along the lines of, it's that you love rather than who you love that matters, Jesus didn't refer to it and wasn't big on judging and condemning. But perhaps that's just me.

In the US the culture and constitution are far more permissive around free speech issues, but here in Canada there was a high-profile case in 2019 where an evangelist named David Lynn was arrested and charged after preaching in the heart of Toronto's gay community at the opening of Pride Month. The charges were dropped a year later.

Beyond the legalities are the reasons why they're preaching in the first place. I certainly understand a desire to speak about God, and there's a noble tradition of engaging the street, but is this about sharing the Good News or searching for soft oppression? For example, having viewed numerous videos of anti-abortion activists in Britain and North America breaking bubble zones around clinics it's clear they know very well that the police will be called and ask them to leave, and are determined to be arrested. Street-preachers may not be as

deliberate but there's sometimes more than a hint of narcissism involved.

Faith is a dialogue rather than a rant, and it's grim and downright dishonest to reduce it to a handful of strident opinions about equal marriage, women's reproductive rights, and misunderstood eschatology. We need to attract people to church, and we all struggle with finding new and effective ways to do that, but it can't be done by confirming preconceptions of intolerance.

I've been criticised in the past for questioning these megaphone martyrs. How can a priest, I was once asked, not defend Christians when they're heckled or hassled merely for preaching? Actually, it's precisely because I'm a priest and a Christian than I withhold my support. I care passionately about opening the door to show the world Jesus, and then getting out of the way, because it's about him, not us. There are all sorts of methods we can use to open that door but much as I try, I can't see this type of street-preaching as being one of them.

Cathedral Chats: Engaging Contemporary Issues

MONICA ROMIG GREEN

Cathedral Chats began during the recent pandemic as a way of connecting with the wider Hamilton community through topics of broad public interest. These conversations were the brainchild of the Rev. Dr. Rob Jones, then assistant curate at Christ's Church Cathedral and Dean Tim Dobbin and originally took place entirely via Zoom.

Later, as the pandemic restrictions eased, the conversations were moved to in-person events at the Cathedral, which were also broadcast via the Cathedral's YouTube channel and Facebook page, with online viewers invited to ask questions through the chat feature.

The intent of these podcast-style interview conversations was that they be compelling and accessible to people both inside and outside of the Cathedral community. The range of topics has been broad: social justice issues and advocacy, current



Lynda Lukasik, director of Hamilton's Office of Climate Change Initiatives (right) spoke about gentrification in Hamilton.

events, and academic research. The goal of Cathedral Chats is not "faith-based" conversations; rather, the Cathedral aims to welcome the local community, demonstrating a desire to host significant, timely and thought-provoking conversations. Cathedrals have been and remain civic spaces where the community can gather to discuss matters of public interest. Treaty rights and Indigenous sovereignty; conspiracy theories and contemporary politics; homelessness and the hous-

ing crisis; anti-racism in the Church; youth mental health; gentrification, inequality, and social tensions in post-industrial Hamilton have all been explored in recent years. Last fall, the Cathedral invited Lynda Lukasik, director of Hamilton's Office of Climate Change Initiatives to share what actions the City is taking in this important area and what everyone could do to help. In the winter, we hosted a roundtable of community leaders engaged in affordable housing to identify



Dr. Carmen Celestini answered questions about the rise of Christian nationalism.

Photos: Contributed by Monica Romig Green

solutions to the local housing crisis. In the spring, we looked at the growing issue of Christian nationalism with the help of Dr. Carmen Celestini, whose academic research is on this topic. She reported being both surprised and delighted that a church wanted to discuss the concerns and potential impact of this burgeoning ideology in Canada. The Cathedral looks forward to hosting three more chats before next summer: Climate

Justice Cathedral is sponsoring a conversation on responsible investing in the fall; our community engagement and spiritual formation teams will each offer public forums in winter and spring. We remain deeply grateful for the capacity to host these events, for the experts willing to share their time and knowledge, and for the interest and support of the wider Hamilton community.

Niagara Anglicans Say Yes! To Kids at Camp

Over \$5000 was raised in support of Canterbury Hills Camp through the 2024 Say Yes! To Kids, Anglican Foundation of Canada campaign. With the camp at 105% capacity, the funds were well used to support the 1167 campers who attended the camp this year.

“We would like to thank the donors and supporters of Canterbury Hills for helping

us reach our Say Yes! to Kids, fundraising goal,” said Sarah Bird who helped spearhead the campaign as a member of the Board of Canterbury Hills.

Say Yes! To Kids, is an initiative to help raise awareness and funding for children, youth, young adults, and family ministries across Canada. Canterbury Hills Camp was one of 16 diocesan camps who participated in

this year's campaign.

The campaign donations primarily helped to replenish the camp's bursary fund, that provides financial assistance to camper families. A small portion of the proceeds were used towards campout, crafts, and program activity supplies.

Canterbury Hills Camp runs through the months of July and August in Ancaster, offer-

ing a camping experience that provides a space for children and youth to build community, engage in experiential learning, explore their spirituality, and increase environmental awareness. In 2024, there were 528 day campers, 114 bridge campers, 464 overnight campers, 20 adventure campers, and 11 Leaders-in-Training.

To learn more about Canterbury Hills or to donate please visit: <https://canterburyhillscamp.ca/>

Left: Returning staff instruct a new camper in archery.

Below: The Leaders-In-Training in July.

Photos: Canterbury Hills Camp



A Church for All Ages

THE VENERABLE SHEILA VAN ZANDWYK

It's often a challenge for a church to reach all ages of society in one fell swoop. Each age group is perhaps looking for a little something different for worship. At Church of the Transfiguration in St. Catharines we seem to be doing something right as we have 4 generations of one family attending and we have parishioners aged from 4 months to 100 years (yes you read that right!!) Bob Trinder who turns 100 this year (and still golfs regularly) is holding Kish Baroi who was baptised in June.

We are also blessed to have Canon Cathie Crawford Browning as an honorary assistant, as well as her husband, Canon David Browning, her mother, Alice Murray, her daughter Steff Doan (who is our children, youth and family ministry coordinator), son-in-law Josh and grandchildren Audrey and Lincoln as parishioners. They are each truly a blessing to our parish family whether it is the children's laughter, Alice's butter tarts, Steff's wonderful children's talks or helping at Messy Church, they all contribute in their own way. We thank God for all our parish family!!



Left: Archdeacon Sheila Van Zandwyk, Bob Trinder and Kish Baroi.

Below: Josh and Audrey Doan, Canon David Browning, Alice Murray, Steff and Lincoln Doan, Canon Cathie Crawford Browning.”

Photos: Contributed by The Venerable Sheila Van Zandwyk



Parish Picnic Fun

In June, The Church of Our Saviour The Redeemer, Stoney Creek held their annual picnic, as many other parishes did as well. Nearly 100 parishioners arrived in Binbrook for an outside worship service and lunch. During the worship service the children of the parish held their own Sunday School session under the trees, with fun and laughter in abundance. The children played games, swung on swings, went for rides in the gator, and jumped on the trampoline. Canon Bahman Kalantari, rector, may have been the recipient of a water balloon or two tossed in his direction.

Photos: Contributed by Bev Groombridge



A Harvest of Righteousness

THE REVEREND CANON DR. SHARYN HALL

A HARVEST OF RIGHTEOUSNESS IS SOWN IN PEACE FOR THOSE WHO MAKE PEACE. (LETTER OF JAMES 3:18)

This is a wonderful phrase from the scriptures, but we all know that the opposite can also be true. We are experiencing a harvest of unrighteousness in unjust wars, in angry protests, in violence in our communities, in injustice against people of different races or religions.

The Letter of James goes on to ask, ‘those conflicts and disputes among you, where do they come from?—perhaps from cravings for something you do not have, or coveting something that others possess.’ The Letter of James possibly dates from the first century after the death of Christ, and yet the wisdom in the letter is relevant today. It may have been written in Syria or Egypt or Palestine—locations in the Middle East where oppression or war are always a threat. Then and now, we know it is the children who suffer most mentally and physically in times of violence and war. We know that thousands of children have died or been injured or stolen in wars in Ukraine and the Middle East. Will they grow up to seek the possibility of peace or will they grow up to seek revenge and retribution?

The struggle for peace is truly a struggle in areas of conflict in the world. The challenge for every generation is to continue that struggle for peace. September 21 is the United Nations International Day of Peace. The World Council of Churches encourages people of faith to make a witness and remembrance for peace.

September is also the month when many of us replay in our minds the images of 9/11.

We know that the violence of a world away can come much closer. Many of us watched the collapse of the World Trade Center towers on television that day, having difficulty believing that it was really happening. On that horrific day, prayers were sent to God, desperate prayers for help by people in the towers, pleading prayers by people for loved ones in planes or trapped in burning towers. The reality was that many people would die and many prayers would not be fulfilled and then there was the question: Where was God on that day?

Two years after the attack on September 11, a documentary entitled, ‘Faith and Doubt at Ground Zero’ investigated the religious response of people who were directly affected by the events of that day. Some people were survivors who questioned why they escaped and many others did not. One woman admitted that she had lost her love for God because God seemed indifferent to suffering. An Episcopalian priest admitted he was no longer sure of God’s help. A Muslim mother who lost her daughter and son-in-law in the collapse of the south tower prayed that they did not suffer and were now at peace with God.

In the documentary, a Christian, a Muslim and a Rabbi agreed that there is a dark side to religion. People can become so passionate about their religious beliefs that they develop extreme views and commit violent acts, and yet in every religion, there is the call to compassion for strangers. One person who was there

to witness the collapse of the buildings commented that God was fighting the devil that day and although it may seem that God lost the battle, many people were saved and God was there to comfort those who suffered.

Today, chaos seems to be all around us: violent storms and fires spread across North America, desolation and famine ravage countries in Africa, wars rage in Europe and the Middle East, people are crushed by bombs, buildings collapse into rubble, families are torn apart and children are snatched away. How can people create a harvest of righteousness in the midst of terror and destruction?

We underestimate the lingering power of resentment and hatred to inspire acts of terrorism more than two decades after 9/11. We also underestimate the power of justice and compassion to inspire acts of courage and hope for peace. The spiritual questions of 9/11 are not often discussed. Was God involved at all that day? Is religion to blame for such determination to kill others or was religion the justification for revenge?

There are many heartwarming stories of people reaching out with compassion to help strangers in distress on that chaotic day in September and for days that followed. There are many stories of people, especially relief workers and the World Kitchen people, working in dangerous conditions to help the starving people in Gaza. In our communities, people are offering help and food to homeless people. People reaching out to others with love is our greatest hope for our world and for the future. May God’s grace be with us all.

National Day for Truth and Reconciliation



"The long journey to rebuild the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in Canada is marked on September 30, so that we will never forget or cease to work for reconciliation. It is a journey of truth-telling and education that must peel away the decades of harm and the ongoing effects that deny Indigenous people respect and dignity as the first peoples of this land," wrote Archbishop Linda Nicholls and Archbishop Chris Harper in a statement last year.

The day coincides with Orange Shirt Day which also recognizes the tragic legacy of residential

schools, the missing children, the families left behind and the survivors of these institutions, several of which were run by the Anglican Church of Canada.

To mark this day, you are invited to wear Orange, to honour the thousands of residential school survivors. It’s also a good day to learn more and pray about the Church’s ongoing work of truth and reconciliation; visit niagaraanglican.ca/ministry/truth-reconciliation.



Photo: Unsplash/Mayur Gala

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ACPO: Attentively Discerning Calls to Ministry

THE REVEREND CANON
MATTHEW GRIFFIN

Bishops carefully select who they will ordain as priests. Every bishop I've spoken with tells me that they rely on the Holy Spirit and time spent in prayer! They're also supported through four other avenues of active discernment. Bishop Ralph Spence has said that we recognise the truth of a call to priestly ministry when it's from God, from the candidate, and from their community—all at the same time.

One avenue is the candidate's parish. The prayers of the parish community are essential! The incumbent, the wardens, and a few other lay people work together on a parish commendation which is shared with the bishop. It outlines how they know the candidate, how the candidate has been involved in the parish, what gifts and characteristics they see in the person that point to priestly ministry, what growth areas they perceive for the candidate, and any other advice.

Another avenue for some candidates is their theological training institution. While the focus here is on formation and study, often the experience the seminary and its faculty have of the candidate can be deeply helpful for bishops.

Each diocese of the Anglican Church of Canada has a discernment process as another avenue. These are adapted to local needs, but include getting to know the candidate, experiencing the candidate's writing and speaking about God and matters of faith, spending time with the candidate in individual conversations and group settings. Many dioceses require psychological evaluations of prospective candidates. In addition to providing potential candidates with chaplaincy support, Niagara also offers experienced guides to help the candidates in their own unfolding work of discernment.

A priest isn't ordained for just the diocese they come from—but they are ordained a priest in Christ's holy catholic Church. The fourth avenue of discernment was created by the Anglican Church of Canada in the early 1970s, and is an opportunity for the whole Church to offer its advice. Referred to as ACPO for short, the Advisory Committee on Postulants for

Ordination is a national program run in each of the four ecclesiastical provinces (Canada, Ontario, Northern Lights, and British Columbia & the Yukon).

I firmly believe ACPO is a gift to the Church, to the candidates, and to everyone who participates! It's a gift of attention and perspective. ACPO assesses candidates sent by their bishops to conferences on the basis of their call, character, and charisms (or gifts—the Church loves alliteration).

Candidates fill in their information packages in advance, complete with letters of reference. A normal residential conference begins with training for the chaplain and the assessors, who have been chosen by bishops from the province. The assessors are drawn from both lay people and clerics, and the secretary tries to bring together a diverse assessment team.

The candidates arrive on the Friday morning. From the moment they arrive, everything they say and do receives careful attention from the assessors—except for when we worship together. After an opening briefing, the ACPO Bishop (currently our own Bishop Susan) celebrates the Eucharist and preaches. We share lunch, and the bishop meets with the assessors.

In the afternoon, groups of up to three candidates meet with a team of three assessors for group interviews. Candidates and assessors alike respond to the same questions, and hopefully relax into the process. There's a social time and dinner, and then the first individual interview happens for each of the candidates (with one of their team of three assessors from the group interview). We all share in Night Prayers together.

On Saturday morning after breakfast, the second and third individual interviews happen. We eat lunch together, and then the secretary meets with the candidates while the assessors begin to prepare the reports. After another social and dinner time, the candidates share an evening with the chaplain while the secretary and the assessors review each report, revising it until it reflects the consensus of the assessment team.

On Sunday morning, we have breakfast and share in the Eucharist, and then the reports



are shared with the candidates. The candidates are most often waiting to hear whether or not they've been recommended for postulancy at this time, but it's the rest of the report that aspires to be gift to them and their bishops for many years to come—what the assessors heard and saw about the candidate's call, how we saw them interact with other folk at the conference, what gifts they bring to their ministry, and often some recommendations for next steps. We share in the reports how we know each thing we saw or heard, and strive to quote the candidate verbatim.

Those three words "at this time" are important. Very fine priests have gone to an ACPO conference and heard that they were "not recommended at this time"—only to return home, work with their bishop, and return to another conference.

Simone Weil wrote that "attention is the rarest and purest form of generosity." That's what the assessment team seeks to give each candidate who comes to ACPO—attention, care, deep-listening, and a striving to hear what they're able to share of why they're being so courageous as to explore a potential call to priestly ministry. That gift of attention is shared with candidates' bishops in the form of recommendations. That gift of attention is one we hope will continue to serve the Church as we remember together that discernment takes time and effort. After all, each of us who follows Christ has been entrusted with vocation—or calling—and whether that calling is lived out as a lay person, or a deacon, or a monastic, or a priest, it's worth returning again and again to Frederick Buechner's definition of vocation: "The place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet."

Canon Matthew Griffin serves as the ACPO secretary of the Ecclesiastical Province of Ontario.

Photo: Unsplash/Lee Scott



Good Reading for Any Season

The Book Club of St. Paul's Caledonia chose "The Rebel Christ" by The Reverend Michael Coren as their summer reading. Each week the group faithfully meets on Tuesday afternoons at a local Christian coffee shop for a discussion to explore its meaning for the faith of its members. The book was one of the Bishop's Lenten Books, but as Jann Brooks says, "We give it two thumbs up! And recommend it for reading any time of the year." In July, the author joined the members of the Book Club for questions and answers about "The Rebel Christ" as well as his experiences as a broadcaster and interviewer of many of today's newsmakers.

Parish MAP 2.0 Launched

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

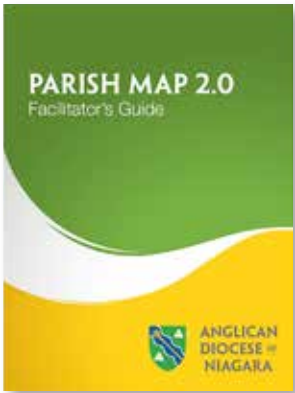
ways we're being called to life and compelled to love."

For many parishes, the coming year will be a perfect time to reengage the MAP process. The new MAP 2.0 guide builds

on what parishes have already done in MAP 1.0 and invites them to dream bigger about God's mission.

Work is also underway to renew the current diocesan Mission Action Plan ahead of Synod in November.

In her charge to Synod last year, Bishop Susan Bell observed that the MAP process has helped congregations to revitalize and surface their vision, "while also helping us to better understand why we're here as a Church and what we're supposed to be doing about that both now and in the near future."



The Spirituality of Botox



**THE REVEREND CANON
MARTHA TATARNIC**

A friend of mine was wondering about Botox with me the other day—not for herself or for me. She was wondering why the young women with whom she works would be getting Botox when they’re in their twenties. She was wondering about the generation gap between us in middle age and these younger women. She told me that they are quality people who are caring and kind, but that she has trouble relating to this aspect of being preoccupied with superficial appearances.

My friend has lived through hard things. Her husband died of cancer a few years ago, and it was difficult and filled with loss every step of the way. She is a person of tremendous faith and someone who inspires me to be more faithful too. She experienced this dark journey as one in which God drew close to her,

God sustained and strengthened her. Her husband’s illness and death was, for her, a revelation of God’s love and faithfulness.

This Botox conversation was about a couple of things. It was the naming of a disconnect that can be all too familiar across generations. Anecdotally, it does seem that this generational divide usually rears its head most strongly for those of us who get to our midway point and have lived through significant losses, faced challenges we had never imagined facing, and have some battle scars permanently etched now onto our souls. We’re old enough to feel like being young and carefree was a long time ago, but we don’t yet have the perspective age brings in being able to see common ground across all of our various life stages.

I’m not an expert in bridging generational divides. I do, however, know something about what leads people to become consumed with questions of appearance. And I would vehemently claim that what is going on with these young women and their Botox is of deep spiritual significance, not just for them but for all of us.

The cosmetic preoccupations of women have historically been judged harshly. “Glam sham-ing” is a concept that sounds silly and is actually a bias that deserves to be called out. Women face enormous pressure to look a certain way, to be trim and wrinkle-free and full-haired.

But we want the labour that it takes to make this aesthetically pleasing package to be hidden. Too much time spent thinking about our appearance is considered vain and self-involved.

I used to spend a lot of time worried about my weight and the food I put into my body. I had an eating disorder. I didn’t talk about this until much later in my life, and I find it hard to talk about now because of the associated judgement. I can tell you that it was partly about the pressure to look a certain way, and it was more fundamentally about believing that if I could make myself look the way I thought I should on the outside, then everything on the inside would be fixed too.

Here is what I would want to say about and to the young women who seem to be preoccupied only with how they look. I would want to claim a deep spiritual impulse to choices that are otherwise judged as superficial. We want to be enough. We want to be seen. We want to be seen as beautiful. We want to measure up. We want to be named worthy. This is the most basic of spiritual desires, it is the restless heart with which we are born, it is the longing that drives human behaviour and that can ultimately lead us to God.

It is also the longing that the world around us will provide umpteen different, and ultimately inadequate, ways of addressing—other than pointing toward a relationship with

the God who sees us fully and claims us as God’s own.

And the second thing I would want these women to know is that there is a bigger picture here in which we all bear responsibility. It’s easy to label women as superficially caught up in vanity about their appearance, and it’s much harder for us to move the cultural dial on how beauty is seen differently and claimed more fully. We all need to be part of how our eyes are opened to see beauty in its many different forms—not just so that we can value ourselves more, but so that we can value one another more too. There is a lot of money to be made selling us makeup, diets, cosmetic procedures, and any number of other antidotes to flagging self-confidence. There is a lot of power to be stolen by keeping women hungry and insecure. There is a lot of justice that is lacking as long as we believe the lie that only certain types of bodies are beautiful. There is a lot of joy passing us by when we allow guilt and depravation to undermine the gift of seeing one another’s beauty—especially across our wrinkles and our aging skin and bones.

There was another layer to my conversation with my friend,

and it’s about the frustration of trying to share the gift of faith with people who seem determined to keep to the surface of life. But the Christian faith teaches us that whether or not people have any interest in spirituality, it is core to the witness of Jesus that God is present in their lives, at work in them, that they are created in God’s image and that the living God is already invested in them, even if they have no idea. At the end of the day, we’re not really called to “share” our faith at all because that suggests that we have something that others don’t. The only thing that is really asked of us is to try to offer language for something that is already real and true. We’re not giving people anything. We’re inviting people to have eyes to see.

This isn’t just a nice suggestion that Jesus gives us, it’s a responsibility. It’s about respecting and recognizing the spiritual longing in one another, even those who feel like they’re on a different page in a completely other book from us. And it’s about investing ourselves in the kind of overall change that helps all of us to be treated with dignity and worth—to see beauty in ourselves and in others.

Four Courses Offered this Fall

“We have an exciting line-up of courses this fall, with something for everyone,” says Sarah Bird, missional formation coordinator and The Niagara School for Missional Leadership (NSML) registrar.

One of the four course offerings is new this year. The Reverend Canon Dr. Judith Paulsen will be leading a course called, A New and Ancient Evangelism. “This course is based on Judith’s newest book of the same name, which was just released in June,” noted Bird.

Parish Development Missioner Emily Hill attended a recent Clergy, Wardens and Lay Workers Day where she

first heard Judith speak. “Judy’s energy, enthusiasm and deep knowledge on the topic of evangelism will be a blessing for all students taking the course,” shares Hill. “Her talk was an inspiration to all of us in attendance”

The course will guide participants through the ancient traditions of evangelism by reviewing eight biblical stories about conversion and the lessons they offer. Students will then explore how they can use these examples in a modern world through their own context.

“We also have the return of courses that were favourites in previous sessions such as, Anglican Polity: How We Do

Things Around Here led by Bishop Susan Bell, and Pastoral Care Foundation: Presence, Paying Attention and Prayer led by Canon Terry DeForest,” says Bird. Christian Foundations will also be offered by a new instructor, Matthew Green.

Courses begin mid to late September and registration is open to anyone interested in deepening their faith and understanding of missional leadership.

For more information visit nsml.ca or contact Sarah Bird registrar@nsml.ca



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The Gift of New Beginnings

THE REVEREND DEACON
JANICE WHITELEY

Do you remember the old song Que sera, sera? It was a song my mother used to sing to me. It was essentially about a young child asking her mother and others how the future would unroll for her. I enjoyed the song because to me it carried a great deal of hope. It was all there for you. We don't know what the future holds for our lives but when I heard that song, I had the feeling that God had the plan and if we do our best to follow that plan, it would be well.

I have been blessed in so many ways in life. At this stage, just when I thought retirement was in view, came the call to become a deacon. Having just come through the ordination for this very special part of my life, I must say, I am still trying to wrap my head around it. When I first spoke with the bishop, and following the diaconal path was suggested, I must admit that although I had heard the word, I really did not know what a deacon was within the



Bishop Susan Bell presents a Bible to Deacon Janice Whiteley after her ordination in May.

Photo: William Pleydon

Anglican Church or what they did. I was advised to go home and pray about it, discern. I had to start with looking it up to see what it meant! My sense from the beginning was that this was right. I have come far enough in life to know that prayer and contemplation on life decisions is essential. With prayer and the much-needed guidance and consultation with others, the answer became very clear

within me. I would take the steps necessary to pursue this. A new beginning! Just as I thought the years in my chosen careers of nursing and teaching were finishing, a new door was opening. God is good! This spoke so loudly of my personal beliefs, Christian walk, and the desire held within me. The Holy Spirit has guided this journey every step of the way. As well as some liturgical



duties in life as a deacon, it will involve, "Holding before the Church the needs of the world, interpreting those needs to the Church....". I have a grateful heart that God has brought this ministry into my life. I feel blessed to have this opportunity. Many years ago as I was doing some bible reading, and this verse found me—Jeremiah 29:11 "For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you a hope and a future." I have held these words close for most of my adult life. Nursing was a dream I held from when I was very young. That was a new beginning for me at the age of 30, going on several years later to have another new door open, another new beginning, that of teaching in the nursing program. There

have been many opportunities within all of this to learn, grow, and offer what I could. I am reminded of another verse from Ephesians 3:21-22 "Now to him who is able to do unmeasurably more than all we can ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever! Amen!" My background as a First Nations person has been another part of the journey. I see God putting this together with any work I can do at this time. Thank God for the gift of new beginnings! My heart is full, and I am ever so grateful that God has given me once again, a new gift! May you be blessed in your life as we go forward in what God lays before us. Meegwetch. Blessings.

Food, Fun, Fellowship, and Philanthropy

FILOMENA STABILE

A sense of community was proudly on display at St. Thomas' St. Catharines on Saturday, July 20 as their yard sale and BBQ was in full swing with over 100 people in attendance. After months of planning, organizing, and sorting through a treasure trove of donations, the event finally came to fruition. And heaven gave its blessing with a beautiful sunny day. The event goals were to raise funds for outreach/general funds and to also create a sense of community among the parishioners and surrounding neighbourhood.



Photo: Contributed by Filomena Stabile

It was planned as a community engagement event and

as St. Thomas' participates in the MAP (Mission Action Plan)

process, this "ticked all the boxes." Donations poured in from parishioners and the community at large. Archdeacon Bruce McPetrie was the resident chef for the day serving up coffee and muffins as well as hot dogs, cold drinks and, of course, ice cream. The highlight for one volunteer was the fellowship that went on at the café. There was always someone resting there, enjoying great food, and just talking to the yard sale attendees who were also taking a break from shopping. The event was a tremendous success! It was a great community builder; watching everyone working together to achieve

a common goal while having fun as was clear from all the smiles and laughter. In the end, St. Thomas' raised over \$1,500 and all remaining items were donated to other charities. "It takes a parish" and St. Thomas' is fortunate to have such resolute members who devote themselves to service, are always there to support each other and the mission of the church. This was an ideal opportunity to meet new people in the neighbourhood while demonstrating our Christian spirit and confirming that St. Thomas' continues to be a vibrant contributor to the community.

Niagara Anglican Deadlines and Submission Guidelines

Upcoming Deadlines:

- October – August 30
- November – September 27
- December – October 25

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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In other words

In Praise of Ordinary Time



JOHN BOWEN

What is your favourite time of the liturgical year? My guess is that most people would put Christmas or Easter at the top of their lists. Missional types like Rogation Days because that's traditionally the time when congregations "beat the bounds" of their parish, to pray for the neighbourhood where they live and move and have their ministry.

As for the rest, well, maybe Advent would get some votes for the sense of expectancy it brings—although Christmas rather overshadows that—and maybe Pentecost, especially among the charismatically inclined. Lent? Not so much.

So far, I haven't heard any votes for what is called Ordinary Time. This is the period between Pentecost in the spring and Advent in the late fall, which is between 18 and 23 weeks long. If we are honest, many of us think of this period as pretty boring, because there are no big celebrations—and it's a long period to go without. Fortunately, the summer comes during that period, so there are lots of things to distract us quite apart from

church celebrations.

The appeal of routine

C.S. Lewis had a quite different attitude to Ordinary Time. For him, it was his favourite time of the liturgical year. Why? Precisely because of the repetitive routine that so many of us find boring. But how can that possibly appeal to anyone?

The answer is that, in the life of a Christian disciple, steady, daily attention to one's faith is a supreme but undervalued quality. Of course, there are mountaintops in the life of faith—splendid worship services, memorable conferences, overwhelming moments of awe as we are faced with God's wonderful creation, dramatic answers to prayer, and so on. These things are precious, and I would be the last person to denigrate such experiences. There are also dark valleys in the life of faith—times of doubt and of suffering, times when God seems a million miles away, times when prayers into which we put our heart and soul are not answered. But most of life is not lived either on the mountaintops or in the deepest valleys. Most of our days are somewhere in the middle, humdrum and ordinary, and it's easy to underestimate their importance.

When I was teaching at Wycliffe College, I confess that going to early morning chapel was not my favourite activity, even when I stayed over at the college and had only steps to walk. But I felt chastened by



Photo: Unsplash/Andrew Gook

the example of a colleague who, day after day, walked half an hour across town in order to be at morning chapel. I once commented to him how impressive this was. He shrugged and said with a smile, "I think of it as being like breakfast. There is not necessarily anything special about my breakfast, but I eat it every day. For me, chapel is a form of spiritual breakfast." I confess his words didn't make me any more enthusiastic about getting up early, but it did make me think about the value of ordinary, even boring, routines. Like breakfast.

The walk of faith

The New Testament confirms the value of the mundane. There is a very important word St. Paul uses some 20 times. It's the little word "walk." He urges us to walk in the light, to walk in the truth, to walk in faith, to walk in newness of life, to walk in a way that pleases God, to

walk in the vocation to which we have been called. Sometimes modern versions translate the word as "live your life" like this or "behave" like that, which may be more colloquial for us, but which mask that simple picture of "walking" the Christian life.

The dictionary describes walking as you might expect: "to move along by putting one foot in front of the other." Walking is steady, repetitive, undramatic, methodical—and it gets you where you are going in the end. Simple—but effective.

Why does this matter? Because the "walk" of faith and truth and love is the essence of being a Christian. The Christian walk is what discipleship is all about. Choosing to love with a steady, repeated determination. Choosing truth over lies with boring predictability. Praying because it's the right thing to do. Making a habit of hope rather than despair every time the choice presents itself. Today.

And then the same tomorrow. And the day after.

What does that look like in practice? Daily prayer and Bible reading. Greeting the pan-handler on the corner. Asking the young server in the coffee shop how her studies are going. Apologizing to my spouse after I have failed to listen—again. Thanking the priest for the sermon, however good or bad it was. Not skipping my tithe. Remembering to pray for people when I've said I would. Giving thanks before a meal. Choosing not to repeat a bit of juicy gossip I've just heard.

Few people notice such things. None of these disciplines (for that is what they are) is earth shaking or dramatic. But they are what the life of faith looks like on a daily basis. Discipleship is a matter of repeated choice. Just like breakfast. Or walking. And it gets us where God calls us to go.



Photo: Canon Keith Whittingham

Jordan Organ Turns 40

Four decades ago, Karl Wilhelm of Mont St. Hilaire, Quebec installed the organ at St. John's, Jordan. Built in the classic tradition with mechanical action, his 98th instrument, the organ boasts 8 stops and has over 500 pipes. There is a single keyboard and full pedalboard. The parishioners at St. John's are planning a fall celebration of this unique instrument. For further information, please contact the church office at 905-562-7238 stjohnsjordanoffice@gmail.com.

Little Free Library Installed in Oakville

A team consisting of David MacKay, Malcolm Little, Nancy Blackie and Kurt Rudolph from St. Cuthbert's, Oakville had great fun installing the Little Free Library and Birdhouse Village bench, despite the rainy weather on the day. Inspired by a Niagara Anglican article in 2018, the parish contacted Eric Henderson of St. James Anglican Church, Fergus to see if he would build a similar one for St. Cuthbert's. He agreed, and a bench, built by the rector's neighbour, was added to the plans. Doug Shorthouse, parishioner and artist, chose the paint colours and both bench and library were painted by Nancy. All of the costs for the project were covered by the local charity, Give Oakville.



Photo: Contributed by St. Cuthbert's Oakville