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A section of the Anglican Journal



NIAGARA ANGLICAN



A Gathering Place and a Sounding Board for the People of the Diocese of Niagara — Since 1955

SEPTEMBER 2023

Comprehensive Feasibility Study Set To Begin

Clergy and parishioners will be asked for feedback on proposed capital campaign

This fall will see the launch of a feasibility study in the Diocese of Niagara to determine the level of support for a parish-focused capital campaign.

“The whole campaign is designed to support local ministry. The health, well-being, confidence, and mission-driven life of our parishes and missions is the goal of all we do as a diocese,” said Bishop Susan Bell. “This campaign presents an important opportunity to resource our local mission action plans.

Representatives from the Steier Group, a church development and fundraising firm, will be conducting interviews across

the diocese to gain feedback on a variety of potential campaign elements.

The primary aim of the proposed campaign is to provide resources for mission in the next season of the church’s ministry, drawing on locally discerned mission action plans. In addition, the campaign would create a new leadership endowment to support differentiated curacies as well as the ministries of missionaries and church planters. Together, these two campaign goals seek to equip our ministries to flourish by resourcing mis-

See *FEASIBILITY* Page 2



Annual Synod Convenes Online in November

THE VENERABLE BILL MOUS

“Stewarding God’s Gifts for Mission” is the theme for the 149th Synod of the Diocese of Niagara, aptly chosen by Bishop Susan Bell.

Members will explore and pray on this theme as a lens through which to contemplate the matters coming before the Synod. A passage from 1 Peter, chapter 4 verses 8 through 12, serves as the biblical foundation for this year’s theme. It exhorts us to love one another deeply in all matters, and to steward the gifts that God has entrusted to our care in order that they

might serve others. The passage also speaks about a time of testing. While the pandemic certainly tested us, our Mission Action Plan continues to focus us on the many opportunities where God is calling us to life and compelling us to love.

Our Synod will convene virtually this year having met in a hybrid format last year. Members will gather via Zoom on Saturday, November 4 to consider essential matters during the half-day session.

At the outset of the Synod, Bishop Susan Bell will share her charge to members, reflecting on the theme and casting a vision

for our collective ministries over the coming year. Members of synod will also hear how, through our Mission Action Plan, we are enlivening our faith, reshaping our culture and structures for mission, and fostering God’s justice.

Synods are an important structure in the governance of our diocese, but, they are so much more than that. They seek to build up the whole Church through prayer, story-sharing, relationship-building, discernment, and decision-making.

The budget will share how the diocese has faithfully stewarded God’s gifts for mission, especially

through the challenges and tumult of the pandemic. While revenues forecast to be at a low ebb in 2024 due to our three-year rolling average Diocesan Mission and Ministry formula, there are many reasons for hope and excitement as we look ahead to the renewal of God’s mission in 2025 and beyond.

The business parts of the Synod will also include receiving the 2022 auditor’s report as well as a few housekeeping changes to the canons. The election of Provincial Synod delegates—which is set to meet next fall in Sault St. Marie—and regional representatives to Synod

Council will be conducted using an online voting platform and reported during the Synod.

All the reports and resolutions for the Synod will be posted at niagaraanglican.ca/synod/2023.

In the coming weeks, please hold the members of synod in your prayers as they discern how our diocese—and all its parishes and missions—can best steward God’s gifts for mission in this next season of the Church’s ministry in Niagara.

The Venerable Bill Mous serves as the Executive Officer and Secretary of Synod.

Unburdening Bitterness

SUSIE KIM

These days we have a myriad of streaming services, but a long time ago, in Ancient Greece, people had epic poetry. Since people were generally illiterate, there were performers who knew these poems by heart that sang or recited them. Many of these poems must be lost forever, but some of them had so much staying power that they were written down when writing things down was costly and difficult. One of these poems is the Iliad, and the first word of the poem in its original Greek tells you what the poem is about: anger.

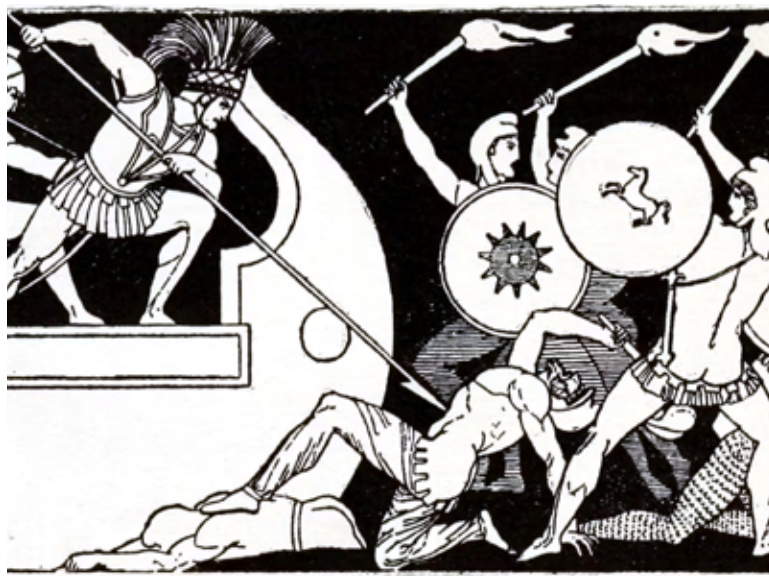
It's a bit willful of me to start off talking about an ancient Greek poem. But I've always believed that ancient works of literature tell us something fundamental about the experience of being human. That's at least part of the reason why they survived for so long and why some people still love to think and talk about them. The *Iliad* in particular has been on my mind lately because I've noticed, in my attempts to be present in Hamilton as a Neighbourhood Missioner, that the people I come across are often very angry.

I see the anger in different ways. A common way people seem to be coping with their anger is with humour. Sometimes the humour is gentle and self-deprecating, but other times it's sharp and pointed outward. One of the oddest forms of anger presenting itself as humour that I see very often is the way people use the Ha-ha reaction on Facebook comments in that ironic way that says: "What you've said is so wrong that all I can do is laugh at you."

A less common but more direct way people cope with their anger is with aggression. I've seen people yelling at those in retail or customer service over the smallest things. I've heard people gossip in the most vehement terms about people who are supposed to be friends. I am not immune to the spirit of anger that seems to have come over the world, and I find myself getting heated on an online forum called Reddit, arguing with strangers on the internet.

As someone trying to form relationships with people of peace in the neighbourhood this overwhelming anger that

seems to be inside just about everybody is a real barrier. The atmosphere of anger creates an atmosphere of fear. No one seems to know when the next minor explosion will happen. No one seems to know when they will be the target of ridicule or shame. Everyone is angry, and no one is safe. It keeps people from being able to be themselves. It's difficult to be in relationship with people who are constantly hiding who they are. But I can't blame them—it's a safety issue. Jesus meets us only where we are, yet we are all too angry and too afraid to be in the here and now that we are in.



AJAX DEFENDING THE GREEK SHIPS AGAINST THE TROJANS.

Image: Contributed by Susie Kim

The anger in the *Iliad* is specifically the anger of Achilles. I hate to do disservice to the text, but I will try to summarize to the best of my abilities for the sake of this article. Achilles is the great warrior of the Achaeans, who are attacking the Trojans. He becomes angry, initially because what is his has been taken away from him. In his anger, he refuses to fight, and this turns the tides of the war against the Achaeans. His dear friend Patroclus cannot bear to witness such a loss, so he convinces Achilles to let him go to battle wearing Achilles's armor, so that the soldiers will be encouraged by seeing their top warrior return. Patroclus is killed in battle by Hector, and Achilles's anger burns even hotter. Achilles kills Hector and drags Hector's corpse around the city. This gruesome revenge does not make his rage go away.

What finally allows Achilles's anger to resolve is Hector's father,

King Priam, coming to Achilles himself despite knowing that Achilles might kill him too. Priam kisses Achilles's hands and pours out his grief over Hector's and his many sons' deaths at the hands of Achilles. He asks Achilles to think of his own father, and weeps at Achilles's feet. Achilles then begins to weep too. The great poet then sings: "When Achilles was now sated with grief and had unburdened the bitterness of his sorrow, he left his seat and raised the old man by the hand, in pity for his white hair and beard."

I've dragged you around the city of the great poem the *Iliad*

for this: anger can be sated with grief. To put it another way, anger can only resolve when the grief underneath the anger is recognized and seen. Bitterness is often sorrow, and it needs to be unburdened.

I suspect that so many people are so angry because in fact so many people are grieving. There has been much to grieve. The practical wisdom that the ancient poem of the *Iliad* can give us here is that it is only in witnessing Priam's grief that Achilles is able to see his own grief and sate it.

One of the things I try to do as a Neighbourhood Missioner is to be the Priam for the Achilles around me. It often feels dangerous to do so, because it always is a risk to be in the here and now, and not only that, to clearly communicate what is here and now. The great wisdom and gift that Priam offers is a self-knowledge about where he is and what he is grieving,

and the courage to name that grief through tears. Have we named, even for ourselves, our griefs? How will we help others see their grief if we cannot see our own? And if we cannot see that we are deeply bereft, how

will we know to lay that heavy burden at Jesus's feet? My hope is that we as the Church can walk through our fears and name the things that grieve us, so that our neighbours too can be unburdened.

Feasibility Study Planned

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

sional initiatives and investing in the future leadership of the diocese's parishes and missions.

"It's important that our clergy and lay leaders hear without any doubt that this is all designed to support them and their local missional goals," said Bishop Bell.

The campaign would also provide an impactful one-time gift to the Anglican Church of Canada's Healing Fund or to support the emerging Indigenous Anglican Church in Canada. It would also provide major one-time gifts to support the ministries of St. Matthew's House, Canterbury Hills endowment, and Christ's Church Cathedral.

"Bishop Susan wants to hear from as many people as possible, so we can gauge their interest in addressing these urgent needs," said the Reverend Canon Dr.

Drew MacDonald, diocesan stewardship and campaign advisor.

During the 13-week study, slated to begin September 25, parishioners will have a variety of ways to give their opinions. While some will be personally interviewed, others will have the option to complete surveys or attend a town hall meeting in their region.

Participants will be given a fact sheet that outlines each of the needs and how the diocese would like to address them. As of now, the proposed campaign is estimated to be \$20 million.

The information collected during the study is confidential and will help diocesan leadership discern how to best proceed with a campaign centered on building up the parishes and missions of the diocese.

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Imposter's Syndrome Is My Companion

And Maybe I Don't Have to Fake to 'Til I Make It



**THE REVEREND CANON
MARTHA TATARNIC**

FOR WHENEVER I AM WEAK, THEN I AM STRONG. (2 CORINTHIANS 12:10)

I was recently asked how I deal with that negative voice in my head telling me I can't do something. I was asked the question because I am a woman in leadership. Our places in leadership are newer in the overall scheme of how our society is structured—there are a lot of glass ceilings only recently broken. Some of those ceiling-breaking moments feel nominal or performative, rather than representing real change. There are ceilings that remain resolutely shatter-proof. And there are still circles in our North American culture where it is acceptable to tell women that their place is in the home. Most of us have our stories of the subtle and not-so-subtle voices telling us that our responsibilities should be prioritized in directions other than pursuing goals and accolades or climbing any professional ladders. This question was asked of me in the context of pooling female wisdom in intentional ways to counteract these very real and ongoing barriers and to build one another up.

I resonated with the question—I know that negative voice well—I hear it every time I put shoe to pavement on a

run. I hear it when I say 'yes' to positions of leadership, speaking engagements or any of the other things to which I give an eager 'yes' even though I'm pretty sure I don't know what I'm doing. Imposters' syndrome is my regular companion. I have to speak in front of large crowds of people, even though I find it terrifying to do so. I lead meetings and committees and projects populated by people who undeniably have expertise and skills that I don't have. I have ended up developing ideas I am not qualified to develop, learning as I go and realizing along the way that there are a lot of people who know a whole lot more than I do.

There are two ways of dealing with imposters' syndrome, other than paralysis or giving up. The first way is obvious—learn to be your own champion; develop some confidence-building mantras; talk back to those negative voices; keep an arsenal of the memories of times that you overcame challenges and succeeded. This is the strategy I use in running. There are always a million reasons why stopping seems more reasonable than continuing. I have had to learn how to keep putting one foot in front of the other, how to combat the wishing and the worrying with the embrace of the moment. Whatever happens next, right now I'm running.

The second way is less obvious. It's less obvious and also more valuable. I have tried the "a leader leads" strategy of barreling my way through my insecurities, looking and sounding as confident and knowledgeable as possible. I don't know how successful I was in fooling anyone, but I do know it was hard to see the big picture from out there in front.

Instead, I've learned this alternative: lean into the negativity.



Paradoxically, there is something enormously positive about those negative voices, as well as something true. The truth is that I am scared and vulnerable and don't know everything and often don't have a clue what I'm doing. Rather than denying that, talking myself out of it, or pretending things are otherwise, I can turn my own shortcomings into an asset.

If I am lacking knowledge, skills and expertise, then that means I need to make room for the gifts of others around the table. If I don't know everything, then that means I have to listen. If I don't have an arsenal of strategies and grand plans, then that means I have to be nimble and flexible and responsive in how plans—step by step, and with tons of conversation along the way—take shape. If there are things that I am called to do that fill me with fear and trepidation, then I need to rely on a grace and a strength that comes from beyond me. If I am attentive to the fact that I, on my own, am not enough, then I will never get trapped into thinking that I have to go it alone.

It's not just that this leaning into negativity is potentially positive, it's also very Christian. Jesus had a lot of time for sinners but was quick to condemn smugness. Jesus, and then in his stead the Holy Spirit, leaves the disciples with no option ever to rest on their laurels, continually

challenging any entrenched thoughts of entitlement or privilege and making it clear that there is always someone other than you and your buddies who brings a fresh perspective and who will challenge and unsettle and bless.

Jesus is formed by Hebrew scriptures which, over their long arc through the history of the Jewish people, leave no apple cart overturned. "You think you know this, but I tell you this," is a through-line baked into who God chooses for what roles, into the prophets' many calls to kings and commoners and everyone in between never to think that their position in God's estimation was secured merely by lineage or titles, into the surprising and humble and quiet and subtle ways that God shows up. The people of God would need to be made and re-made in each successive generation, not by birthright, but by acts of mercy and a corporate offering that is most compelling in its humility

rather than its domination.

I hesitate to make grand sweeping statements about how female leadership is different from male leadership. We are all people, and we are all unique. Creating the kind of welcoming conditions for women not only to be in leadership, but to flourish in doing so, expands the talent pool. And that's a good thing. Women aren't naturally more compassionate or nurturing or warm or humble. We don't automatically change systemically and structurally because we put a woman in charge.

I do wonder, however, whether the relative newness of female leadership in so many sectors of society, as well as the way that women tend to be socialized, means that we are a little more prone to imposters' syndrome and those negative voices than our male counterparts. I also wonder if leaning into that imposters' syndrome, rather than fighting it, might be part of what could be our offering. Maybe the world doesn't need more confidence, self-reliance and expertise. Maybe the world needs more collaboration, more listening, more flexibility, more humility. Maybe we don't have to "fake it 'til we make it."

Maybe the greatest thing I, as an insecure and unqualified woman, might bring to the table is an honesty about the things that I lack.

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**CALLED TO LIFE
COMPELLED TO LOVE**

Reflections on General Synod 2023



Assembly 2023: Green Shoots Sprout Up in Calgary

General Synod met from June 26 to July 2, 2023

"There's a lot to love about our Church, and the experience of gathering Anglicans from across the country to worship, fellowship, and do the business of the Church, is one of those things," says Bishop Susan Bell.

From June 27 to July 2, the General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada was hosted by the Diocese of Calgary as part of an assembly with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada. "Let there be Greening" served as the theme and a touchstone for the gathering.

"It was very exciting to walk into a room of Anglicans from all parts of the Canadian Church and know we were going to be listening, learning, and talking together as we received reports, watched presentations, and discussed resolutions," reflected Canon Kathy Morgan, one of the Diocese of Niagara's eight members in attendance. "There was even more excitement as our Lutheran friends joined assembly and the conversations became even fuller."

In her Primatial Address, Archbishop Linda Nicholls gave a wide-ranging overview of her ministry and that of the church nationally in recent years, especially through the pandemic. The primate reflected on Anglican identity and the Anglican Church of Canada's place within the worldwide Christian Church. She concluded her remarks by noting that the Church is entering an intentional time of discernment about its mission for the future, pursuing new pathways for mission, and seeking to support the emerging self-determining Indigenous Church.

To guide planning, priority-setting, and resource allocation, General Synod members adopted five Transformational Aspirations for the Church, to be lived out in the coming years in collaboration with provinces and dioceses.

Some of the many green shoots of God's mission and ministry that sprouted up throughout the worship,



Niagara's attendees to General Synod 2023, held in Calgary in July. Left to right: Reverend Canon David Anderson, Andrew Clinkard, Susan Little, Canon Greg Tweney, Jodey Porter, Adam MacNeil, Dana Lutton (Jodey Porter's sighted guide), Dean Tim Dobbin, Reverend Canon Kathy Morgan, Archdeacon Bill Mous, Bishop Susan Bell.

Photo: Contributed by Diocese of Niagara

presentations, discussions, and decisions included:

- authorizing pastoral liturgies for journeys for gender transition and affirmation;
- furthering the work of dismantling racism in the Church;
- adopting a motion to address the climate emergency;
- sharing a new parish engagement resource for social and ecological justice issues;
- receiving the Sacred Circle's Covenant and Our Way of Life document; and
- entering into a full communion relationship with the Moravian Church.

"General Synod was an occasion of rejoicing and some difficulty," reflected Bishop Bell. "It was often a pleasure, sometimes a strain, but always a privilege to serve as the governing body for our Church." The bishop noted that a lot of good work was accomplished through the assembly, observing that the Spirit was woven through the discussions. "We learned a lot about our emerging church post-pandemic, and also in the light of the self-determining Indigenous church. A new reality and rela-

tionship is being revealed."

The secretary general of the Anglican Communion, Bishop Anthony Poggo, addressed General Synod. In his remarks, he highlighted Canadian contributions to the global Church and praised the Anglican Communion's "inter-connectedness across continents, cultures, and languages." A State of the Union address about the full Anglican-Lutheran full communion relationship was also offered during the assembly.

Canon Ian Alexander and Archdeacon Tanya Phibbs were elected to serve as prolocutor and deputy prolocutor of the General Synod. In a separate election, Bishop Susan Bell and Adam MacNeil, Niagara's youth member, were elected to serve on the Council of General Synod, the executive body of the Anglican Church of Canada.

Those from Niagara attending the assembly made significant contributions to the organization, worship, discernment, motions, and debate.

"Some days felt long and challenging, and yet the display of respect, civility, kindness, and generosity among the delegates

were all signs of how we are committed to being the body of Christ together, attentive to the leading of the Spirit in our midst," said Adam McNeil. "I had the privilege of expressing my support of the motion to authorize pastoral liturgies for gender transitions and affirmations. I felt deeply

proud and honoured to join with many others in affirming the dignity and beauty of our trans and non-binary siblings." In addition to Bishop Susan Bell, Kathy Morgan, and Adam MacNeil, Niagara's delegation included Canon David Anderson, Andrew Clinkard, Dean Tim Dobbin, Susan Little and Jodey Porter. Canon Greg Tweney and Archdeacon Bill Mous also attended as assessors, and Sister Heather Broadwell attended as a religious order representative.

"It was a joy to think and pray with the members of our delegation from Niagara, each of whom brings enormous strengths and gifts to this work," said Bishop Bell. "My profound thanks to each of them for their time and dedication; they did our diocese proud!"

Mous also attended as assessors, and Sister Heather Broadwell attended as a religious order representative. "It was a joy to think and pray with the members of our delegation from Niagara, each of whom brings enormous strengths and gifts to this work," said Bishop Bell. "My profound thanks to each of them for their time and dedication; they did our diocese proud!"



Archbishop Chris Harper, National Indigenous Anglican Bishop and Presiding Elder of the Sacred Circle.

Photo contributed by Diocese of Niagara

Reflections on General Synod 2023



The Spirit Was at Work

SUSAN LITTLE

The major highlight happened on the last night of business when the Anglican Council of Indigenous People (ACIP) presented a series of visual updates of their work across the country. At its conclusion, the National Indigenous Bishop, Chris Harper, led us in a reflection based on the gospel of Mark. He explained the importance of community which is the common humanity that binds us all together. In his usual gentle and encouraging way, he got us to do what he said Indigenous folk do when celebrating together. He asked us all to move to the sides of our large meeting area and then to hold hands. One small group began circling the altar in the middle of the gym while the outside circle moved to the rhythm of a drum. Soon

the whole body of General Synod joined hands and danced together, forming circles within circles. What fun we had! Slowly and rhythmically, we moved, one overlapping area of the circle emerged slowly on its own and broke open into a new space, circling and following parallel to the rest of the larger circle. Gradually, as more and more circles emerged, all the circles moving about in the gym were connected. How triumphant we felt when the music ended and we had created a magnificent tightly-knit circle: God's people, unified together and having fun. A true community!

The Spirit was at work when we took time to get to know other delegates around us. We found amazing connections to others we had never met and discovered common strengths we share in our churches.

Similarly, we got to know firsthand the many different kinds of church settings where delegates come from, catching a glimpse of the challenges they face and how the Spirit enlivens the gospel through particular ministries across Canada.

Although we would have liked our Primate to continue until the next General Synod in 2025, certain voices that seemed contrary to good governance were able to defeat the motion. Trying to not take it personally, in her concluding remarks, Archbishop Linda was very gracious. As an old and flawed institution, the Church must remain vigilant to work against biases, yes, even fifty years after the first Canadian ordinations.

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trary to good governance were able to defeat the motion. Trying to not take it personally, in her concluding remarks, Archbishop Linda was very gracious. As an old and flawed institution, the Church must remain vigilant to work against biases, yes, even fifty years after the first Canadian ordinations.

The most inspiring moment occurred when we participated in a smudging ceremony. Standing outdoors beyond the building where we would soon convene opening worship for General Synod, National Indigenous Anglican Archbishop Chris Harper led us in the smudging with an open dish of charcoal, burning tobacco, sage and sweetgrass. He taught us how to respond to the smoke, making it clear there were no 'wrong' ways of entering this sanctifying tradition. It

was awesome!

The authorization of new "Pastoral Liturgies for Journeys of Gender Transition and Affirmation" created more debate than expected. Some members of General Synod shared stories about the need for such steps in order to minister fully to marginalized people, to heal and even save lives. Although the resolution passed, the discussion was not without pain. Some bishops and clergy of expressed reluctance to use any new resources, thereby ostensibly ignoring our 2SLGBTQI+ communities. Archbishop Linda had emphasized that we need transparency and "respectful conversations" if we are to be accountable and committed to one another", but obviously not all are ready.

Astonishing Grace and Tensions

General Synod 2023 reflections

THE VERY REVEREND DR. DEAN TIM DOBBIN

I am deeply grateful for the trust this wonderful diocese placed in those of us elected as delegates to General Synod 2023. It was a privilege and joy to have been part of the Niagara team. As Bishop Susan has remarked, we are a diocese which indeed punches above its weight in terms of what we contribute to the health and vitality of the national Church. It is something I hope and pray we can feel good about.

While the prospect of meeting morning, afternoon, and evening across five full days with limited down-time was somewhat daunting, there was immense richness in simply being together with Anglicans and Lutherans from across the country, worshipping and eating together, sharing stories, wrestling with contentious issues, and celebrating clear movements of the Spirit amongst our various communities, especially in the Indigenous church. It is

reassuring to be reminded that we are all part of a creative, diverse, and caring family.

There were moments of astonishing grace—the celebration of full communion between Anglicans, Episcopalians, and Lutherans in Canada and the United States; welcoming the Moravian Church into full communion; receiving the Sacred Circle's document, Covenant and Our Way of Life, which will guide the Indigenous church toward self-determination; the shared worship services with our Lutheran siblings; the passing of some significant resolutions addressing climate care, newly authorizing liturgies; and wonderful conversations with delegates from so many different ministry settings.

There were tensions—we are the church, after all! Our system of governance comes with some challenges, especially for the Indigenous members of General Synod who are accustomed to different ways of decision-making. Some expressed frustration at a perceived lack of

understanding of the challenges they are facing. A number of our dioceses are facing considerable financial pressures and declining membership which can feed uncertainty over ongoing viability. The diversity of our understanding of the church and ministry, of the role of Scripture, and how it is read can erode our trust in each other. It is vital we continue to pray for the unity of our beloved Church.

One of the metrics for the fruitfulness of these national Church gatherings is the impact they have at the local level. I am looking forward to ways in which we as a diocese and as individual parishes can engage with the Five Transformational Commitments for the Church and the parish engagement resource for social and ecological justice issues, particularly how they connect with our own parish MAP process. It will be important to give our best attention to relationships with Indigenous members of our church and to understand how we can support their steps



General Synod youth delegate Adam MacNeil, Bishop Susan Bell, and Dean Tim Dobbins.

Photo: Contributed by Diocese of Niagara

towards self-determination. I hope that we can be more intentional about making connections with our local Lutheran faith communities, discerning opportunities for sharing in ministry and mission in our neighbourhoods. We need to continue to pray for peace in Jerusalem regularly and to familiarize ourselves with new liturgical resources, especially those supporting the transgender community. Indeed, there is

much to read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest.

Again, I wish to thank you for the great gift of being able to represent this extraordinary diocese.

Reflections on General Synod 2023



A Diverse Wisdom

JODEY PORTER

Consider Synod as a blind delegate—a 670 page convening circular, countless handouts, complex motions and amendments on the screen, faces and expressions in the room. It all depends on sight. The opening Gospel reading of Matt. 6:22-23 taught us that the eyes are the way to the soul. If they see, the soul is full of light. If the eyes do not see, the soul is full of darkness. However, what I felt and learned at Synod is that I might lack sight, but certainly do not lack vision and voice.

National Indigenous Anglican Archbishop Chris Harper, recommended that as Christians, we walk up to someone we have never met before and scare them with a declaration of love. God's love is a shocking and glorious miracle for us each day. It is the wonder of creation and the heart for our mission of Creation Care. Frightening and overwhelming as is the wondrous love, inclusive power, capable of bringing into one family as Christians and as a church. The Sacred Circle of the



Chalices are exchanged by the leaders and representatives of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, the Episcopal Church, and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and the Anglican Church of Canada. This is a symbol of the ongoing communion and common mission shared between the churches and lived out in the Churches Beyond Borders initiative.

Photo: Contributed by Diocese of Niagara

Indigenous Church and the parliamentary form of governance of Synod may be different, but they lead to the same truth.

We met with our Lutheran colleagues, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada and they too are different. And yet, we are one Communion. We learn from each other and our different traditions. We welcomed the Moravian Church to our one communion with joy and learning of their mission, to fill the world with Christianity and joy but not build churches and maintain them, just form faithful Christians. They welcomed us to a love feast.

Creation Care was a constant presence—all creatures of our world are God's creatures. This

world is not just about human beings, but about the whole, marvelous and miraculously diverse expression of what God has made and is still creating. In this, we are co-creators and have much to do to be worthy and fulfill our Christian mission to protect and share our threatened garden of the earth.

We learned about the ways that our colonial past, culture, and structure pose barriers to those of other cultures, races, and faiths. We are not a smug Christian club, but a wonderfully chorus of diverse voice and stories, each of which must be heard and each of whom loved as one of the same family with God. We are one church with a diverse wisdom.

A Message of Faith and Hope

ANDREW CLINKARD

The highlight of Assembly/General Synod 2023 for me was threefold, two of them being intertwined—the human interactions and the three evenings we used the Lutheran's Holden Evening Prayer Service. This was my third General Synod, but the only one that included a joint assembly with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC), and the only one on a university campus. I found the joint worship with an equal number of Anglicans and Lutherans at my worship table spiritually moving and the relaxed beauty of the service calming.

There were fewer organized social events which combined with the less formal venue, seemed to lend itself to more

intermingling of the delegates. I thoroughly enjoyed my time with my Niagara colleagues, but I also spent time relationship building with Anglicans from Atlantic Canada, hearing inspiring stories of life there and work in multi-point parishes. The third highlight for me was having Adam MacNeil, a fellow member of my church, Church of the Resurrection, attend GS as Niagara's youth delegate—he did Resurrection and Niagara proud!

The greatest challenge, and something I found very upsetting was the fact that despite two attempts to resolve the canonical requirement for primates to retire by age 70, neither of the motions to allow a Primate to continue to work until the next General Synod

following their 70th birthday passed in the House of Bishops. At the closing banquet I had an opportunity to speak for a couple minutes with the Primate and I expressed my thanks for her outstanding ministry, how unjust I felt some Bishops had been, and I wished her well.

I bring back to my parish a message of deep Christian faith and hope, the joys and challenges of multi-point parishes, the wonderful ecumenical work taking place in numerous rural areas between Anglicans and the United Church of Canada, and of the close relationships we enjoy in our full communion partnership with the ELCIC on both an individual and corporate level, and an understanding of the significant ELCIC presence on the prairies.

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One Thing: A Simple Church

THE REVEREND CANON DR. DREW MACDONALD

In the 1991 film “City Slickers,” a crusty old cowboy named Curly supervises three New York city dwellers as they learn to drive cattle across the Southwest U.S.A. As Curly helps the “slickers” get in touch with their souls, he shares tidbits of wisdom. In one memorable scene, Curly takes off his leather glove, points his finger to heaven, and says, “It’s all about one thing.” The three men in mid-life crises respond with the obvious question, “What is the one thing?” To which Curly responds, “That’s what you have to figure out!”

Before the pandemic, Bishop Susan encouraged people in the Diocese of Niagara to consider the “one thing” that would help them draw closer to God and to prioritize that “one thing” in their lives. Like Curly, Bishop Susan was on to something important. We need to be truly clear about our priorities, but we can’t figure them out on our own. As followers of Jesus, we determine our priorities with God in the context of community.

The Mission Action Plan has



been guiding parishes to discern what God is calling them to be and to align themselves with God’s renewing power. That same renewing power is already at work in their spiritual lives, collective lives as parishes, and in the world beyond the church walls. The brilliance of the MAP process is that it helps every parish focus on a few key initiatives that will move them forward towards being the missional church that God is calling them to be.

As the new stewardship & campaign advisor, I join the parish development team, helping to grow healthy and vibrant congregations across the diocese. There are so many different aspects of parish life to steward in a healthy parish: effective governance models; a culture of unity, harmony, and generosity; holistic small groups; inspiring worship; passionate spirituality; strong lay leadership; and a missional vision. Every parish is in a different place, so, as leaders,

we must discern what needs to come first. What is the one thing that is the most important?

My experience as a parish priest for almost three decades has shown me that the one thing at the heart of what we are called to do is practice, teach, and help others to grow in faith. As church leaders, it is easy to get lost or overextended by engaging in the never-ending projects that “keep the church running” at the expense of engaging in our primary business: forming people to be disciples of Jesus. As the stewardship & campaign advisor, I will be focusing on faith formation as the means to develop a culture of generosity in parishes.

I have a passion for working with clergy. Clergy need to be equipped and empowered to form God’s people in faith. A church can have a great vision statement, but if the people sitting in the pews do not have a dynamic faith in Jesus and a deep understanding of how the Holy Spirit should be shaping our lives and the way we inter-

act with the world in radical ways, it will be difficult, if not impossible, to live fully into the vision.

Although there are many good resources about church health and growth on the market, I recommend the book *Simple Church: Returning to God’s Process for Making Disciples* by Rainer and Geiger (2008; B&H Publishing Group). In this book, the authors demystify the disciple-making process by returning to the simple ways that Jesus formed people in faith. “One thing” your parish could do to begin improving culture of stewardship would be to read and discuss this book together.

Another step you could do would be to get in touch with me. It’s my “one thing” to make myself available to ministry leaders, with a specific focus on the clergy of the diocese, to help you guide parishes in implementing the stewardship and faith formation aspects of your Mission Action Plan.

Even though I’ve only been in this role for a few months, I have seen how hard the leaders in the Diocese of Niagara are working. I’ve seen a clear love of God, of your parishes, and the communities which you are called to serve. In this ever-changing world, we need to prioritize our tasks strategically so that we are working smarter and not just harder. I am here to help you figure out how to do this—how to prioritize and focus on the “one thing” God is calling you to do now. I look forward to working with you.

The Reverend Canon Dr. Drew MacDonald is the new stewardship & campaign advisor for the Diocese of Niagara.



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Honor the LORD with your wealth and with the firstfruits of all your produce —Proverbs 3:9

Campus Ministries—Alive and Well

Community, Inclusion and Faith Exploration: Priorities of UofG Campus Ministry

ANDREW HYDE

This past Spring, as part of our 55th Anniversary celebrations, the Ecumenical Campus Ministry at the University of Guelph gathered students and partners to reflect and vision together about our mission—where we'd seen God at work in our midst, and what God was calling forth from our shared future together.

Together, we identified three priorities that guide our witness as a Christian community at UofG—meaningful community, radical inclusion, and faith exploration.

Because of ECM's ministry, UofG students will forge meaningful community. They'll find friends they will trust and confide in, who are facing the same challenges of being away from home in a tough academic envi-

ronment, and with whom they can pray and laugh, break bread and try new things. Our weekly community dinners and vespers worship services are some of the most-utilized doorways into this significant community. A university campus can be overflowing with people, but still an overwhelmingly lonely place for students who struggle to find connection. Thanks to campus ministry, some of those students will find meaningful community as part of the Body of Christ.

This Fall, students will be challenged to receive and offer radical inclusion. ECM is the only Christian ministry at UofG that is explicitly affirming of 2SLGBTQIA+ persons and relationships. We operate UofG's Queer Christian Community, host regular learning groups on anti-oppression, right relations, and gender expression, and are a



core member of the university's Multi-Faith Resource Team. We feel this is part of what it means to be followers of Jesus. This summer's hateful stabbings that targeted a Gender Studies class at nearby University of Waterloo remind us how important it is to stand up for inclusion on our campuses. Real lives hang in the balance. Thanks to campus ministry, many UofG students will live into God's vision of justice by making our ministry a place of radical inclusion.

Through ECM's ministry, UofG students will explore their faith

by broadening their religious literacy, engaging in spiritual practices that reveal God's presence, and by renewing their commitment to follow Jesus in ways that make sense for today. Some will find a new spiritual home in our ecumenical mix of Anglican, Presbyterian, and United Church expressions. Others will be opened to a life of faith for the very first time. Others still will find opportunities to lean into a calling towards Christian leadership. Wherever one's starting point, our campus ministry will be a place where

the questions and praises, the mysteries and comforts, of faith will find equal footing with the pursuit of academic rigour and probing of developmental frontiers.

For the past 55 years, the Anglican Diocese of Niagara has partnered with United and Presbyterian churches to offer this kind of Christ-centred welcome to students at the University of Guelph. We can't wait to welcome this Fall's cohort of students, through whom the Spirit will work to enliven these visions for our ministry, campus, and world.

To learn more about the Ecumenical Campus Ministry at the University of Guelph, visit www.ECMguelph.org or email ecm@uoguelph.ca.

Sowing the Seeds of Love

THE REVEREND KRISTA HILTON

I have a small yard in the front of my house under a huge maple tree. The shade impedes the growth of the grass and the tree sucks up all the moisture. I've tried putting down sod, oodles of grass seed, healthy soil, lots of water. Everytime the grass withers and dies, leaving me with a grubby looking front yard. Meanwhile, the side patio, made of interlocking stones, should be weed free but throughout the spring, I find myself on my knees picking out weeds trying to grow between the patio stones. It seems that the grass won't grow on the fertile ground and yet the weeds grow in the most inhospitable environments!

As I was reflecting on those stubborn weeds that grow between the patio stones, I wondered, is this a bit like what we hear in the parable of the sower? In this parable, we are told that the word of God is like seeds sown, where some land on fertile ground and grow

strong, while others fall on rocky ground and wither. But does this mean we should stop sowing God's word? Or be picky about when and how we share God's word? Or is there another lesson here, that the sower scatters seed in all kinds of places and then trusts in God?

Since I work as the ecumenical chaplain at Brock University, this interpretation feels very true to me. If I was holding back in order to cast God's word only on what I believed to be fertile ground, I might miss all kinds of opportunities to make pastoral connections with students. And so there is benefit in casting wide, and trusting that the seeds will find a place of growth. We don't necessarily know which is fertile ground and which is stony ground; and we also don't know that what might be stony ground now could in fact allow some growth of faith, which in turn grows stronger. And so my role at Brock University is to sow seeds of God's love with abandon.

One of the ways that I and the other chaplains sow seeds is by hosting a soup supper once

a month. This is for all students and it's a way to show hospitality within the Faith and Life Centre. Not every student who attends may be interested in a life of faith, but hopefully we are sowing the seeds of welcome by hosting this dinner—maybe one seed will sprout growth sometime in the future. When we are liberal with our love and our welcome, we are sowing seeds of God's love and trusting that those seeds will be nourished at some point. Even if we think it's a rocky ground, growth can happen in the most surprising places!

Bishop John Spong, an Episcopal priest and bishop who died in 2021, often spoke about "loving wastefully." In his last lecture, he said that: "If God is a source of love, then the only way I can worship God is by loving, loving wastefully. I mean the kind of love that never stops to calculate, never stops to wonder whether the object of its love is worthy to its recipient. It is love that loves not because it has been earned. That's where I think God is made visible." Loving wastefully means not



The Reverend Krista Hilton celebrating an Agape Meal during Holy Week at Brock University

Photo: Contributed by Krista Hilton

Campus Ministries – Alive and Well

Seeds of Love

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

counting the cost. It means just scattering the seeds of God's love as widely and as wastefully as possible, without holding back, without deciding first if the recipient is "worthy."

Living wastefully may not come naturally to many of us. After all, many of us live by the mantra to reuse, reduce, recycle; we've learned to budget and plan and save. Being wasteful is perhaps anathema to us! But in this one area, we can make an exception: when it comes to love, we don't need to count the cost or conserve it for fear of running out; we can be risky with love and allow ourselves to scatter it wide, letting it fall where it may, whether it be fertile or rocky soil. Loving wastefully means breaking down barriers, whether it be class, economic, race, gender, sexuality, identity, etc.

In 1989, the pop rock band Tears for Fears released the hit song, "Sowing the Seeds of Love." The lyrics come to mind as I prepare for the fall semester at Brock University. The chorus simply says, "Sowing the seeds of love (Anything is possible), Seeds of love (When you're sowing the seeds of love)." When we become sowers of God's word, that is to say, sowers of the message of God's love, we can do so with abandon and hope. One of the ways I will be sowing seeds this fall at Brock University is by offering study groups; one will be based on the book, *Beyond a Binary God: A Theology for Trans Allies* by Tara Soughers; another group will be studying the book, *Teaching Faith with Harry Potter* by Patricia Lyons. I can't predict what growth will come from these seeds, but I will sow with hope! With God's grace, the seeds we sow will grow; we may not be around to see its growth, but our job is simply to plant the seeds—wastefully and with abandon, spreading God's love as widely as we can.

The Rev. Krista Hilton is Ecumenical Chaplain at Brock University, St. Catharines. She can be reached at nb_khilton@brocku.ca

Ecumenical Chaplaincy at McMaster

2023-2024

Warm Cups of Soup Served

Our Chaplain and team of volunteers are excited to welcome every student each Wednesday to "Soup & Spirit", our longtime free soup and bread ministry. This is a crowd pleaser, especially in the Fall and Wintertime when its cold outside.



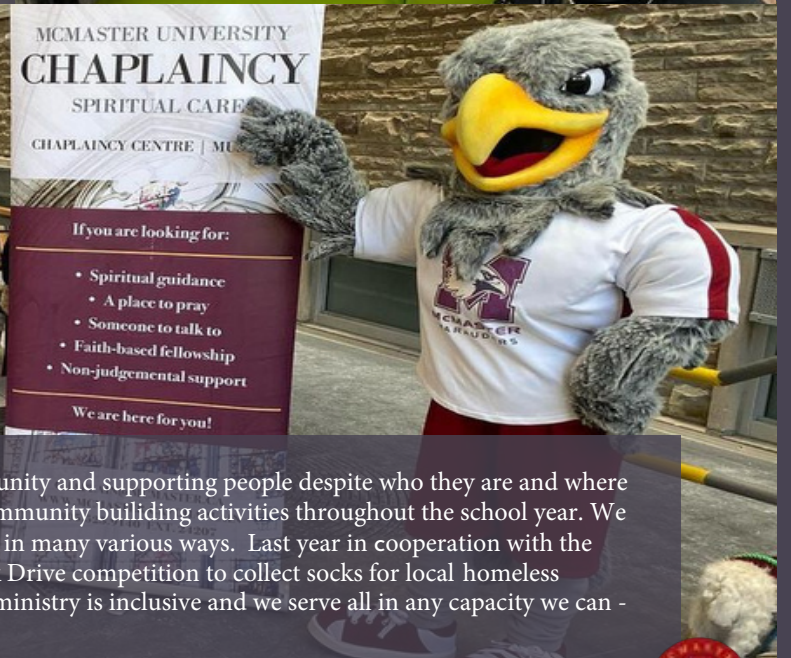
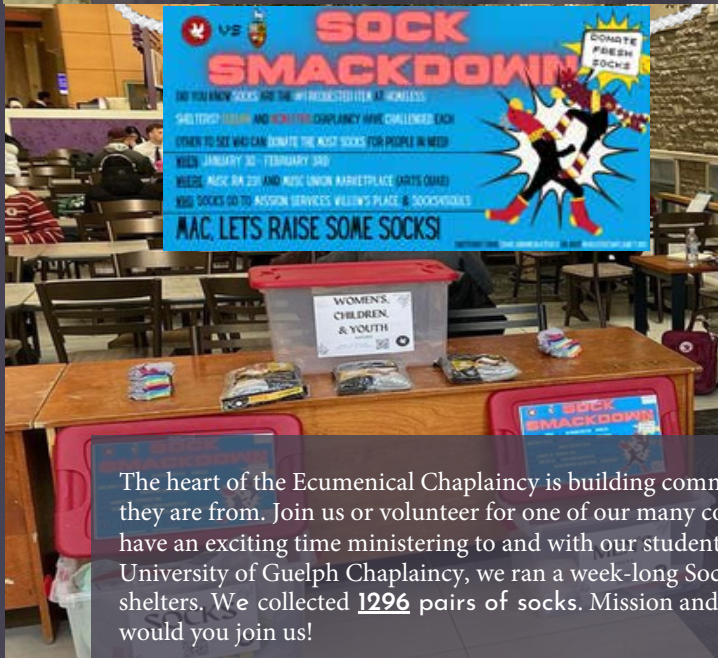
Student Drop-Ins - Exam Season

Warm home baked cookies, hot chocolate, teas and apple cinnamon muffins are the day's highlight. Our Chaplain and team of volunteers welcomes hundreds of students during the Fall and Winter exam periods to destress, connect and enjoy a place to relax prior to or after exams. Enjoy fresh baking from our local Hamilton and surrounding areas communities.

Therapy Dog Vists

BISCUIT THE THERAPY DOG

The newest addition to the Chaplaincy Center is Biscuit the Therapy Dog! Biscuit has captured the hearts of many McMaster students and she is excited to do the same this school year, if for no other reason, please come by the Chaplaincy Center in MUSC 231 to say hi to Biscuit



The heart of the Ecumenical Chaplaincy is building community and supporting people despite who they are and where they are from. Join us or volunteer for one of our many community building activities throughout the school year. We have an exciting time ministering to and with our students in many various ways. Last year in cooperation with the University of Guelph Chaplaincy, we ran a week-long Sock Drive competition to collect socks for local homeless shelters. We collected **1296** pairs of socks. Mission and ministry is inclusive and we serve all in any capacity we can - would you join us!

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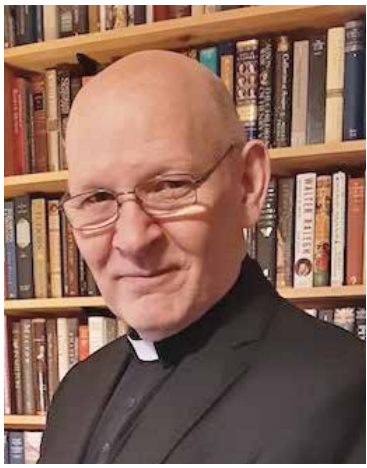
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The Enduring Legacy



THE REVEREND MICHAEL COREN

This year is the 60th anniversary of the death of C. S. Lewis, author of the *Narnia* stories, *Miracles*, *Till We have Faces*, *Surprised by Joy*, and so many other implicit and direct defences of Christianity. A writer who has shaped my life perhaps more than any other.

I'm not sure if it's still there, but some years ago there was a poignant, if seldom noticed, symbol in The Kilns in Oxford, the long-time home of the Belfast-born author. It was the outline of a mezuzah: the small container attached to the doorposts of Jewish homes, containing parchment on which the Shema is written. It was there because one of Lewis's two stepsons had asked to adopt the birth faith of his late mother, Joy Davidman. Lewis, the world-renowned champion of Christianity, had asked Jewish friends how he could best accommodate the boy.

It was a gently noble gesture, and that decency seems typical of the man.

He was most prominent between the mid 1930s and early 60s and as such inhabited a dramatically different age—even the BBC couldn't get enough of him! But a disdain for faith had already emerged, particularly in the universities where he taught. He addressed this in his 1952 book *Mere Christianity*, based on a series of highly popular radio broadcasts.

"There is no need to be worried by facetious people who try to make the Christian hope of Heaven ridiculous by saying they do not want to spend eternity playing harps. The answer to such people is that if they cannot understand books written for grown-ups, they should not talk about them. All the Scriptural imagery (harps, crowns, gold, etc.)

is, of course, a mere symbolical attempt to express the inexpressible. People who take these symbols literally might as well think that when Christ told us to be like doves, He meant that we were to lay eggs."

Those who allegedly couldn't understand "books written for grown-ups" knew exactly who they were. As a consequence, they made Lewis's life at Oxford progressively more difficult, which is one of the reasons why he moved to a more accepting Cambridge in 1954. But even then, his insistence of defending Christian truth to a mass audience as well as within his own circle lost him support and allies.

Rather like his friend Tolkien, he was always far more appreciated by readers than peers. If he hadn't become a Christian and hadn't written children's stories he would have been far more respected within the academy, especially for his remarkable books *The Allegory of Love: A Study in Medieval Tradition*, and *English Literature in the Sixteenth Century Excluding Drama*.

Yet while he may not have been given his proper place in university circles, there is something almost hagiographical in the way he's regarded in Christian circles, and within the Lewis industry there is, it must be said, a certain dreamy nostalgia. He's the quintessential caricature of a fantasy don—all tweed, tea, and leather armchairs. It's no accident that he is a virtual cult in the United States, especially and in some ways ironically—he drank and smoked—within the evangelical community. American Evangelicals may be politically influential but they lack intellectual heroes, and Lewis does very nicely out of fulfilling this role.

There are numerous profound thinkers making the Christian case today, but none of them wrote a children's story as timeless as *The Lion, The Witch, and the Wardrobe*, or something as deliciously and mischievously clever as *The Screwtape Letters*—if you've never heard John Cleese's recording of the book about a senior devil writing to his junior, grab hold of it immediately. Or chronicled in a haunting book, *A Grief Observed*, how it felt to lose a spouse, where he observed that "No one ever told me that grief felt so like fear. I

am not afraid, but the sensation is like being afraid."

He once wrote, "I believe in Christianity as I believe that the sun has risen. Not only because I see it, but because by it I see everything else." That's not always an acceptable sentiment

60 years after the man's death, but Lewis never worried about what was acceptable, only about what he considered to be important. That, at heart, is why Jack (his chosen name) Lewis, father of Aslan and, as he said about his 1929 coming to Christianity,

"the most dejected and reluctant convert in all England", simply won't go away, even for the hardest of cynics.



Writer and academic C.S. Lewis. "There is something almost hagiographical in the way he's regarded in Christian circles," Michael Coren writes.

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“The Puzzlers Will Meet On Monday Afternoon.”

**THE REVEREND DEACON
NANCY MCBRIDE**

If you were to walk into my kitchen on any given day, you would likely find a jigsaw puzzle in progress on the kitchen table. Admittedly I am not the puzzler I once was. In recent years the pieces have gotten fewer in number, and larger in size, but my enthusiasm has never waned.

During the first week of the pandemic, I advised a friend to build jigsaw puzzles. Soon several 1000 piece puzzles were on my porch for her to collect. I had more in reserve and decided to take my own advice. Within the year, I built well over 100 puzzles. My pastime became an obsession!

The assembly of a jigsaw puzzle is a metaphor for problem-solving. A puzzle has a frame and pieces, just as a



Puzzlers meet on Monday for community to work on their puzzles.

Photo: Contributed by Nancy McBride

problem has a boundary and issues. No one approach is better than another. When you solve a problem, you lay out and sort all the facts in front of you. Sometimes I build the border first, but sometimes I tackle the dominant feature. Gradually it all comes together—jigsaw built, problem solved.

Research has shown that building jigsaw puzzles is a

good workout for the brain, because it strengthens spatial reasoning and builds short term memory. It can also protect the brain from the effects of aging. Both the retirement homes I visit have puzzle tables in their activity rooms, and many of my completed puzzles end up in their libraries. Sometimes the residents even let me place a piece or two while we visit,

with or without words. While building puzzles alone can be rewarding, puzzling with others can be pleasant. Social activity is good for the brain.

Coming out of the COVID-19 pandemic, many people I knew were staying home. Programs they had participated in previously were slow to be reactivated. Changes in health status and loss of friends weighed heavily. People were lonely and in need of a fun activity. As I sorted my puzzle library one afternoon, I decided to set up a puzzlers group at St. Paul's, Caledonia. I ran the idea past my friend, who happily opted in, and we were good to go.

We are a small group, but we enjoy the company of friends and challenge of a tricky puzzle. The group is not limited to members of our congregation, and we welcome friends and neighbours. Perhaps the best



outcome is the good-natured teasing and all the laughter we share when we struggle to find a particular piece that goes somewhere and the joy when the 'lost' is found. We've built dogs and chickens and butterflies, all manner of birds and scenes from all seasons. We all have our pet peeves, like fences, or cows painted in the style of van Gogh! We have learned to discipline ourselves to pack up at the end of the afternoon.

And, every Sunday, during the announcements, I remind the congregation that “the puzzlers will meet on Monday afternoon in the parish hall.”

In other words

Tea With Bessie: Honouring God's Hidden Heroes



JOHN BOWEN

Sometimes young people heading for ministry ask my advice. Some of what I say is obvious, but there is one item that always makes them laugh with surprise: “You should collect old ladies.” When they realise I am being perfectly serious and the laughter stops, I tell them a story.

There had been a service at a downtown church celebrating

the anniversary of the student ministry for which I worked. Afterwards, I was chatting to people over coffee when a friend came up, and said, “Come with me. I want you to meet someone who prays for you every day.” And the friend introduced me to Bessie Crompton.

At the time, she seemed to me, then in my 40s, very old, probably in her 90s. How did Bessie even know I existed? To this day, I don't know. I presume she had seen my name in mailings from our national office, and just decided that I was someone who needed to be prayed for—I did.

Not only did Bessie pray for me, she also donated monthly to my support. The ministry was supported entirely by donations. So we developed a tradition whereby I would visit

her and her husband Ted once a month, ostensibly to pick up her donation.

I can only remember two things about those monthly teatimes. One was the moment when she poured the tea. If that sounds like an odd thing to remember, you don't know how severe her Parkinson's was. How the tea got from the pot to the cup without the majority of it going on the tablecloth, I will never know. The other thing that sticks in my memory is that she had always made cookies for my children, and wrapped them in the waxed paper lining of a cereal box. “Bessie Crompton cookies” were a favourite in my house for years.

Eventually, Ted and Bessie had to move into an assisted living facility, and that was where

I saw them for the last time before we moved to Hamilton. They were as cheerful as ever, and Bessie remained confident that Jesus would return before she died. He didn't—but I'm sure she was glad to see him anyway.

At some point in our friendship, Bessie gave me a colourful crocheted blanket she had made. That “Bessie Crompton blanket” remains one of my most prized possessions to this day because of the love that it represents.

I have come to believe that people like Bessie Crompton are the true heroes of Christian faith. They are unknown outside a very small circle. They do not preach or write books; they are not bishops or seminary professors; they do not create homes for the homeless or run

food banks—though they may have done so when they were younger. They are hidden heroes whom God loves because of their obscurity. I sometimes say that it is one of God's best jokes that the world is run by little old ladies who pray. I suspect that there is more truth in that than we ever appreciate in this life.

Of course, you may already be one of those people the world dismisses as “a little old lady.” If so, rejoice and be glad, for great is your reward in heaven. And, in the meantime, be prepared to be added to some young leader's collection. They need you. You will know what you need to do: pray for them every day, love them in whatever way you know best, and invite them for tea once a month. Making cookies and blankets is optional.

Niagara Anglican Deadlines and Submission Guidelines

Upcoming Deadlines:

November – September 22
December – October 27
January – November 24

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:

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Love is stronger than Hate

THE REVEREND CANON SHARYN HALL

September always brings the memory of 9/11, an event more than 20 years ago that raised fears for the future of our global world. Two airplanes flew into the World Trade Center in New York City. It was an unforgettable event of hate and revenge.

Four years ago, I had the opportunity to visit the memorial, consisting of two huge pools of water representing the two towers destroyed by the attack. On all sides, water cascades down to form enormous pools, which disappear into smaller, deeper squares in the centre. The names of those who died are engraved into dark, stone ridges around the outer squares.

It is a special place—of peace, of beauty, of sorrow, and of hope. I stopped at a small kiosk to purchase mementos of this historic memorial. One is a small bag with the inscription, 'LOVE is stronger than Hate'. On a card attached to the bag, a brief description explains that this sentence is the trademark of an organization called 'New York Says Thank You Foundation.' On the day after the 9/11 tragedy, "the kindness and compassion of people from all across the world prove that LOVE is stron-

ger than hate... actions big and small that bring people together to transform tragedy into hope are living proof that LOVE is stronger than hate."

We need to hear those words today in our countries, our cities,

and our neighbourhoods. Hate has always existed in our world, sometimes in subtle ways and sometimes in open hostility.

There was a two-part, extensive article in the Hamilton Spectator at the beginning of

June entitled, 'Hate is now in the Public Square.' This headline was under a photo of seven men raising their fists in a Nazi salute. They are members of a neo-Nazi group called 'Nationalist-13'. They started with only a handful of members but now have more than 1,000 followers on the internet. Their targets are anyone different in race, religion, culture, ancestry, or sexual orientation.

There is a rising tide of hate in Ontario according to police and advocacy groups. The article presents a long list of hate incidents ranging from death threats to public harassments to offensive graffiti. An example was the graffiti spray painted on the Harriet Tubman elementary school in St. Catharines. Harriet Tubman was the famous conductor of the underground railroad who led enslaved people from the United States to freedom in Canada. Her statue in the schoolyard was covered in paint and racial slurs were painted at its base. What motivates people to damage a school for young children?

People are not born with hatred in their hearts; they are taught hate by others. One of the incredible aspects of hatred is the self-righteous attitude of people who claim the right to

hate others because they are different. If you are different, they decide you are bad for their neighbourhood, their town, or their country. Jesus often warned about the sin of pride, because pride can turn hearts and minds away from compassion, justice, and God's love for all people.

- Do we speak out against the injustice suffered by those who have no voice?
- Do we seek mutual understanding among religions?
- Do we support strangers in our communities?
- Do we speak up to support the dignity of others regardless of their differences?

Each one of us can contribute to the strengthening of love through actions big and small which promote understanding, respect, and dignity. Each one of us can counteract the power of hate by our compassion and support for others in our neighbourhoods and in countries far away.

We can remember that the terrible act of hatred on September 11, 2001, gave rise to actions big and small that brought people together from many walks of life all across the world to transform tragedy into hope as living proof that LOVE is stronger than Hate.



The September 11 Memorial, New York City

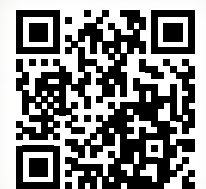
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